ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity: Mixed Race Identity and Knowledge Production in Higher Education
	Aaron C. Allen, Doctor of Philosophy, 2016
Dissertation directed by:	Professor Christina B. Hanhardt Department of American Studies Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Program
	Professor Nancy L. Struna Department of American Studies

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity: Mixed Race Identity and Knowledge Production in Higher Education," explores how the category of "mixed race" has underpinned university politics in California, through student organizing, admissions debates, and the development of a new field of study. By treating the concept of *privatization* as central to both multiraciality and the neoliberal university, this project asks how and in what capacity has the discourses of multiracialism and the growing recognition of mixed race student populations shaped administrative, social, and academic debates at the state's flagship universities—the University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles. This project argues that the mixed race population symbolizing so-called "post-racial societies" is fundamentally attached to the concept of self-authorship, which can work to challenge the rights and resources for college students of color.

Through a close reading of texts, including archival materials, policy and media debates, and interviews, I assert that the contemporary deployment of mixed race within the US academy represents a particularly post-civil rights development, undergirded by a genealogy of U.S. liberal individualism. This project ultimately reveals the pressing need to rethink ways to disrupt institutionalized racism in the new millennium.

*MULTI*RACIALITY ENTERS THE *UNI*VERSITY:
MIXED RACE IDENTITY AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN HIGHER
EDUCATION

by

Aaron C. Allen

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Advisory Committee:

Associate Professor Christina B. Hanhardt, Co-Chair
Professor Nancy L. Struna, Co-Chair
Professor Janelle Wong
Professor Patricia Hill Collins
Associate Professor Michelle V. Rowley
Associate Professor Minelle Mahtani

Preface

"For now we see in a mirror dimly . . ."
—1 Corinthians xiii, 12.

Figure 1. Los Angeles Times. April 28, 1969. Courtesy of San Francisco State University College Strike Collection, San Francisco.

This political cartoon, originally published in the *Los Angeles Times* on April 28, 1969, was discovered during the early stages of my research. I continually returned to the image as it served as a visual representation of the key terms undergirding "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity"—institutionalization, racial representation, the politics of recognition, and historical identity. The cartoon depicts a black male student holding a dossier that reads, "march for historical identity," while he gazes into a mirror only to see a nebulous version of himself reflecting back. Written atop

the mirror's frame are the words "White Status Quo Institutions." Below the drawing is an excerpted bible verse, Corinthians 13:12 which reads, "For now we see in the mirror dimly…" On a fundamental level, the cartoon's elements come together to describe how the antiracist Black student movements of the late 1960s looked for US colleges and universities to integrate curricula that recognized and validated Black historical and cultural identity.

The cartoon's political narrative is further revealed by its placement alongside an editorial by Raymond Moley titled "Real Enemies of Black Studies Are its Backers." In the piece Moley argues that integrating some Black studies courses into the nation's universities should have been important for two primary purposes: first, to offer a more complex understanding of American history and culture; second, and "more significantly, to provide for Negroes that pride in their race and its contributions so essential to their self-respect."[1] Yet, Moley concludes these purposes failed due the field's militancy, which has ultimately turned Black studies courses into a means of "propaganda, political action, and methods of revolutionary coercion generally." Ultimately, Moley opining over the lost potential of Black studies due to its over-politicization adds an additional interpretive layer to the cartoon; one that helps archive how the institutionalization of racial difference, specifically in the context US colleges and universities, is steeped in a logic of liberal individualism.

As the Black student stares into the mirror, what is reflected back appears altered—a filtered, abstracted image that only slightly captures that which peers in its direction. This is certainly illustrative of how the US academy's inclusion of racialized others became a vital component to, and even constitutive of, post-1968

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[1] Moley, "Real Enemies of Black Studies Are its Backers," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1969.

"white status quo institutions."[2] That is, as the student in the cartoon peering into the mirror symbolizes his longing to jettison notions of universal knowledge by achieving institutional recognition of particularized racial histories, the institution only "dimly" reflects these desires. In this way, the drawing represents how institutions inevitably fail to *fully* represent, and instead embrace elements of "historical identity" movements largely in service to broader national projects. For instance, during the Cold War period US academic institutions sought to reflect the country's racial diversity by, as just one example, "put[ting] the subject of [Black studies] into the context of American history and culture."[3] However incorporating a wider range of cultural knowledges was not necessarily for the purposes of disrupting these "white status quo institutions," but rather to bolster the image of the US as both a national and global model of freedom and liberation.

Consequently, while the Black student looks to the institutional mirror for *historical* identity—the type Moley associates with revolutionary political action— the mirror reflects back an abstracted form of Black identity tied to notions of *personal* racial pride and *self*-respect. The language of the latter represents a liberal identitarian framework that would become the common sense approach to racial politics in the post-civil rights era. More precisely, race was abstracted to merely reflect an individualized social identity rather than a relational, complex, and historically situated category of difference constructed to consolidate power. Moley

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[2] In 1968, the Black Student Union and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)—a coalition of other race-based student groups—protested San Francisco State University's lack of diversity among the student body, faculty, and curriculum. Clashes between student protesters and cops lasted for over 4 months, which resulted in SFSU instituting the nation's first School of Ethnic Studies. Colleges and University would institute similar programs and departments nation-wide.

[3] Moley, "Real Enemies of Black Studies Are its Backers."

framing race as simply a social identity, facilitates his ability to assure his readers, "there is nothing incompatible in seeking at the same time two objectives: first to provide assimilation of the Negro in our common life; second, to encourage him to learn more about his own heritage." In this way, institutions could maintain elements of the institutional status quo, emphasizing the importance of the liberal self, even if these institutions would not remain exclusively white. After all, the notion of a *multi-racial* nation *uni*fied under the banner of "American" identity coincided with US nationalisms and claims of ethical superiority on the global stage.

If the metaphorical mirror projected these values "dimly" during 1969, then this image of identity politics came into full view by the 1990s, as multiculturalism in the classroom became a hotly debated topic. In fact, while the first portion of Corinthians 13:12 archives the early development of institutional recognition of racial difference in the US academy, the verse's latter most portion omitted from the cartoon might serve as a more apt characterization of the 1990s multiculturalist era. It reads, "…but then I shall know just as I also am known," or in the most simplest of terms, I see myself as I am seen. Replacing the cartoon's former caption with this latter portion of Corinthians 13:12 then might suggest that looking toward the metaphorical mirror symbolizes how institutional recognition in the last decade of the 20th century meant racial subjects seeing themselves and their demands *fully* in the image of the state—as a liberal individual upon which all identity claims would be made. It is this transformation that spurs my analytical critique of the category of mixed race in the context of university politics.

Dedication

For Mom and Pops.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the Graduate School at the University of Maryland, College Park for the Dean's Fellowship Award, the Summer Research Fellowship, and the Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant; also the Department of American Studies, and the Honors Humanities Program for the Graduate Assistantships. These forms of financial support have helped me to shape, develop and complete this project.

I would also like to give my deepest gratitude to the interviewees from the Mixed Student Union at the University of California, Berkeley and Los Angeles. This project owes a lot to your willingness to speak candidly about your experiences. Without your participation, a significant portion of this dissertation would not be possible. Thank you.

This dissertation is a culmination of many formal and informal intellectual and professional encounters. Of upmost significance are those closest to this project's development and completion: my wonderful and inspirational committee members. Co-Chair, Nancy Struna, your commitment to the American Studies Department, its graduate students and faculty is a true blessing. Throughout my graduate career, her concern for me stretched beyond the boundaries of the classroom. She always made me feel supported during difficult times in the program, and helped me to continue to push forward. Nancy, you are very much appreciated. Michelle V. Rowley's exactness has made me a better student. Her voice continues to resonate in my mind when thinking about both theory and method; a direct result of the impact her class on feminist methodologies had upon me almost four years ago. Dr. Rowley, you continue to leave me in awe with your brilliance. Patricia Hill Collins' words of encouragement have stayed with me throughout my graduate career. As a student struggling with his confidence and place within the academy, her comments regarding my potential as a future scholar have meant the world to me. I sincerely thank you for that. Also, I am so very grateful to Minelle Mahtani for being a part of this project. She has been incredibly influential in my work and is a true inspiration. I have continued to return to her scholarship on issues of mixed race as a source of intellectual motivation, which is illustrated by her appearance in the footnotes throughout this dissertation. I look forward to working with you in the future. Janelle Wong's addition to this project helped bring the committee "home." Her expertise on California-based politics was an invaluable addition. On a personal note, having a fellow UCLA Bruin alum on my committee continues to make me smile.

In many ways Co-Chair Christina Hanhardt birthed the inspiration for this project. A single comment on what I now consider a subpar seminar paper written over five years ago became the inspiration for my dissertation. Dr. Hanhardt, your brilliance has resulted in multiple iterations of this dissertation, increasing in quality with each draft. Many thanks for that. I realize how very lucky I am to have had you guide me through this process. Your commitment to your students can never be rewarded

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To my closest friends: Luis Acosta and Armando Barragán, I write this struggling to come up with the words that can fully capture just how appreciative I am for you both. You guys have been the best support system possible. Lu, thank you for listening to me share countless undeveloped thoughts and ideas about this project. Allowing me to record many of our conversations helped me to figure out what I was actually trying to write for my dissertation. I have also been so very grateful for your ability to take me out of "grad school mode," and remind me of the life I live outside of it. And Armando, I can't thank you enough for always calling to check in on me throughout this process. Whether concerning personal or academic matters, your willingness to make sure I was doing well always let me know I had people rooting for me back home. As I entered this final year of my program, seeing you graduate with your PhD a year prior served as a constant source of inspiration. Thank you for making me a part of your moment, which helped me prepare for my own. Norlyn Asprec, I sincerely appreciate you being there for me during the most difficult stretch of this process. I can never thank you enough for your help in getting me through those really rough days. A piece of my success belongs to you.

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Introduction

In 2011 the *New York Times* ran a yearlong editorial series called "Race Remixed,"

which profiled the increasing number of "mixed race" Americans.[4] As the articles

tended to focus on the increasing number of young people who racially self-identified

with two or more races, journalists often identified the university as their primary site

to contextualize this trend. Whether these stories focused on issues of student

applications or on mixed race student groups, the university was popularly imagined

as a site where the category of mixed race cohered. An article from the series titled,

"Black? White? Asian? Young Americans Choose All the Above," featured the

Multiracial/Biracial Student Association (MBSA) at the University of Maryland,

College Park, and discussed the group's desire for multiracial recognition both on

campus and in their everyday lives. The attention MBSA received from mainstream

media hints at the recent proliferation of mixed race student groups organized in

colleges and universities throughout the US. These groups represent a relatively

recent identity-based "community" on college campuses, and possess, as the *Times*

piece alludes to, an uncertainty around their advocacy beyond public recognition.[5]

The central theme of these articles mostly highlighted a demographic shift in higher

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[4] New York Times columnist, Susan Saulny, spearheaded the "Race Remixed" series, which spanned from January 2011 to January 2012. In its year of publication, the series produced 7 articles and several multimedia pieces covering various topics of mixed race.
[5] Saulny concludes her article on the University of Maryland's mixed race student group, MBSA, writing, "…there is a wider debate among mixed race people about what the long-term goals of their advocacy should be both on and off campus." It appears even popular coverage of mixed race identity is uncertain as to the broader political goals outside of the politics of recognition. I discuss the issue of mixed race student advocacy further in chapter 2. See, Susan Saulny, Black? White? Asian? More Young Americans Choose All the Above.

education particularly, and in the US more generally, which ultimately signaled the diverse and complex nature of US racialization in the 21st century.

Despite popular claims that mixed race students signify the increased diversity and multiculturalism of the university, the significance of the institutional and cultural presence of mixed race within these spaces has largely gone without a sustained critique. Consequently, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" examines the complexities of mixed race within the US academy by not only understanding the category as a mode of personal identification, but also as a legitimated, institutionally recognized social category, and a developing autonomous academic field. It is under these terms that this project ultimately asserts that the contemporary deployment of mixed race within the US academy represents a particularly post-civil rights development, undergirded by a genealogy of U.S. liberal individualism. That is, as students identifying as "mixed race" have begun to represent a growing population on college campuses in recent years, the category is simultaneously integral to and a consequence of the institutional management of racial difference by privileging notions of self-determination, private personhood, and racial neutrality. These three concepts provide a political framework for the concept of mixed race that sometimes purposefully and other times inadvertently hinder redistributive policies and systematic antiracist critiques of racial inequality within the US academy and beyond.

Thus, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" considers the relations of power that bring mixed race into view within the US academy, primarily although not exclusively in California's two most prestigious public institutions—University of California at Berkeley (UCB) and Los Angeles (UCLA). The overarching question

guiding this project asks how, and in what capacity, has the growing recognition of mixed race student populations shaped debates about the administrative, social, and academic spheres of university life?

This dissertation addresses the aforementioned question by incorporating semi-structured interviews and archival research, along with media and public policy debates, and university administrative documents. By analyzing these diverse set of objects, I take an interdisciplinary approach to an area of study that largely situates its methods firmly within either the social sciences or humanities. On the one hand, social scientist (namely, psychologists and sociologist) predominately employ qualitative methods—often through in-depth interviews—focusing on the experiences of mixed race individuals and the personal and social consequences of their racial identities.[6] On the other hand, as humanists deploy poststructuralist critiques that deconstruct essentialist representations of the mixed race experience, they mostly abandon the use of personal narratives in their research, and instead tend toward an evaluation of the cultural significance of mixed race through literary analysis. While the differences between these methods are discussed later in this introduction, I bookmark them here to emphasize that this project borrows from both approaches. I do so with an understanding that institutional life is constituted by a synthesis between personal experience and complex power relations guided by a variety of institutional apparatuses (e.g. state government, schools, families, etc.). Therefore by regarding interviews with student organizers, media and policy reports, and university administrative documents all as a form discursive practice—in a Foucaultdian

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[6] See, France Windance Twine, "Brown Skin White Girls: Class, Culture and the Construction of White Identity in Suburban Communities," *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 3.2 (1996): 205-224.

register—these methods come together to reveal a set of dominant, historically contingent social relations that constitute *both* the ideologies *and* material consequences of mixed race identity within the context of the university.[7]

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" hopes to make an intervention in both mixed race studies and universities studies. Given the growing conversations about the economic restructuring of the university and the crisis of the institutionalization of minority difference, I examine how the category of mixed race has figured into these discussions.[8] While there are growing concerns and debates regarding both the privatization of public universities and the increasing recognition of the mixed race population, these conversations are often treated as mutually exclusive. This project, however, treats both the economic and cultural restructuring of the contemporary university and the politics of mixed race as deeply entwined. In so doing, this project interrogates the category of mixed race in the context of how the US academy, primarily at the University of California, manages racial difference in an era of increasing austerity.[9] Ultimately, by examining the category of mixed race in the context of the US academy, I consider the broader consequences of the

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[7] I follow Foucault's definition of "discourse" to get at the ways individuals and institutions construct a language with which to constitute meaning and subjectivities.

[8] See, Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and It's Pedagogy of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

[9] California's public university budget has been reduced dramatically over the years. According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), the state spent 1.6 billion dollars less in the 2010-2011 academic year, than it had a decade prior. While PPIC attributes such cuts, in part, to the state's recession and low revenues of the general fund, they also cite a change in California's priorities, stating, "Declines in higher education expenditures have exceeded those for other state functions. For example, over the past ten years, general fund expenditures for higher education have fallen 9 percent, whereas general fund expenditures for corrections and rehabilitation have increased 26 percent." See, Hans Johnson, "Defunding Higher Education: What Are the Effects on College Enrollment?" *Public Policy Institute of California* (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute, 2012), 4.

institutionalization of minority difference, which continues to be a central aspect of contestation and debate within the university today.

To further contextualize "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity," it is the goal of this introduction to accomplish the following: First, outline a working definition of mixed race and its related terms; second, synopsize the political claims of multiracialism and the development of mixed race studies; third, outline the differing genealogical accounts to describe how mixed race has been made visible in the US national imagination; fourth, introduce the economic, political, and cultural landscape upon which both mixed race *and* state institutions converge—namely the rise of neoliberalism; fifth, discuss how the university functions as a primary site for integrating institutional concepts that not only coincide with the politics of mixed race, but also function in the interest of both state and capital; sixth, provide a rationale for why California's system of higher education, particularly UCB and UCLA, is an ideal location for interrogating the category of mixed race; and lastly I conclude with a discussion of the projects methods and broader contributions to the field of American studies and critical ethnic studies.

On Mixed Race Terminologies

This project invokes the term *mixed* race while maintaining that this concept and its implicit binary opposite—racial purity—is a biological myth. While the concept of race has no scientifically inherent bases, the social construction of both race and mixed race carry with them substantive meaning with material effects. That is, these categories are imbued with social and cultural meaning, often based on physical

appearance, to categorize and organize bodies within a hierarchical structure, whereby certain racialized bodies are disproportionately exposed to violence.

Cultural geographer Minelle Mahtani describes the difficulties in identifying a specific meaning of mixed race, arguing, "There can be no agreement about what constitutes mixed race in a global arena because *mixed race cannot be pinned down to a single sematic definition. It can be understood only by relating its shifting meaning and contours to historically and geographically related processes*" (author's emphasis).[10] Thus, taking into consideration the shift in meaning of mixed race over time and space, this project uses the term specifically in the context of the US multiculturalist era—particularly during the 1990s and early 2000s—to describe, first, an embodied identity, and second, a structuring ideology. In regards to the former point, mixed race indicates those individuals who self-identify (either publicly or privately) with two or more races, and sometimes influenced by possessing racially ambiguous physical features.[11] The term's latter conceptualization understands mixed race as a signifier for cultural ideas and beliefs about racial mixture—both as a form of interracial intimacy and as producing a category of racial difference.[12]

Throughout this project, I also use mixed race interchangeably with "multiracial." Both terms are commonly used to denote the same concept, although multiracial has been used more often to refer to constituencies seeking state recognition of identities associated with racial mixture—i.e. the "multiracial

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[10] Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 31.
[11] See Kerry Rockquemore, David L. Brunsma, and Joe R. Feagan, *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 2008), 57,67, 89.
[12] Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 1.

movement" (not the "mixed race movement").[13] Thus, following African American

studies scholar Jared Sexton, when referring to the concept of "multiracialism," I

mean "initiatives of the multiracial movement…and the media discourse about 'race

mixture' in contemporary culture and society."[14] While all these concepts are not new

within a national or global context, the emergence of contemporary mixed race

identity in the US is part of a set of historically situated processes coming from

intersecting political, social, cultural, and academic fronts. This is in keeping with

sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant's pioneering theory of racial

formation, which outlines how "racial meanings pervade US society, extending from

the shaping of individual racial identities to the structuring of collective political

action on the terrain of the state."[15] In this way, mixed race and multiracialism refers

to the convergence of personal identity and the broader thoughts, attitudes, and

collectivities that either challenge or endorse these ontological formations.

The Politics of Recognition: The Rise of Multiracialism and Mixed Race Studies

The "multiracial movement" emerged in the 1990s as constituents largely made up of

self-identified mixed race individuals, parents of multiracial children, and some

political conservatives sought to achieve official state recognition of mixed race

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[13] Mixed race and multiracial seem to be widely accepted as interchangeable terms, or at least encompass enough people that identify with one or the other for each to have significant meaning. For example, in June of 2015, Pew Research Center conducted a wide scale project titled, "Multiracial in American: Proud, Diverse, and Growing in Number," which used consistently used both terms.
[14] Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes,* 1.
[15] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge), 6.

identity.[16] Mixed race people alongside their interracial families sought to counter

historical tropes of the "tragic mulatta/o," arguing that mixed race subjects

represented self-assured people with complex identities that did not fit the nation's

current racial schema.[17] These advocates argued that racially mixed individuals

should be granted the right to publicly identify with all parts of their racial heritage

rather than be forced to choose between them. Those in support of the institutional

recognition of mixed race people believed that officially acknowledging this growing

population ultimately signaled a "new racial frontier," which represented a state-

sanctioned rejection of the long-standing one-drop rule—the idea that anyone who

was believed to possess "one-drop" of black blood was considered singularly Black.[18]

Public policy scholar Kim Williams' *Mark One or More: Civil Rights in*

Multiracial America and sociologist Kimberly McClain DaCosta's *Making*

Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line, both

offer a political and cultural account of the rise of contemporary multiracialism in the

US. Williams' text narrates how multiracial organizations, largely made up of white

mothers advocating on behalf of their multiracial children, sought and achieved state

recognition of mixed race identity during the 1990s. Multiracial organizations such as

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[16] Political Conservative and former house-speaker Newt Gingrich was perhaps the most prominent figure in support of officially acknowledging the multiracial population. For a detailed discussion of Gingrich's role in the multiracial movement see, Kim M. Williams, *Mark One or More: Civil Rights In Multiracial America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 54-58.

[17] The trope of the tragic mulatto as represented in American literature is a racially mixed subject, usually a woman, who by failing into fit into the "white world" and "black world" meets a tragic ending—generally through social isolation and/or death. See, Robert W. Pineda-Volk, "Exploring the 'Tragic Mulatto' Stereotype Through Film History, *National Social Science Journal* 28.1 (2007);

[18] For scholarly discussions concerning the historical significance of the one-drop rule, see Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Scott Leon Washington, "Hypodescent: A History of the Crystallization of the One Drop Rule in the United States, 1880-1940 (Dissertation, Princeton University, 2011); Daniel J. Sharfstein, "Crossing the Color Line: Racial Migration and the One-Drop Rule," *Minnesota Law Review* 91.3 (February 2007), 592-656.

the Association of Multi-Ethnic Americans (AMEA) and Project RACE demanded the 2000 U.S. Census and other federal and state governmental forms allow individuals the opportunity to racially self-identify with more than one race.[19] While AMEA and Project RACE held varying positions regarding the precise method for doing so—the former favored an option to "mark one or more" racial category, while the latter, more politically conservative organization, advocated for a stand-alone "multiracial" option—the fundamental terms upon which the multiracial movement rested was to the challenge the current system of racial classification. By creating a strong constituency of mixed race people, these organizations expanded their claims that they represented a unified community who deserved social recognition.[20] Preeminent mixed race advocate and psychologist, Maria P. P. Root, argued, "Although not all individuals or groups representing U.S. multiracial communities are unified in their solutions, almost all agree that opening the dialogue about multiracial category for federal and state government racial classifications may be a way of dismantling racial constructions."[21] However the "dismantling of racial constructions" was not a means toward an explicitly political end, but rather for most it was an attempt to simply remove the stigma around racially blended families by achieving broader recognition and acceptance.

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[19] Kim M. Williams (2006) & Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line*, (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007). G. Reginald Daniel, *More than Black?: Multiracial Identity and the New Racial Order* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001). These authors provide a detailed description of the various multiracial organizations throughout the 1990s as well as their political differences.

[20] The 2000 U.S. Federal Census would eventually employ the option supported by AMEA, which officially marked the first time individuals would be allowed racially *self*-identify with one *or more* racial category at the federal level. Williams (2007) provides an in-depth break down of the ideological differences among a variety of multiracial organizations regarding this decision.

[21] Root, "Introduction," *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*. Ed. by Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), xxiv.

DaCosta's project examines the multiple factors that influenced the emergence of contemporary multiracials outside of just policy, of which include market forces as well as familial relations. In the context of family, she suggests that while organizations like AMEA and Project RACE focused on state classification, the majority of self-identifying multiracial people remained relatively uninvolved in the movement. DaCosta argues, "of greater concern to them was providing social support to interracial families and mixed race people and generating public awareness and acceptance of their families. For most of them, some form of official acknowledgement of their mixed racial background was important only to the extent that it seemed to acknowledge their interracial families."[22] In other words, if contesting the state's current system of racial classification would provide mixed race people and their families legitimacy within the public sphere, then multiracial people would support the movement, while still remaining relatively detached from active participation. Therefore, for many of the vocal supporters of mixed race recognition throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the movement's success ultimately meant the legitimatization and validation of mixed race identities and experiences.

Beyond official mixed race organizations and interracial families, both popular and academic literature about multiracial identity also contributed to the legitimization and substantiation of this population. Amidst the pervasiveness of multicultural discourse throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the publishing of mixed race memoirs mushroomed during this same period. For example, Gregory Howard Williams' *Life on the Color Line: The Story of A White Boy Who Discovered He was Black* (1996); James McBride's *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute*

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[22] Dacosta, *Making Multiracials*, 14.

to His White Mother (1997); Rebecca Walker's *Black, White and Jewish:*

Autobiography of a Shifting Self (2002), just to name a few, all represented writers

unsettling normative categories of race in an effort to either explicitly or implicitly

make room for the presence of mixed race identity. Between these various texts

readers are told stories of a black man honoring his white mother; a white boy who in

an instant becomes black; and how the racial self is constantly "shifting." Many of

these memoirs found their way on bestseller lists in the US, suggesting at the very

least a growing interest in discussions of mixed race identity.[23]

Furthermore, academic concern over contemporary mixed race issues

proliferated during this same time. African American studies scholar Jayne

Ifekwunigwe's comprehensive anthology, *"Mixed Race" Studies: A Reader* indexes

the historical trajectory of the intellectual study of mixed race, locating the fields'

emphasis on contemporary multiracial identity politics firmly within 1990s. While

Ifekwunigwe identifies the first phase of mixed race studies as beginning in the 19th

century Victorian period—comprising of a series of pseudoscientific efforts to

pathologize racial hybridity—the emergence of the second phase in the

multiculturalist era is characterized as a celebratory project seeking to reverse

stigmatization perpetuated by the first. Edited collections by Root, namely *Racially*

Mixed People in America (1992) and *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), are widely

considered to set the foundational arguments of the field. For Root, essentialist

notions of race hinder the recognition of mixed race identity, merely perpetuating

both pathology of mixed race people and ultimately supporting racial hierarchies. As

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[23] The publishing and success of these memoirs hint at the growing popularity and intrigue of the mixed race experience. For instance both Gregory Howard Williams' *Life on the Color Line* and James McBride's *The Color of Water* were national bestsellers.

a response, state recognition would serve as a step in the right direction to remedy these issues.

Just as discussions around racial identity, recognition, and state classification framed public debate around multiracialism, these are also foundational elements to what I refer to as *classical* mixed race studies. "Classical" mixed race studies, I suggest, represents the early contemporary literature on racially mixed people and/or issues of multiracialism that is mostly (but not all) produced within the social sciences throughout the 1990s and early part of the new millennium. This literature both in theory and method often emphasizes the lived experience of multiracial subjects, focusing on the agency of mixed race individuals. The foundation of the field is largely based upon scholars' commitment to fleshing out the everyday lives of self-identifying multiracial people. For example, in Roots' *The Multiracial Experience* the authors discuss issues of recognition, identity, and larger sociocultural process by largely revolving around the notion of personal experience. The structure of the book reinforces their emphasis on experience as each contributor opens a new chapter with a short personal narrative revolving around what shapes their complex identities. These brief passages introduce the reader to the authors' social position by briefly sharing a personal moment or revelation that contexualizes their interest in mixed race studies. For instance, outlining a history and critique of the US government's racial classification systems based on hypodescent, mixed race studies scholar and activist Carlos A. Fernandez opens his essay with a brief personal story

about growing up as a dual citizen of the US and Mexico.[24] Focusing on the personal experiences of multiracial people significantly defines the field's methodological priorities as well as its primary arguments regarding race in America.

Many classical mixed race studies scholars who discuss the multiracial experience do so in the context of broader discourses concerning the nation-state. These scholars base their arguments for state recognition of racially mixed people around three primary themes. First, classical mixed race studies suggests that the significant growth of interracial families and their mixed race progeny demand official acknowledgment as they represent the changing racial demographics of the U.S., especially within a post-civil rights context. The 1967 Supreme Court case, *Loving v. Virginia*, which declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional, is frequently cited as *the* watershed moment that sparked a rise in interracial marriage, and thus created what is referred to as the "biracial baby boom."[25] Root suggests, "the contemporary presence of racially mixed people is unmatched in our country's previous history. Interracial families and multiracial individuals are changing the face of America and the meaning and utility of race."[26] She claims the imposition of monoracial categories not only negatively affects mixed race individuals' self-esteem, but also fails to recognize the transformation of the nation's racial makeup.

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[24] Carlos A. Fernandez, "Government Classification of Multiracial/Multiethnic People," in Root (ed.) *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Border as the New Frontier* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications), 15.
[25] While Maria Root (1996) is among the first to coin the phrase "biracial baby boom" to indicate the growth of multiracial people within the U.S. as a result of the supreme court case *Loving v. Virginia* (1967)—officially decriminalizing interracial marriage in all US states—many other authors attribute this Supreme Court case as drastically impacting the growth of the mixed race population in America. See Spickard (1989), Brown & Douglass (1996), Korgen (1999), and Rockquemore (2002).
[26] Root, "Introduction," *The Multiracial Experience*, xiv.

Secondly, classical mixed race studies scholars argue that the public recognition of mixed race people threatens current conceptions of race by bringing to bear its socially constructed nature. Multiracial embodiment becomes a mode of disruption of current racial logics in that distinctive boundaries between races are breached. Historian Paul Spickard challenges the one-drop rule, claiming, "the most illogical part of all this racial categorizing is not that we imagine it is about biology…what is most illogical is that we imagine these racial categories to be exclusive."[27]

Here, Spickard represents classical mixed race studies scholars' attempt to push back against the notion that racial classifications are mutually exclusive in hopes the nation will no longer stigmatize those embodying racial ambiguity. The idea is to use mixed race identity as a political tool for "deconstructing" the nation's normative conception of race. Root argues, "in essence, to name oneself is to validates one's existence and declare visibility. This seemingly simple process is a significant step in the liberation of multiracial persons from the oppressive structure of the racial classification system that has relegated them to the land of 'in-between.'"[28]

Lastly, these scholars suggest that a natural progression from troubling notions of bounded racial categorization is the recognition of mixed race people as embodied representatives for the opposition to legacies of racial hierarchy. Through multiracial people understanding and repositioning themselves within the public

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[27] One drop rule states that any person with "one drop" of black blood (any African ancestry) is considered black. This rule, albeit less strict, has been applied to other groups of color. Paul Spickard, "The Illogic of Racial Categories," in Root (ed.) *Racially Mixed People in America* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 1992), 20.
[28] Maria P. P. Root, "Within, Between, and Beyond Race," in Root (ed.) *Racially Mixed People in America*, 7.

sphere, classical mixed race studies asserts the nation, in a similar gesture, would not only move away from current understandings of race, but also reorient itself toward a "progressive" approach to combating racial inequity. In G. Reginald Daniel's *More than Black: Multiracial Identity and the New Racial Order*, he distinguishes 19th though mid-20th century conceptions of multiracial identity from a more contemporary formation in the post-Loving era whereby anti-miscegenation laws were federally deemed unconstitutional. For Daniel, whereas the former multiracial identity was akin to racial passing in that it served as a strategic method to evade Blackness and its material realities. This was largely manifested through the creation of multiracial enclaves. Daniel asserts the "new" contemporary mixed race identity represents a more racially inclusive formation that equally embraces *both* black *and* white racial backgrounds. Daniel's "both/and" model of contemporary mixed race idea functions as disorganizing mechanism meant to trouble normative racial formations.

Ultimately, it is believed the most significant opposition to *racism* is an assault on the concept of *race*, which for these scholars, begins with the public recognition of mixed race. In other words, for many classical mixed race studies scholars, the positive development emerging from contemporary mixed race identity refers to the anticipated impact against racial oppression. Naomi Zack argues that in the context of devaluation of human subjects based upon race, racial ascriptions become just as damaging as racial oppression. She asserts, "such racial designations limit individuals in their subjectivities, even when they take up the designations themselves, about themselves. The mythology about race which underlies racial

devaluations and racial designations is evident in the language of race that is used in the United States."[29] Consequently, the entrance of mixed race as a legitimated identity into the public sphere will eventually give rise to an American universalism that ultimately breaks down racial hierarchies. This is perhaps best illustrated by a popular belief—particularly in the context of either discussions of the rise in interracial marriages or US immigration—that "one day we'll all be mixed."[30]

However, in the 1990s through the turn of the 21st century some scholars were cautious of the role mixed race identity played within the US nation-state. Certain classical mixed race studies literature is optimistically wary about the social impact of the racially mixed subject. While public recognition of mixed race people is still of significant interest for these scholars, they self-reflexively consider the implications of the field in particular, and multiracialism more broadly, within a larger sociocultural context. For example, sociologist Ann Morning cautions mixed race studies and others against considering mixed race people as representatives of a "*new racial frontier*." She argues this forgets the ways in which mixed race people have always been apart of racial discourse within the Unites States. Morning claims, "by obscuring the historic dimensions of American multiraciality—emphasizing its newness but not its oldness—we may run the risk of ignoring lessons that past racial

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[29] Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 167.

[30] As an example of this phrase, one might look to former President Bill Clinton's response to claims that he was "one heck of a stand-in for the first black president." At a Memphis campaign for Hilary Clinton on February 12, 2016, he responded, "I'm happy to do that, but you know what else we learned from the human genome? We learned that unless your ancestors, every one of you, are 100 percent, 100 percent from sub-Saharan Africa, *we are all mixed-race people*." Willa Frej, "Bill Clinton Says 'We are All Mixed Race,' *Huffington Post*, February 15, 2016, accessed March 1, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bill-clinton-mixed-race_us_56c1cf6ce4b0c3c55051de41. example of understanding race as individualized biological category, albeit historicized. Rather than a structural position determined by social forces that

stratification offers for understanding today's outcomes."[31] Morning goes on to historically situate mixed race people by discussing the multiple ways they have been of social and political concern among US census takers, scientists, and social scientists; arguing these debates must be looked to and amended for the future development of mixed race politics.

Alongside concerns over the lack of attention paid to the historical legacies of mixed race identity, others have raised uneasiness over the perception of mixed race studies scholars' support of public recognition, particularly in the context of civil rights advancements. That is, some classical scholars express concern that the field represents an academic tool to invoke rhetoric of a post-racial society. Sociologist and Asian American Studies scholar Cynthia L. Nakashima recalls her personal run-ins with what she notices as the increasing presence of multiracials within popular culture, stating, "my first reaction is always to worry that, again, we will be portrayed either as the final hope for assimilation (e.g. *Time* magazine's special issues, Fall 1993, on "The New Face of America") or as an evil force set out to destroy the gains made by people of color."[32] Here Nakashima, although optimistic about the field's potential to interrogate the complexities of racial formation, remains wary of proclaiming the category of mixed race as the primary threat to America's racial logics. In order to avoid such claims, she suggests a system of "checks and balances" must be put in place among what she categorizes as three dominant discourses

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[31] Ann Morning,. "New Faces, Old Faces: Counting the Multiracial Population Past and Present." in *New Faces in a Changing America: Multiracial Identity in the 21st Century*, edited by Herman DeBose and Loretta Winters (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2002), 41.

[32] Cynthia L. Nakashima, "Voices from the Movement: Approaches to Multiraciality," in Root (ed.) *The Multiracial Experience*, 79-80. The cover of the 1993 issue of *Time* magazine featured a computer-generated woman mixed with several races. The image of a phenotypically white woman was framed as a representation of the "New Face of America" in the context of the nations growing "multicultural society" as a result of increased immigration.

circulating the field—those looking for inclusion in "'traditional' racial and ethnic communities," those forming a legitimated multiracial community, and those working against normative racial categorization by "creat[ing] connections across communities."[33] Nakashima argues that implementing such "checks and balances" will prevent the field from perpetuating racial mixedness as either the solution to racial hierarchy or the source of the nation's continued racial injustices.

Finally, certain mixed race studies scholars mention how the field, in an attempt to capture the lived experiences of the mixed race community, must be attuned to how the concept of mixed race might work to re-inscribe normative articulations of race. Specifically, the fields' language nullifies its transformative objective by perpetuating discourses of racial purity through the very notion of *mixed* race. Literary scholar Caroline Streeter argues the field must remain aware of how the invocation of the multiracial community, in an effort to challenge traditional conceptions of racial "purity," may be complicit with, or at least limited by, language.[34] While not fleshing out the complexities of this dilemma, Streeter encourages mixed race studies to attend to such contradictions within in its scholarship in order to contribute to a comprehensive critique of the social and cultural significance of mixed race identities, and its broader impact on race and racisms.

Despite these few noteworthy scholars positioning themselves slightly outside of the primary mode with which classical mixed race studies operates, they still remain optimistic regarding mixed race subjects' contemporary significance within

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[33] Ibid., 81.
[34] Caroline Streeter, "Ambiguous Bodies: Locating Black/White Women in Cultural Representations," in Root (ed.) *The Multiracial Experience* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 320.

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both academic and larger cultural discourses. The establishment of the classical element of mixed race studies during the 1990s and early 2000s, including those optimistically wary, largely understand the recognition of multiracials as signifying their recovery from representing marginal and tragic figures. Ultimately, the early iteration of the field is defined by its concerns around the changing demographics in the U.S., identifying the socially constructed nature of race, and identifying mixed race identity as a viable category to challenge racial inequity. The emphasis on recognition and visibility are certainly in line with dominant discourses that appear in a range of minoritatian positions during the post-1960s era. Consequently, the next section discusses how multiracialism and the growth of scholarly work concerning mixed race is constituted by a set of complex historical relations, including debates about racial hybridity in the antebellum period, development of (neo)liberal economic policies, and civil rights era identity movements.

Mixed Race Timelines

The propagation of mixed race identity and the rise of academic exploration concerning racially mixed people was built around complex relations of power and resistance. Some situate its logical formations primarily within the context of the civil rights movement, while others locate and examine mixed race and its legacies during the period of US chattel slavery. While these two timelines are certainly not considered mutually exclusive, the latter considers the role of mixed race as fundamental to the birth of the nation, while the former observes its significance in the context of US racial reformations post-1960s. The differing contexts and timelines

for which contemporary mixed race is scrutinized signals how the category serves as just one illustration of the genealogical continuity with which mixed race appears within national conciseness. And so as proponents of the multiracial movement throughout the 1990s often suggested that the desire for state recognition was about the *personal* right to racially self-identify—having little to do with larger questions of political economy, or in some cases, politics at all—this very claim actually represented a racial politics entrenched in the ongoing logic of liberal individualism.[35]

Recalling both DaCosta and Williams' interrogation of the political and cultural processes by which mixed race people collectively organize, both authors cite the civil rights era as facilitating the emergence of multiracials into the public sphere.[36] The passing of civil rights legislation throughout the 1960s placed a fundamental importance of racial statistics and data in order to track institutional discrimination (e.g. residential segregation, income disparities, mortality rates). Social programs built around state-sponsored racial categories put greater emphasis on racial *self*-identification. DaCosta asserts, "In such a climate, the imperative of 'knowing' one's racial identity membership was heightened" as tracking this data was to provide the necessary measuring stick with which to identify the effectiveness of civil rights legislation.[37]

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[35] For example, "conservative" multiracial activist, Nathan Douglas attempts to detach questions of identity from a discussion of politics. He claims, "I never perceived the [multiracial] movement to be about political identity anyway, internally or externally. It was an individual identity movement. That's idealistic perhaps, but to me it was about something much grander than the crass nature of politics" ("The Multiracial Movement: An Uncomfortable Political Fit," *The Multiracial Activist*, 30 September 2003, http://multiracial.com/site/content/view/414/27/).

[36] Williams, *Mark One or More: Civil Rights in Multiracial America* & Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line*.

[37] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 14.

Moreover, the mid to late 1960s not only meant increased minoritarian demands for social and economic equality, but also the expression of racial pride among Black Americans and other groups of color. DaCosta asserts the Black Power movement, particularly Black Nationalist discourse beginning in the mid-1960s, would come to significantly contribute to the proliferation of mixed race people into the cultural mainstream. The affirmation of racial and/or ethnic pride initiated greater emphasis on notions of racial authenticity and "self-realization," which ultimately raised the stakes over issues of identity and group loyalty. It is argued this call for group cohesion amongst communities of color, particularly the Black community, in conjunction with increased pressure to gather racial data, created the climate from which mixed race people would form a collective identity in the multiculturalist era.

Williams emphasizes, "multiracial activists of the 1980s and 1990s did not reinvent the wheel of protest; instead, they creatively adapted and reinterpreted the tactics, ideologies, and legal outcomes available to them."[38] Taken together, DaCosta and Williams suggest the combination of racial inauthenticity and the increased emphasis on racial data collection served as the primary recipe for "making multiracials" in the last decade of the 20th century. Thus, according to Williams, "multiracial activists drew shrewdly on civil rights symbolism yet cast themselves as more progressive than the so-called progressives."[39] Habiba Ibrahim offers another example of the ways in which mixed race advocates have reinterpreted these earlier civil rights movements through an increased emphasis on folding the political into the

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[38] Williams, *Mark One or More*, 7.
[39] Ibid.,7.

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private sphere.[40] She asserts that while a significant feminist analytic from the sixties and seventies frames mixed race discourse—"the personal is political"—multiracialism implicitly weakens feminist thought by reorganizing this central analytic into the idea that "the political is private."[41]

However, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" does not assume contemporary multiracialism was simply born out of a perversion of leftist principles during the civil rights era, but rather operates under the premise that mixed race politics are constitutive of state power *both* during and prior to the civil rights era. Cultural historian Tavia Nyong'o discusses the enduring relationship between state power and the politics of mixed race in *Amalgamtion Waltz: Race, Performance and the Ruses of Memory*. He argues that the strategic uses of racial hybridity as a method for endorsing US national promises of racial transcendence is "not just the effect of recent pre- and postmillennial effusions…[but] was already visible, for instance, during the antebellum struggle to abolish slavery."[42] For Nyong'o, the sustained appearance of racial hybridity in the national imagination demonstrates how the mixed race figure has *always* been fundamental to the genealogy of race and racism, rather than an inherent resolution or hindrance to it.[43]

Likewise, African American studies scholar Jared Sexton argues in *Amalgamation Schemes: Anti-blackness and the Critique of Multiracialism*, that the political significance of contemporary multiracialism is not uniquely linked to post-civil rights identity politics. Rather, Sexton underscores how the ebb and flow of the

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[40] Ibrahim, *Troubling the Family,* 14-15
[41] Ibid., 14-15
[42] Nyong'o, *Amalgamation* Waltz, 9-10.
[43] Ibid.,174.

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color line has largely relied on "the inverse historical relation between white supremacy's tolerance for multiracial formations and the relative strength of black liberation struggle."[44] For instance, he notes the occasional acceptance of "mulattos" as an available social identity during the era of chattel slavery, whereby mixed race populations (both slave and free) served as a "buffer" class between whites and Blacks, who often worked cooperatively with antiblackness. Conversely, historical moments with a strong presence of movements for Black liberation, such flexibility in the color line became less available. The one-drop rule was more strictly enforced, and thus Blackness appeared again as a broad spectrum.[45] It is from this historical formulation, Sexton suggests, that contemporary multiracialism emerges. More precisely, in the context of expanding anti-black racism during the post-civil rights multiculturalist era (e.g. re-segregation and mass incarceration), mixed race identity is legitimated as a social category working in the service of white supremacy.

Thus, whether charted within the post-civil rights era or the antebellum period, these timelines of contemporary mixed race demonstrate the ways multiracialism is deeply imbricated in larger nationalist projects. In this way, we might understand historical dynamics that do not explicitly name the category of mixed race (or even the concept of racial mixture more generally) as still contributing to the fundamental logics that underwrite contemporary multiracialism. That is, if we recognize the presence of mixed race as nothing new to the historical landscape of the

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[44] Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*,12.
[45] Ibid. Sexton notes the antebellum era and beginning of the Reconstruction period as specific moments of the resurgence of white supremacy whereby "black and mulattos [were pressed] into a relatively common category" (13). He notes such conflations of Blackness never erased class and color distinctions within the black community, but rather mediated these differences in the context of legal segregation and the institution of lynching.

US—just various formulations of racial mixture during different moments—

seemingly unrelated cultural, economic, and political relations help to understand the

ascendancy of contemporary understandings of mixed race. Consequently, this

project considers neoliberalism's rise during the post-war period as another

explanatory historical moment for contemporary iterations of mixed race. More

precisely, I consider the ways national (and global) discourses emerging from post-

WWII provide a specific vocabulary that would come to appeal to contemporary

mixed race identity in the 1990s.

Racial Liberalism in the US Post-War Period

Scholarly research on neoliberalism provides an economic, political, and cultural

landscape historicizing a cultural logic from which contemporary mixed race identity

takes shape. Scholars such as David Harvey, Lisa Duggan, and Henry Giroux, among

many others explain how neoliberalism is committed to creating an economic

structure that is driven by the expansion of the free market through deregulation,

emphasis on private property rights, and upward distribution of resources.[46] These

neoliberal economic practices facilitate a cultural and political transformation that

adheres to an ideology of ever-increasing privatization. Valuable to these discussions

is the field's commitment to pursuing the complex relationship between the global

economy and cultural politics. Specifically, much of the work done on neoliberalism

(particularly within cultural studies) considers the interconnectedness of economic

policies and identity politics through the growth of privatization. This expansion of

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[46] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005);
Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on American Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).

the private sphere is central to my examination of mixed race in the context of the university.

Upon entering the Cold War, the nation's new rhetoric of racial equality would coincide with growing economic policies that promoted market individualism.[47] Jodi Melamed argues "the suturing of liberal antiracism to U.S. nationalism, which manages, develops, and depoliticizes capitalism by collapsing it with Americanism, results in a situation where 'official' antiracist discourse and politics actually limit awareness of global capitalism."[48] As racial liberalism in the US facilitated an "official" endorsement of antiracism, it concealed the nation's investments in the exploitative nature of global capitalism.[49] Struggles against and competition with communist and fascist governments created a backlash against economic state intervention within the US.

This move demonstrated a commitment to creating an economic structure driven by the expansion of the free market through economic deregulation, an emphasis on private property rights, and the upward distribution of resources. Lisa Duggan suggests neoliberal policies represented an effort to compete in the growing global marketplace by pushing for pro-business activism and re-privatized both the economy and civil society.[50] The state's involvement becomes limited to the policing and protection of privatized rights, ensuring that markets are functioning properly and creating them where they do not currently reside (e.g. health care, education,

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[47] Ibid., 3.
[48] Ibid., 6.
[49] Melamed, "Spirit of Neoliberalism," *Social Text* 89 (Winter 2006), 2.
[50] Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?*

land/property, *identities*, etc.).[51] Instead of a being understood as a political project benefiting the world's wealthiest class, the global embrace—and coercion—of neoliberal ideology extended the belief in the utopian possibilities of international liberal capitalism everywhere and for everyone.[52] Neoliberalism was an alluring ideological transaction of sorts—the buying and selling of a dream that upheld deregulation and increased privatization as the most effective way to open up economic and cultural possibilities.

Given the context of the postwar period, the nation's pursuit of global domination would first have to confront the fact that the spread of transnational capitalism would require an alternative management of "surplus populations." In the context of the postwar era, racial liberalism served as a state-sponsored "struggle" against racial inequity that provided the necessary opening for neoliberal economic policies to take hold—predominately the benefiting the interests of the US and global elites. Although the state inherited a discourse of antiracism, U.S. capital accumulation driven by neoliberal principles would adhere to white heteronormative logic. Market individualism, privatization, and increased deregulation would now be enabled by rhetoric of abstract equality. Hence, for racial liberalism to fully transform U.S. hegemony, it had to concurrently address both the political economy as well as cultural politics.

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[51] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.
[52] Ibid.,Harvey suggests that the allure of neoliberalism lied in its expansion would impact the globe equally. He writes, "neoliberalization has not been very effective in revitalizing global capital accumulation, but it has succeeded remarkably well in restoring, or in some instances (as in Russia and China) creating, the power of an economic elite. The theoretical utopianism of neoliberal argument has…primarily worked as a system of justification and legitimation for whatever needed to be done to achieve this goal." (19).

Fundamental to the incorporation of official US antiracism was racial liberalism's ability blur—not fix—traditional racial hierarchies. Distinguishing between privileged and stigmatized racialized bodies became increasingly difficult as the criteria upon which hierarchical value was ascribed to these bodies (i.e. skin color) no longer followed normative racial structure. Literary scholar Jodi Melamed emphasizes, "introducing flexibility into white supremacist ascriptions of privilege solely on the basis of phenotype or racial descent, racial liberalism overlaid conventional white/black racial categories with alternate criteria for distinguishing privilege and stigma arising from a liberal model of *race as culture*" (my emphasis).[53] As the boundaries between stigmatized and privileged became distorted in relation to normative racial formations, white *racial* supremacy could be replaced with American *cultural* superiority. Latin American studies scholar George Yùdice discusses "culture-as-resource," to suggests nations, institutions and individuals all invest in culture as it helps to reinforce civil society, and ultimately provides political and economic dividends.[54] U.S. neoliberal cultural politics became a resourceful tool to perpetuate the idea of American universality whereby access to privilege was believed to be individualistically determined. Consequently, the state (de)regulates racial difference by hiding it behind a veil of American national culture represented by a supposed universal national subject. Despite culture taking the place of race within racial liberal discourse, racism remains fully functional—even as the nation engages in actions that are seemingly not about race or even appear as antiracist.[55]

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[53] Melamed, "Spirit of Neoliberalism," 6.
[54] George Yùdice, *The Expediency of Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 1.
[55] Ibid., 4.

Emerging from this national paradigm is the establishment of neoliberal multiculturalism.[56] This phenomenon acts as an ongoing development borrowing its logical foundations from postwar racial liberalism and transplanting it into the 1980s and 1990s—the era of ever-increasing economic deregulation and globalization. Continuing to sever economic interests from a critique of racial inequity, superficial diversity came to justify cultural—and economic—U.S. superiority. Since the efforts to democratize higher education in the post-WWII era, the university has played a key role in shaping U.S. public commitments to the ideals of diversity and equality by serving as a central location for the recognition and management of racial identities. Thus, by the 1990s multiculturalism in the classroom specifically and academic institutions more generally served as a hotly debated topic. Often contestations over the expansion and retrenchment of redistributive rights would take place within the space of the university. The role of contemporary mixed race identity is no exception to this long history.

University: A Mixed Race Training Ground

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" takes note of the conceptual relationship between mixed race subjectivity and the (neo)liberal university—both are impacted by notions of privatization, and also name and disavow racial difference through the concept of "diversity." I consider these parallels as integral to and a consequence of,

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[56] Melamed, "Spirit of Neoliberalism," 7. Here Melamed remarks that neoliberal multiculturalism "sutures official antiracism to state policy in a manner that hinders the calling into question of global capitalism, it produces new privileged and stigmatized forms of humanity, and it deploys a normative cultural model of race…as a discourse to justify inequality for some as fair or natural." We might understand neoliberal multiculturalism another descriptive term for the process by which minority difference becomes institutionalized in various structural contexts. (7). For a more comprehensive discussion see, *Represent and Destroy* (2011).

at least in part, the genealogy of the institutionalization of minority difference. In this way, this project asserts that the national significance of contemporary mixed race is deeply imbricated in the cultural, political and economic development beginning post-World War II, but especially taking root the post-1960s university. Roderick Ferguson argues in *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* that during the 1960s both state and economy looked to the U.S. academy as the principal training site for effective procedures on the representation and regulation of minority difference. "Put plainly, it would attempt to resolve the contradictions that govern and constitute the nation-state" by reconstituting revolutionary movements into discourses of "minority autonomy," "self-determination," and "freedom."[57] Thus, the US academy during this period not only served as a critical site of racial contestation, but also was central for creating an adaptive model for managing racial difference. In this way, the university served as a significant site for integrating institutional concepts taken from liberation movements, which were digestible to and in the interest of both state and capital.

What manifested was a university system that embraces an ideology of US diversity through a type of liberal individualism that disavows race consciousness. Christopher Newfield's *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (2008) notes how the postwar expansion of the university was severed by an ongoing economic assault on the university through the withdrawal of public funds and turning higher education into a privatized and corporatized institution, which created dire consequences for university racial politics. University-related issues of economic efficiency, admissions, and democracy were seen as

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[57] Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*, 27-28.

conflicting with "race conscious social policies" and thus were reversed and/or rejected.[58] He argues, "diversity was the pivotal concept through which college–educated middle classes could officially reject racism and yet tolerate, even perpetuate, racism's traditional symptom, racial inequality."[59] In this way, the university has played a key role in shaping US public commitments to the ideals of diversity and equality, and functions as a central location for the recognition and management of racial identities. Thus, if higher education functions as the "prime instrument of national purpose," as suggested by former UCB President Clark Kerr, then examining the ways the category of mixed race has been utilized as a component to that apparatus, particularly around the turn of the century.[60]

When the U.S. federal government began tracking *self*-identified mixed race people in 2000, a considerable number of this population was under the age of eighteen.[61] Over the past decade these young people have become college-aged, and their presence within the university—in conjunction with popular discourses of mixed race—has potentially impacted racial discourses on these campuses. Yet, much of the research on mixed race in the context of the university has primarily focused on questions of identity development, institutional support, and interpersonal relationships on campus. Kristen Renn's *Mixed Race Students in College* examines mixed race students' experiences with their college peers, focusing on how a variety of identity patterns emerge amongst this population. Based within similar social

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[58] Ibid., 12. The rolling back of Affirmative Action policies is perhaps the best example of this. California is perhaps a landmark example of race conscious policies effectively banned by portraying such redistributive methods, ironically, as a threat to democracy and equality.
[59] Ibid., 114.
[60] Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 66.
[61] Kristen A. Renn, *Mixed Race Students in College: The Ecology of Race, Identity, and Community on Campus* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 1.

science literature, Renn's project examines the social, historical, and cultural context of mixed race only as far as it impacts her respondents' personal identity decisions and experiences on campus. Similarly, Andrew Garrod and Robert Kilkenny's *Mixed* centers on personal experiences, focusing on twelve multiracial college students with each chapter featuring one student sharing their life story in their own words. Also, France Windance Twine's essay, "Brown Skin White Girls: Class, Culture and the Construction of White Identity in Suburban Communities," draws on interviews with sixteen young, mixed race African decent women to explore the role of material privilege and residential segregation in the making of racial identity. Twine emphasizes the accessibility of white identity to non-European individuals as well as the fluidity with which this identity transitions and disappears in the context of the university space (i.e. UC Berkeley). I find Twine's discussion of the role of the college environment important in laying the foundation for indexing the relationship between mixed race and the university.

However, I diverge from this aforementioned literature, as this project is less concerned with the individual identity development of mixed race students and more concerned with how the category of mixed race travels through the university, imbricated in institutional politics of admissions data, student organizing, and disciplinary formation. Research engaging in a cultural critique of mixed race within the space of the university has been minimal at best, although this is not to say humanistic discussions on the subject are entirely absent. The preface to Ralina Joseph's *Transcending Blackness* (2013) talks of her own undergraduate participation in a multiracial student group at Brown University. However this functions only as

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entry point into her broader critique of the politics of mixed race. African American Studies scholar Rainier Spencer, literary scholar Michele Elam, Mahtani, Sexton, among others all levy criticisms against the academic scholarship of mixed race studies, asserting that the field lacks any serious discussion of material inequities based on race (see Chapter 3).[62] Yet, these authors all choose to leave the classroom in favor of other analytical sites. "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity," on the other hand, identifies the US academy, largely but not exclusively focusing on UCB and UCLA, as a salient site to examine how mixed race identity has functioned as a category of intellectual, administrative, and cultural concern. Doing so presents the strategic ways racial liberalism operates in and through mixed race to uphold institutional preoccupations with privatization and individualization—key principles underlying US nationalisms. Specifically, by focusing on UCB and UCLA, this project identifies the importance of California to larger national debates concerning economy, racial policy, and mixed race discourses.

California at the Frontlines of Mixed Race Debate

California's political, economic, and cultural standing in the US serves as a "model and antimodel for the nation and sometimes the world."[63] That is, the states relatively large economy and diverse population makes California in many ways an ideal testing ground to explore a variety of economic, political, and cultural strategies for the rest of the nation to learn from. This includes learning the ways neoliberal policies

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[62] Sexton (2008); Michelle Elam, *Souls of Mixed Folks: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011); Rainier Spencer, *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011); Minelle Mahtani (2014).
[63] Peter Schrag, *California: America's High Stakes Experiment* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 1.

operates within the state. Thus, as the post-industrial and technological legacies of World War II turned California into a major economic entity, both its financial growth and decline over roughly the past 70 years makes for a useful site to examine its cultural politics. The state's nationally publicized racial and immigration policies, anti-gay legislation, prison and education systems make California a central geographic flashpoint with which to engage broader U.S. discourses.[64] Additionally, when considering the state's racially diverse landscape, it's worthwhile to study broader discourses around national diversity and racial progress. For example, anticipating "the changing face of America," the U.S. continues to track the "minority-majority" status of a variety of states. In 2000 California was at the forefront of this shift, becoming the country's first large state with a white population dropping below fifty percent. However, I would suggest, for the U.S., tracking such statistics appears to be a part of larger ideological constructions. As statistically the first large "minority-majority" state, the U.S. often situates California at the frontier of racial progress—a narrative the country continues to adopt, especially in the age of America's first black (sometimes biracial) President. Put differently, California's racial currents are *made* emblematic of an increasingly diverse and racially progressive country.

This is not to suggest that California is necessarily representative of the entire country. In fact, given its exceptionally large economy and relatively large Asian population—making up just over 14 percent of its population—the state is certainly

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[64] Such controversial policies include Proposition 187 (1994), which banned eligibility to receive public services to undocumented immigrants; Proposition 184 (1994) which increased sentencing for offenders being arrested, charged, and convicted for a third time; Proposition 8 (2008), which put gay and lesbian marriages to a halt. This proposition was later ruled unconstitutional in the Federal Court of Appeals in 2013.

apart from the rest of the US in many ways.[65] Nonetheless, California's large

population size and diverse population make the state an important testing ground for

examining neoliberalism's impact on racial politics. Daniel Martinez Hosang's *Racial

Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* identifies this

popular sentiment, claiming that racial discourses and debates in the state, which

invoke concepts like "tolerance" and "freedom," are constituted by racial liberalism.[66]

In fact, whereas Melamed offers up a theoretical discussion of racial liberalism's

operations, Martinez Hosang provides detailed analysis of numerous ballot initiatives

that helped to both construct and perpetuate racial liberalism within California despite

the state's progressive image. He suggests, "diverse political actors defined the

character of the state [California] as fundamentally forward thinking and open-

minded; a station of perpetual opportunity that had vanquished and disavowed all

trappings of discrimination and prejudice."[67] In this way, a California based study

provides a case with which to interrogate broader discourses of national "diversity"

and racial "progress."

    While terms like "diversity" and "progress" serve as ubiquitous institutional

concepts, mixed race subjects often signify embodied representations of these ideals,

which this dissertation further explicates in the chapters that follow. Understanding

the cultural significance of mixed race makes California an especially significant

location given that approximately 1.8 million self-identified mixed race individuals

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[65] "United States- Asian Population Percentage, 2013, By State," Accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/all-states/asian-population-percentage#chart

[66] Daniel Martinez Hosang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* ((Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 264.

[67] Ibid., 6.

reside in the state—the highest mixed race population in the country.[68] Additionally,

during the height of the multiracial movement, the state held the highest number of

mixed race organizations in the U.S.[69] Given California's diverse racial make-up,

there is also considerable heterogeneity within the broad category of "mixed race."

Using the state's varied mixed race population will also serve as a departure from

studies on mixed race primarily focuses on black/white mixed race people.

Furthermore, the work of Aubrey Douglass provides a helpful history of

higher education in California. In *The California Idea and American Higher

Education: 1850 to the 1960 Master Plan*, Douglass calls public higher education "a

tool of socioeconomic engineering."[70] That is, public universities allow states to

educate and train a local labor market and create a source of economic development

serving the needs of the state. Douglass argues that California refined this process by

creating a structured university system in an effort to reshape the state's society. He

highlights how this model helped to vastly expand California's higher education,

particularly following WWII, as officials prepared for an impending post-war

economic decline in the state. What I find valuable about Douglass' history of the

California university system is its relationship to a larger political and cultural

economy. A relationship that has undergone a change whereby "the consensus that

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[68] U.S. Census Bureau, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010"
http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf (accessed 17 February 2010). According
to the 2010 U.S. Census, 1.8 million mixed race Californians constitutes 4.9 percent of the state's total
population. While this places California at the top in terms of sheer population size, the state ranks 4th
overall in terms of the percentage of mixed race individuals. The states with higher percentages of
mixed race individuals relative to total population are: Hawai'i (24.6%), Alaska (7.3%), and Oklahoma
(5.9%).
[69] According to a study conducted by Kim M. Williams, as of 2000 there were 11 mixed race
organizations in California. See Kim M. Williams, *Mark One or More: Civil Rights in Multiracial
America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
[70] John Aubrey Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education: 1850 to the 1960
Master Plan* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press), 1.

formed in the post-World War II period to fund or expand higher education has dissipated."[71]

California also offers a rich history of identity movements intersecting with academic knowledge production and disciplinary formation. First, California's institutions of higher education have a strong history of activism and student protest. From the Free Speech Movement to Civil Rights struggles to student protests against UC Regents' implementation of anti-affirmative action Special Policy 1, California's higher education system has served as a significant site of political action by its student body.[72]

Secondly, its universities have a rich history around the development of ethnic studies programs. For example, the actions by the Third World Liberation Front helped San Francisco State University (SFSU) become the first institution to establish the School of Ethnic Studies in 1969; UC Berkeley followed by establishing an Ethnic Studies Department. The history of identity politics and attempts to decentralize the university via ethnic studies (along with women's studies, LGBT studies, and gender and sexuality studies) programs in California's higher education system aligns with my investments concerning the politics of mixed race. As mixed race identity and disciplinarity become increasingly intelligible, it is crucial to examine how this is articulated within the university setting. Ultimately California's university system has a significant relationship to a larger political and cultural economy whereby, borrowing from historian John Aubrey Douglass, "the consensus

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[71] Ibid., 16.
[72] University of California Board of Regents implemented Special Policy-1 (SP1) beginning in 1997, which effectively ended Affirmative Action policies at the University of California. Proposition followed, officially amending the state's constitution to ban all affirmative action programs within public institutions, taking effective in 1998.

that formed in the post-World War II period to fund or expand higher education has dissipated."[73]

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" focuses primarily on UCB and UCLA due to their debated commitments to diversity as well as their institutional status as two of the most "elite" of the UC campuses. After the ban on affirmative action, California, particularly its elite school has a persistent problem with the numbers of Black students on campus. For example, "from 1994 to 2010 the percentage of black applicants admitted to the university system dropped to 58 percent from about 75 percent…By comparison 83 percent of white students who applied in 2010 were admitted, along with 85 percent Asians and 76 percent Latinos."[74] These numbers are even direr when considering the UC systems most elite institutions, whereby UCB and UCLA between the same aforementioned period, the black admissions rate went from 51 percent to 15 percent and from 58 percent to 14 percent, respectively.[75]

Newfield emphasizes, "the most selective UC campuses, Berkeley and UCLA, continued to have declining enrollment from underrepresented groups in the 2000s…"[76] I argue that these schools are significant not because of their generalizability to US universities more broadly—they certainly are not—but rather that their importance lies in the ways these schools functions as elite, predominately white institutions that have been impacted by the crisis of diversity, or lack thereof. As these schools continue to implement strategic plans for diversity, uncovering the

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[73] Ibid., 16.
[74] Sharon Bernstein, "Black students lagging in admissions to University of California, *Reuters*, December 5, 2013, accessed April 3, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-california-race-idUSBRE9B504120131206.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, 117.

ways in which mixed race has figured into conversations of diversity, if at all, has largely gone unexamined. Taken as a whole, California and its system of higher education provide an interesting economic, political, and cultural context with which to locate a study of mixed race. California possesses one of the richest historical relationships between state policy and public university systems in the country.[77] Mixed race identity politics and its current development as an academic field demonstrates this interrelatedness between the institutionalization of knowledge production and broader cultural and political discourses circulating the state and nation. Focusing on the UC systems offer a significant opportunity to make interventions within the current discourse of racial mixedness in the U.S.

Mixed Methodologies

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" draws from a diverse archive—including interviews, media and policy debates, administrative documents, and past research mixed race studies—in order glimpse how mixed race operates within three analytical sites of the university: administrative, social and intellectual. As previously mentioned, the methodological divide between social scientific and humanist approaches to issues on contemporary mixed race has largely been held in tact. On the one hand, studies within the social sciences largely examine the role of individual

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[77] With California becoming the first state to designate budget allocations for public university research and its tripartite system (3 sphere of College education) to increase access to its residents, an intimate relationship between state politics and higher education has created an integrated model for the rest of the country to follow. See Aubrey Douglass, *California Idea and American Higher Education: 1850-1960 Master Plan* (Palo Alto: Standford University Press, 2007).

experience through the lens of typological models of identity development.[78]

Sociologists Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunsma's seminal text, *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America* is among the best examples of this type of research. Now in its second edition, the book employs survey data and interviews to examine personal experiences of mixed race individuals, ultimately developing 4 typologies of mixed race identity formation.[79] Studies like this focus on the experiences of mixed race people largely in order to make conclusions about the relationship between these individuals' identity and the broader social and political landscape of race and racism.

On the other hand, humanist scholars generally move from prioritizing personal narratives of racially mixed subjects to examining ideologies that underlie mixed race identity in the context of larger structures of domination through visual and textual analysis. For example, in Michele Elam's *The Souls of Mixed Folks: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium*, she conducts a literary analysis of the work of artists, writers, and performers to not only trace multiracialism's theoretical and political pitfalls, but also how some artistic forms have aesthetically challenged celebratory notions of multiracialism.

It is my hope that "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" can help bridge the methodological gap that largely remains between these humanistic and social scientific approaches to studies on mixed race. As an exception to this divide, gender

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[78] For a comprehensive review on this social scientific approaches on mixed race identity, see Sarah E. Gather, "Mixed Results: Multiracial Research and Identity Explorations, *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 24.2 (2015), 114-119.

[79] Rockquemore and Brunsma's thirty-nine in-depth interviews with undergraduates, along with 177 surveys, the authors divide black/white mixed race individuals into expressing four different identity types: border identity, protean identity, transcendent, and singular. For a detailed description of these typologies see, Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunsma, *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).

and race scholar Jinthana Haritaworn offers a model that successfully weaves together interviews with policy debates, race-based research, popular culture, and other cultural artifacts to discuss the political and cultural significance of discourses concerning racial mixing.[80] Haritaworn grounds a variety of discursive resources (e.g. "global consumer culture, "debates on 'migrant integration,'" and "urban planning discourse") by reading them alongside experiential narratives gathered through qualitative interviews. While this project differs largely in the sense that my broad archive of source material does not span across this dissertation evenly, like Haritaworn, I explore multiple evidential sites where mixed race is constructed and circulated. Consequently, this project draws upon the following: interviews with organizers of mixed race student groups at UCB and UCLA, university admissions policy debates, press releases, marketing strategies, archival materials from the San Francisco State College Strike and Hapa Issues Forum (HIF) collections, mixed race media coverage, and scholarly literature based in mixed race studies. "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" reads these aforementioned resources as texts that both produce and bring to light the discursive and material meaning of mixed race in the context of university politics. In other words, a close reading method grants heuristic power to various articulations of multiracialism, whether they are students' personal experiences, policy or media reports, political cartoons, academic scholarship, and other discursive materials.

My interviews comprised of current and former organizers of the Mixed Student Union (MSU) at UC Berkeley and UCLA to gather first hand accounts of the

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[80] Jinthana Haritaworn, *The Biopoltiics of Mixing: Thai Multiracialitiess and Haunted Ascendancies*, (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2012).

social and political investments of these individual students specifically within the context of the organizations they represented (see Chapter 2). I engaged in in-depth conversations both in person and through video conference calls. I interviewed most of these students on more than one occasion, and recorded and transcribed each of these interactions with the permission of my respondent. My primary interest in talking with these students was less about how they understood their personal identities as much as it was to identify the reasons they were drawn to a multiracial student organization, how they situated MSU in relation to other race-based student organizations, and the ways in which the group navigated racial politics on campus. I was particularly interested in their organizational understanding of diversity and inclusion, and how they imagined the category of mixed race fitting within this discourse.

Here, I would like to acknowledge the role that my own positionality played in the interviews I conducted. While my reluctance to engage in this type of personal conversation emerges out of the frustration with the overemphasis on personal narratives in the context of mixed race discourses, I find it important to make a few comments on the subject in order to reveal the location from which I entered into these interviews as well as read them. As a person with one black parent and one white parent, who identifies as black, I saw myself as simultaneously a racial insider and outsider with my interviewees. While sharing some similar experiences with my participants—the type that come with having parents of different racial backgrounds—I never was drawn to a mixed race student group while in college. This was in large part the reason I became intrigued by the organizational dynamics of

these groups. While I have been quite familiar with the personal stories of mixed race individuals, I was less aware of what factors inspired multiracial students to collectivize on a college campuses, and the politics that surrounded their organizations.

However, I do not claim that my conversations with MSU organizers are generalizable to every mixed race student group. Or, that my interviews necessarily reflect the attitudes and beliefs of each member of these organizations let alone *all* self-identifying mixed race students attending UCB and UCLA. Rather, this project is most interested in how students who chose to organize and spearhead an institutionally sanctioned, mixed race affinity group articulated the role of contemporary mixed race at their respective universities. MSU, like other identity-based student organizations, are an integral component of institutional life on campus, particularly in the multiculturalist era. Thus I view students who decide to organize these groups as just one interpretive mode with which to examine institutional articulations of mixed race at UCB and UCLA.

Concerning Haritworn's interviews with mixed race individuals, she argues, "participants are not merely raw material or sources of prehistorical 'experience,' but active producers of their own interpretations…" In other words, interviewees are active agents in constructing the personal meaning and significance of their narratives, which helps ground the historical and institutional dynamics constituting these experiences. Referencing the opposite side of the same coin, historian Joan Scott challenges the idea that personal experience serves as evidence of the real and of truth for the just the individual. For Scott, experience is *not* "defined as internal;"

or *not* "an expression of an individual's being or consciousness."[81] Rather, Scott

claims that subjects become constituted through experiences rather individually

possessing them. That experience is not "ground-zero" of our explanations, but a

product of historically situated knowledge. Thus, by taking Haritworn and Scott

together, this project understands the significance of experiences mixed race student

organizers as an assemblage of relations at the level of the structural and individual—

i.e. the historical formation (neo)liberalism governance, institutional changes to the

university in the multiculturalist era, and the personal narratives of mixed race

identity in everyday life.

Chapter Outline

In each of the chapters that follow I interrogate the institutionalization of mixed race

in a different area of campus life—the administrative, social, and academic,

respectively. The sequential order with which I present the chapters tacitly reveals the

influence one sphere has upon the next. That is, I begin with the *administrative* sphere

to suggest how policy proposals and debates help fashion the political grammar that

often constitute *social* exchanges amongst the student body. Likewise, the debates

and contestation taking place between the administrative and social spheres of

campus life, consequently become manifested, contested, and institutionalized within

the academic sphere. It is within this framework that this project makes the following

overarching argument: The category of mixed race is representative of and

constituted by the neoliberal university's institutionalization of minority difference.

Through a critique of multiracialism's emphasis on concepts of privatization and self-

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[81] Ibid., 83.

authorship, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" suggests the category of mixed race functions as a manageable category of difference that perpetuates notions of abstract equality.

Chapter 1, Categorically Wrong: Mixed Race Recognition and Color-blind Policy, explores the ways in which mixed race identity has functioned as a valuable category of difference for some University of California (UC) officials—particularly Ward Connerly—to justify supposedly "race blind" policies. I focus on how mixed race students in particular, and multiraciality more generally, was invoked by Connerly and others as a strategic rationale to initially ban the collection of racial data in California's public universities (Proposition 54), and then subsequently to add a "multiracial" option on the UC admissions application (RE-52). Through these attempted policy changes, this chapter examines the administrative expediency of mixed race, suggesting that the category's emphasis on private personhood corresponds with the social and economic logics that underwrite the neoliberal university. Meanwhile, such policy attempts negatively and disproportionately impact access to higher education, particularly for black and brown students. Examining these two policy debates serve as case studies for understanding how the category of mixed race is used to manage racial difference in California's UC system, post-affirmative action.

Chapter 2, Legacy's Preferences: On Mixed Race Student Organizing, employs semi-structured interviews with student organizers of the mixed student union (MSU) at UCB and UCLA, as well as archival materials (Hapa Issues Forum Collection and San Francisco State College Strike Collection), to examine the ways in

which institutionalized notions of racial difference become imbricated in the personal and organizational identity of MSU. This chapter discusses how the neoliberal university's investments in individualism and abstract equality shape the organizational grammar of these student organizers, particularly as mixed race becomes synonymous with the concept of diversity. As such, Chapter 2 interrogates how these mixed race groups have inherited post-civil rights, multiculturalist language that focuses more the recognition of personal identity than structural equality within higher education. By considering the ways these student organizers articulate the values and objectives of MSU, this chapter reveals how engaging in discourses of diversity independent from a structural critique of racism and redistributive justice is a common sense mode with which to approach racial difference, particularly post-1990.

Chapter 3, Academic Disciplined: Mediations on Critical Mixed Race Studies, engages in an intellectual history of the scholarly efforts to institutionalize Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) as a distinct field of inquiry. I assess both the critical and affective undercurrents motivating its development. Scholars continue to reckon with the relationship between their disciplinary projects and the institutions that house them. In this tradition, I examine the field's primary modes of institutionalization, particularly through an analysis of CMRS conferences, the inaugural journal publication, and other CMRS literature, this chapter identifies an ongoing debate about the critical value of CMRS and its political possibilities, particularly in the space of the neoliberal university. As the contemporary university has taken discursive hold on minority difference, diversity, and representation, I discuss how

centering the mixed race subject is simultaneously associated with *and* an interruption of critical practice. This relationship is further explored through the affective relations motivating some scholars' pursuit of creating CMRS as a distinctive form of critical practice.

Ultimately, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" hopes to work alongside the scholarship in American studies and critical ethnic studies that discusses how institutional affirmations of social difference advance structural inequality. As institutionalization continues to be a vexed topic of concern, this project emphasizes the imperative to interrogate not only how traditional modalities of difference are incorporated in favor of hegemony, but also emergent formations such as *contemporary* mixed race. Thus, whereas many others have explored the incorporation of identity politics among singular racialized groups, this project engages in a sustained analysis of the ways mixed race travels through the university—primarily UCB and UCLA. Specifically, I trace how the politics of multiraciality are imbricated in broader liberal multiculturalist projects of the US academy. In so doing, I look to supplement the ongoing conversations that consider the ways antiracist projects, particularly in the context of the university, can be used to buttress rather than battle regulatory regimes of power.

Chapter 1: Categorically Wrong: Mixed Race Recognition and Color-blind Policy

Walking through the main entrance to UC Berkeley's (UCB) campus—California's flagship public university and among the state's most prestigious institutions for higher education—one is likely to come upon Sproul Plaza. From a historical perspective, this area of campus was a significant location during the student protests of the 1960s and 70s. Adjacent to the plaza are the steps of Sproul Hall, where UC Berkeley student activist and prominent leader of the Free Speech Movement (FSM), Mario Savio, delivered his famed "Bodies upon the gears" speech in December of 1964. In the speech he addressed the importance of campus-based political activities and defended the right to free speech on university grounds. The FSM, with its origins emerging out of the civil rights and anti-war protests, marked a significant moment for campus politics from the 1960s forward, particularly in California. On the one hand, the FSM contributed to the struggle against culturally and intellectually homogenous institutions of higher learning by advocating for the university to become a site dedicated to protecting counter-hegemonic discourse, and on the other, the movement represented a crucial step toward the institutionalization of cultural and political difference. Like other student protests of the period, the FSM encouraged, in the words of Roderick Ferguson, "new modes of interpretation and new institutional visions," while university officials would adapt with "new modes of regulation and exclusion."[82]

Today Sproul Plaza is a celebrated landmark memorializing the FSM and student activism more broadly on UCB's campus. In fact, to honor the past student

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[82] Ferguson Reorder of things, 16, 29.

movement, at the center of the plaza lays a sculpture called the "Column of Heaven and Earth," although more commonly referred to as the "Free Speech Monument." Designed by Mark Brest van Kempen, the sculpture is a six-foot wide granite ring laid flush against the ground, which surrounds a six-inch circle of soil and an invisible column rising into the airspace overhead.[83] An engraving in the granite reads, "The soil and the air space extending above it shall not be part of any nation and shall not be subject to any entity's jurisdiction."[84] Here the inscription declares that while student activists (like the monument itself) may be located quite literally in the institution, they certainly do not have to be *of* it.

Figure 2. Mark Brest van Kempen. "Column of Heaven and Earth," UC Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. *Photograph taken by author.*

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[83] Roman Mars, "Berkeley's Invisible Monument to Free Speech," *SF Chronicle*, June 6, 2011, accessed September 2, 2015, http://www.ucira.ucsb.edu/berkeleys-invisible-monument-to-free-speech/.
[84] Ibid.

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Commissioned in 1989, the monument was part of an art-competition sponsored by the Berkeley Art Project group to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the FSM. At the time, UCB adamantly refused to accept the sculpture as a gift, or any other work that memorialized the FSM, as many members who commissioned the project and the university officials that rejected it were among those situated on opposite sides of the movement twenty-five years prior. Despite the pushback, the university eventually relented with the condition that there would be no mention of the sculpture's association with the FSM in the press release.[85]

However, the discord between activist and university officials that characterized both discussions of the FSM in the mid-1960s and its 1989 commemoration has largely disappeared. Today not only does the Free Speech Monument specifically and Sproul Plaza more generally serve as the central site for student political protest, but the university has found its own way of memorializing the FSM. In 2000, to honor Mario Savio's role in the movement, UCB completed the construction of the Free Speech Movement Café whereby, according to the university website, "the menu is a manifestation of the ideals inherent in the Free Speech Movement."[86]

Ultimately, I suggest Sproul Plaza demonstrates the ways in which the literal campus landscape becomes integral to the narration of the complex exchanges between activism and the academy. This particular campus site helps emphasize how the tensions between alternative visions of higher education and the academy's

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[85] Ibid.

[86] See, "Rossman (Michael) Free Speech Movement Photographs" *Free Speech Movement Records*, accessed September 2, 2015, http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/FSM/fsm_ead.html; "Free Speech Movement Café," accessed September 2, 2015 http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/about/fsm-café.

incorporation of them are revealed not only through the institutional language of UCB (and other UCs), but also through the campus architecture and design. In this way, an examination of the physical university campus reveals just as much about the institutionalization of difference, as do other forms of discursive practices.

Thus, in the following pages, I first continue my analysis of UCB's marketing landscape in order to contextualize how the university constructs, both literally and figuratively, a particular culture of privatization, which helps contextualize the ways "mixed race" has been seen by some university officials as a valuable category of difference to both celebrate and manage campus diversity and political unrest. In doing so, I look at Ward Connerly's California Racial Privacy Initiative (RPI) and formal request to add a multiracial category on UC admission applications in order to examine how "mixed race identity" has functioned as a valuable category of difference for university officials to justify supposedly "race blind" policies that, in fact, negatively and disproportionately impact black student access to higher education. I discuss how despite the lack of institutional success of Connerly's efforts, many of his arguments would be replicated on a national scale with more success. To that end, I argue just as moving toward increased privatization has represented the primary mode of economic restructuring within academic institutions, deploying the category of mixed race—with its similar rhetoric of privatization, independence, and entrepreneurialism—has served as a form of racial reorganizing that facilitates the assault on equal opportunity programs, including Affirmative Action.

Institutional Aesthetic of the Neoliberal University

If UCB's Sproul Plaza is currently a celebrated landmark memorializing student

activists' successful efforts in facilitating "new modes of interpretation" within the

university (after all it still remains the central site for student political activity today),

then a walk through the rest of campus during the 2012-2013 academic year revealed

a more recent cultural landscape signifying "new modes of regulation" by

administrators and officials. By this I am specifically referring to the plethora of

banners that were attached to the light posts lining the pathways throughout UCB's

campus. The images on these banners displayed portraits of a variety of UC Berkeley

students along with a personal handwritten message printed on their photograph. The

people on the banners—ranging in race, ethnicity, gender, and age—provided a

personal response to why they were grateful to UCB by completing the phrase,

"Thanks to Berkeley…" Students on the posters articulated their gratitude to UCB for

a variety of reasons. Answers printed on the banners ranged from UCB facilitating a

process of self-actualization, to broadening personal knowledge about different

cultures, to instilling a sense of pride for being a first-generation college student. The

portraits and testimonials of UCB students were then contextualized by additional

banners posted along the same pathways displaying statistics and positive messages

that reflected the growth of university services as a result of private donations made

to the university.

Figure 3. UC Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. June 11, 2014. *Photograph taken by author.*

As the banners featured both students grateful to UCB *and* UCB grateful to its financial contributors, they collectively gave onlookers an impression of mutual cooperation (and appreciation) amongst university officials, private donors, and a diverse student body. Nevertheless, further evaluation of the banners strung up throughout the campus, I argue, represents the university as a physical locale housing a particular cultural logic that finds "mixed race" useful for the management of difference and inequality within the academy and beyond. More precisely, the campaign banners signify the cultural and institutional beliefs underlying the neoliberal university's approach to diversity in the context of increasing privatization

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of public institutions generally, and sets up a rationale with which "mixed race" has been deployed within these types of spaces specifically. In order to draw the necessary relationship between UCB's recent campus aesthetic and the category of "mixed race," I first situate the banners within the larger university campaign from which they were created.

Carried out by UCB's University Relations department, The "Thanks to Berkeley…" theme that appeared on the campus banners was a significant part of a five-year advertising initiative, referred to as "The Campaign for Berkeley." Its primary objective was to draw private donations to the university in order to help compensate for the fact that California's state funding made up less than one third of the university's overall budget during this period.[87] Along with the campus banners, the campaign included a triannual publication called *The Promise of Berkeley*—a magazine targeting alumni, donors, and prospective donors, which shared stories of campus activities in hopes to inspire private contributions to the university. Fund raising strategies also included the publication of other departmental/program-specific literature, the organizing of campaign events on campus, a website to make financial contributions, and a variety of other marketing services. The campaign's principal strategy was to create an "identity" and "brand" for UCB so as to foster a "sense of community" and ultimately "inspire giving and illustrate the need for private support and its impact." [88]

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[87] University Relations, "Campaign Brand Attributes," *The Campaign for Berkeley: Branding Guidelines*, *Marketing Services, and Communication Materials*, Berkeley: University of California, 2009), 8.
[88] Ibid., 4, 34.

While all the elements of the campaign specifically targeted university donors and potential donors, the "Thanks to Berkeley" banners signaled a broader effort to integrate its message of a thriving, diverse UCB directly into the campus aesthetic. I argue that the strategic deployment of these banners, which featured the faces of a supposed diverse student body, served as decorative proclamation that the university's commitment to difference relies upon its private financial support. In other words, UCB attempted to express its commitment to the brand of diversity, but it also tried to associate this investment in diversity with *its turn to private funding.*

In fact, according to the marketing guidelines for the campaign, a strategic point regarding the university's "brand differentiation" was to express the "cultural and intellectual diversity of faculty and students."[89] Thus pedestrians encountered numerous multicultural collages with each participant on the banner displaying a smile or delightful smirk. Collectively, the banners fastened to numerous light posts along the campus pathways offered a racial tapestry within the campus aesthetic, and provided a visual celebration of what is believed to be a diverse institution. Still, the variety of images across race, gender, and age were not the only clue as to the campaign's investment in diversity-as-institutional identity. There were also student testimonials coinciding with the portraits, which often helped supplement UCB's embrace of difference. For example, among the campaign banners featured, a student proclaimed, "I am honored to be at Cal as the first in my family to study in the US," while another student graciously stated, "Cal has opened my eyes to the diverse world we live in." The banners provided testimonials that expressed the presence of students who represented products of recent immigration or became enlightened by campus

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[89] Ibid., 9.

multiculturalism. Such statements strengthened the diverse images presented on the

banners by emphasizing the variety of ways UCB supported difference. Here, the

campaign banners portrayed UCB as the conduit for creating "an inclusive

community that embraces the diversity of the people of California and the world."[90]

This message literally decorated the physical space of UCB, mostly along the

pathways leading into the main entry points of campus, which represented an

example of the ways in which UCB incorporated—not just ideologically but also

visually—discourses of diversity into its institutional identity.

However, it is important to emphasize that these declarations of institutional diversity were situated within an active campaign that solicited (and celebrated) private funding. The numerous signs lining the walkways of UCB's campus were a decorative articulation of the ways in which neoliberalism

Figure 4. UC Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. June 11, 2014. *Photograph taken by author.*

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[90] Ibid.,45.

facilitates "the transfer of wealth and decision-making from public, more-or-less accountable decision making bodies to individual or corporate, unaccountable hands."[91] In other words, diversity becomes a privatized concern placed in the hands of private donors rather than a priority for the public good. One campaign banner in particular illustrated this point with a simple statement intended to advertise UCB's appreciation for its donors: "Thanks to you…Berkeley is public and ever essential."[92]

The "you" in this case refers to the number of individual financial supporters, who were then thanked for maintaining UCB as a distinguished public university. The irony of the banner's statement lies in the fact that UCB's *public* status was imagined as a function of its *private* contributions. Under this premise, that which marks UCB as an essentially important public entity—serving the collective good of the university's diverse community—is not reflected by the state's commitment to social services via public investments in higher education, but rather through private donations made to the institution. The campus banners visually gestured toward a project that strategically tied together concepts of diversity and privatization. This demonstrates how university efforts to contribute to the public good through so-called commitments to diversity are strategically collapsed into the private sphere. That is, the representation of difference as a public good is understood as best achieved in and through ideological investments in privatization.

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[91] Lisa Duggan, *Twighlight of Equality,* 12.
[92] Ellipses included in actual banner.

Lisa Duggan argues, "neoliberal campaigns to downsize public education…[define] education more as a matter of personal responsibility—a private, primarily economic matter."[93]

Here, Duggan is not simply referring to the effects of free market economics on education, but also the cultural projects linked to these types of economic policies. Consequently, the varied racial representations put forth by the "Thanks to Berkeley" campaign through campus banners and other marketing materials operated in and through the realities of an increasingly privatized public university system. The increased reliance on privatized funding within public higher education concurrently emphasizes both the particular economic realities facing the academy *and* its impact on the cultural politics of racial difference. That is, university officials' implementation of neoliberal principles simultaneously motivates a free-market model to fund public higher education, while also transferring this strategy to the concept of institutional diversity—emphasizing individualism, self-reliance, and personal responsibility.

In the context of UCB's campaign, these principles were made part of the campus landscape, constructing a visual representation of the ideological union between privatization and diversity. Another campaign banner displayed on campus implicitly illustrated how individualism and self-reliance—two terms undergirding the cultural rationale of privatization—served as underlying principles in the management of difference. The banner shows a multicultural group of young people positioned around a single student's testimonial, which reads, "Berkeley taught me

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[93] Duggan, *Twilight of Equality*, 42.

that there is no recipe for happiness, you create your own."

Figure 5. UC Berkeley. Berkeley, California. June 11, 2014. *Photograph taken by author*

Here, this comment observed within the context of the diverse faces on the banner, situates difference along side the notion that "happiness" is individually achieved ("you create your own"), while detached from any structural determinants (i.e. a "recipe"). The banner imagined UCB as the primary catalyst for developing diverse, entrepreneurial subjects who were seeking individual enlightenment, rendering any structural restrictions to individual "happiness" unrecognizable. This specific banner symbolized the ways in which university officials apply corporatized

principles to broader areas of campus politics, particularly by conceptualizing

diversity as individualized differences, achieved through self-reliance and personal

responsibility. Thus, as "universities are increasingly folded into the economy as the

site where 'innovation' contributes to capitalist expansion," the same free market

logic becomes the institutional method with which to engage campus social life.[94] Put

differently, new and innovative ways to manage university social and cultural politics

are intimately connected to the economic restructuring of higher education.

As "The Campaign for Berkeley" demonstrates how visions of the neoliberal

university are directly placed within the campus environment, UCB makes known a

set of ideal characteristics undergirding its social, political, and economic climate. In

its attempt to distinguish UCB's institutional "identity" from other universities, the

campaign's strategic marketing guide clearly outlined characteristics of "Berkeley's

personality" that it wished to assert. In fact, the marketing guide named specific

"personality attributes" of UCB, using the following terms: *entrepreneurial,*

innovative, independent, outsider, challenging convention, healthy irreverence,

adventurous, risk taking.[95] Ultimately, these features represent a form of strategic

branding that not only characterized the terms governing UCB's institutional identity,

but also sets the conditions for institutional membership, which rendered certain

subjectivities more desirable than others.[96] As the campaign quite literally decorated

the campus with characteristics now commonly associated with notions of diversity

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[94] Shoshana Pollack and Amy Rossiter, "Neoliberalism and the Entrepreneurial Subject: Implications for Feminism and Social Work," *Canadian Social Work Review* 27.2 (2010): 158.

[95] University Relations, "Campaign Brand Attributes," *The Campaign for Berkeley: Branding Guidelines*, *Marketing Services, and Communication Materials*, Berkeley: University of California, 2009), 7

[96] Herman Gray, "Subject(ed) to Recognition," *American Quarterly* 65.4 (2013): 771-798.

and privatization, it actively sought subjectivities perceived as best to uphold these institutional ideals.

Given this, one may ask how this discussion of UCB's campaign is applicable to the category of mixed race, and how this particular subject position has been institutionally deployed in the context of higher education in California. In response to such inquiries, I explain how many of the aforementioned "personality attributes" the campaign lists (and decoratively articulated via campus banners) hints at a broader explanation for why mixed race has been a valuable strategic category for managing difference within California's universities and beyond. For example, just as words like "entrepreneurial," "innovative," "independent," "outsider," and "challenging convention" were described as some of the attributes underlying UCB's "institutional personality," these same terms have been commonly attached to mixed race identity. Mixed race is often imagined as an *entrepreneurial* identity whereby one's racial position is understood as being personally organized and managed, *independent* of normative processes of racialization. It supposedly *challenges conventions* through new and *innovative* ways to disorganize traditional racial categorization by creating a general category of inclusion for those who have otherwise felt like racial *outsiders*. Here, it is not difficult to identify the descriptive commonalties between the campaign's characterization of a university undergoing increased privatization and that of mixed race discourse, even if only in language. However, beyond just similarities in language, these parallels in vernacular begin to suggest why ideas surrounding mixed race identity are so appealing to the efforts of managing racial difference within the academy, particularly regarding contentious

topics such as campus diversity and admission policies. Doing so will shed light on just one of the significant ways in which discourses of racial diversity have adopted the grammar of neoliberal economic policies, and thus limit access to higher education for historically underrepresented students in general, and black students in particular.

The introduction of mixed race discourse in the context of both California's divestment of its public universities *and* the state's continued debate around equitable access to higher education is not accidental. In addressing the reduction of public financial support of post-secondary education in California, and its relationship to the state's changing racial make-up, Sunaina Maira and Julie Sze argue, "the economic restructuring of the university may also be a strategy of racial restructuring and management, of students, the workforce, and population in the context of shifting racial demographics in California that threaten elite privilege and white supremacy."[97] For the authors, the important link between the economic changes impacting California's public university system and the strategies to maintain its investments in white supremacy must be situated along side California's demographic shifts. Specifically, they suggest it was not a coincidence that as California was transitioning to become the first large state to have people of color outnumber whites, public higher education was becoming less accessible due to decreases in public financial support. However, while Maira and Sze argue economic restructuring functioned as a tactic to reestablish "elite privilege and white supremacy" in the context of the changing demographics of California, I suggest this economic

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[97] Sunaina Maira & Julie Sze, "Dispatches from Pepper Spray University: Privatization, Repression, and Revolts," *American Quarterly* 64.2 (2012), 320.

restructuring *coincided with* and took *advantage of* the discourse surrounding the state's population changes.

Here, I am specifically referencing the official recognition of the considerable number of mixed race people in California. As the 2000 US Census marked the first time respondents could self-report multiple races, California would record the highest multiracial population in the country.[98] While the large number of mixed race people in the state may not have represented an actual demographic shift—but rather a shift in the way people were being counted—the *perception* of this demographic shift was quite real. In 2004, the Public Policy Institute of California profiled this trend, suggesting that the growth in the state's mixed race population would have "the power to challenge and even transform our understanding of race in California."[99]

For some university officials, the recognition of California's mixed race population would be used to support particular economic and cultural goals of the neoliberal university. Just as moving toward increased privatization has represented the primary mode of economic restructuring within academic institutions, deploying the category of mixed race—with its similar rhetoric of privatization, independence, and entrepreneurialism—has served as a form of racial reorganizing that facilitates the assault on equal opportunity programs, including affirmative action. It is this observation that underwrites the core of this chapter's argument: the invocation of mixed race has been, at times, used to inculcate admissions policies that have

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[98] Nicholas A. Jones & Amy Symens Smith, "Two or More Races Population: 2000," *2000 Census Brief*, November 2001, accessed August 4, 2014, http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-6.pdf. Nearly 5% of the California's total population self-reported 2 or more races on the 2000 US census. This is almost double the rate of the US at large.
[99] Laura E. Hill, Hans P. Johnson, and Sonya M. Tafoya, "California's Multiracial Population, *California Counts: Population Trends and Profiles* 6.1 (2004), 2.

contributed to the extremely low enrollment of black students at California's public academic institutions.[100]

"A Multi-racial Society That Defies Box-Checking"

The post-affirmative action era in California had solidified that talking about civil rights and racial equality could be coupled with the rolling back of redistributive policies benefiting underrepresented communities. After the success of California's Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action programs for women and minorities in public institutions race and gender conservatives continued to draw upon the same rhetorical strategies that had led to the anti-affirmative action initiative to pass. That is, present ballot measures as an expansion of, instead of an attack on, civil rights even as they worked to restrict access. Within this framework, the category of mixed race would allow officials to consistently utilize its emphasis on "personal" notions of identity construction to redirect political debates away from civil rights disparities as an institutionalized problem and more towards a private concern. In this way, mixed race would be deployed with a similar type of neoliberal cultural and economic vocabulary that was familiar to California voters in yet another ballot measure targeting race. Here, I am specifically referring to Proposition 54, also known as the Racial Privacy Initiative (RPI), which was placed on the California ballot in 2003, but ultimately failed.[101]

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[100] In the decade following the passage of California's Proposition 209 ended any form of race-based admissions decisions in its public institutions, the University of California was unable to increase or even reach the level of black student admits to its university. See, Sharon Bernstein, "Black students lagging in admissions to University of California, *Reuters*, December 5, 2013, accessed April 3, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-california-race-idUSBRE9B504120131206.
[101] Scholars have discussed mixed race in the context of Proposition 54 to varying degrees. G. Reginald Daniel gives the most extensive discussion of RPI in the context of mixed race identity. He

RPI sought to amend California's Constitution by banning "state and local governments from using race, ethnicity, color, or national origins to classify current or prospective students, contractors or employees in public education, contracting, or employment operations…"[102] In short, the passage of RPI would disallow the collection of racial data in regards to the university and most other state-run institutions. If successful, this measure would have, in effect, ended public recognition of racial hierarchy within the state's public sector. Yet conservative proponents of RPI continued to draw upon the same rhetorical strategies that led to the end of race-based admissions policies through Proposition 209—presenting it as a ballot measure that was an expansion of, instead of an attack on, civil rights. Within this message, the category of mixed race would be deployed, using its elements in a way that coincided with a familiar type of neoliberal cultural and economic vocabulary familiar to California voters.

Then-UC Regent Ward Connerly, staunch political conservative who had spearheaded the campaign that resulted in the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, reemerged seven years later to lead the campaign for Proposition 54. The Regent claimed that race was exclusively a private matter, no longer important in public life. He argued collecting and tracking categories of race by most public institutions

largely discusses the division among mixed race advocacy groups in regards to RPI, which I further outline below. However, my discussion of RPI differs as I give significant treatment to not only how the category was deployed, but also the larger cultural logic that motivated its usage. See, G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2010), 271.
Kim M. Williams, *Mark One or More* 122-24; Michelle Elam, *Souls of Mixed Folk,* 12.
[102] "Propositions: Official Title and Summary," *Official Voter Guide*, accessed August 22, 2014, http://vote2003.sos.ca.gov/propositions/2-3-prop-54.html. Other elements of Proposition 54 state: "Prohibition also covers persons subject to other operations of government unless Legislature finds compelling state interest, authorizes by two-thirds of each house, and Governor approves. 'Classifying' defined as separating, sorting, or organizing persons or personal data. Exemptions include: medical data; law enforcement descriptions; prisoner and undercover assignments; actions maintaining federal funding."

merely maintained the country's racist past by reinforcing division amongst its people. In other words, Connerly essentially borrowed the grammar of neoliberal economic policies, emphasizing that the category of race, like the economy, was best handled privately, and any governmental oversight on such matters only limited social progress.

And in an expected turn given multiracialism's progressive associations, its advocates' emphasis on private, individualized approaches to racial recognition would offer a language that was taken up by the state. In fact, Connerly would use ideas found within mixed race discourse to introduce his argument for the passage of Proposition 54. For instance, in a 2001 press release announcing RPI, Connerly stated, "we are a multi-racial society that defies box-checking. The boxes can no longer define us, just as the 'one-drop rule' can no longer divide us. The goal of the Racial Privacy Initiative is to move us beyond the box and closer to a color-blind society. The government should respect our privacy and not collect such personal information..."[103] Connerly's statement was a strategic adjustment in scale that sought to take some mixed race individuals' claims for racial self-definition and spin this by framing California's racial landscape as signifying one large mixed race body, which collectively possessed a private right to reject the imposition of the government's outdated racial categories. In other words, the state had no right to impose policies that used traditional racial categories when they simply did not apply in the context of a growing multiracial population.

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[103] Racial Privacy Initiative: Proposition 54, 2001, "Connerly Announces Racial Privacy Initiative: RPI to take California Beyond Boxes,"
http://digital.library.ucla.edu/websites/2003_999_187/content/press/april11_2001.php.htm.

Connerly's comments revealed an appropriation of many elements vital to the claims made by advocates of the multiracial movement from the 1990s, which further revealed the internal split between mixed race advocates in regards to their support or denouncement of Proposition 54. G. Reginald Daniel discusses how the most politically conservative mixed race advocacy groups saw, like Connerly, the elimination of racial data as a significant step toward ending racism by firstly attacking the categories themselves.[104] Conversely, more progressive mixed race groups saw RPI as threat to the hard work of the multiracial movement whereby mixed race people were now allowed to mark more that one race on the US Census and other data collection forms. Despite these differences, Connerly took the fundamental ideas that undergirded both the politically conservative and progressive sides of mixed race advocacy. That is, a rejection of the historical legacies of the "one-drop rule," challenging the accuracy of "box checking," and designating racial categorization as a personal issue were all represented elements borrowed from multiracial advocates' arguments that eventually led to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) changing its federal guidelines on the 2000 US Census. Connerly seized the opportunity to invoke a version of a mixed race vocabulary that had grown increasingly popular in the prior decade as a way to further perpetuate his vision of a color-blind society. While certainly not the first time mixed race identity was used for conservative ends, Proposition 54 revealed the political fluidity with which the category could be applied.

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[104] G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States*, 272.

What is significant about mixed race is the ability for officials to consistently

celebrate its emphasis on horizontal difference among individual subjects, while

disavowing vertical difference, relegating it to the past. In this way, the category of

mixed race is particularly staged against blackness, whereby the former group

signifies present and future (i.e. the browning of America) and the latter signifies the

racist past.[105] Thus, officials value the utility of mixed race in the present to envision

Californians in particular, and the US more broadly, as only separated by the

particularities of a universal process racial mixture; contrasted against a bygone era of

material difference constituted by black inequality. As an example, in the same 2001

press release promoting Proposition 54, Executive Director Kevin Nguyen from the

American Civil Rights Coalition (ACRC)—a conservative nonprofit organization

against race-based policies—contrasted the growth of multiracial children in relation

to black children to justify RPI. Nguyen stated, "in a state where more 'multiracial'

children are born than 'black' children, it just doesn't make sense to stuff people into

these racial boxes. California needs to lead America in examining the role of

government in such personal decisions such as racial or ethnic identity."[106] In this

case, conservatives using mixed race to support RPI signifies a tactical effort to

disguise, and even justify, the treatment of blackness as irrelevant within California's

system of higher education by redirecting issues of underrepresentation to the private

sphere. For Nguyen, black inequality is irrelevant in the face of California's relatively

large multiracial population. His comments suggest that tracking racial data for

institutional purposes is unimportant, as racial hierarchies are becoming a non-factor

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[105] For critical discussion of mixed race futurity, see Minelle Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia* (2014).
[106] Racial Privacy Initiative: Proposition 54, 2001, "Connerly Announces Racial Privacy Initiative

due to what he considers a phenomena belonging to the private sphere—i.e. reproductive patterns. The emphasis on California's model of (multi)racial diversity enables black subjecthood to be considered out of step with a racially "progressive" state that has effectively privatized—and personalized—race through interracial reproduction. Consequently, proponents of RPI are able suggest that public data collection on the rates of black student admissions, for example, is no longer necessary, because black subjectivity as a category of identity is deemed no longer necessary within the context of a sizeable multiracial population. Thus, it was their hope that seamlessly weaving mixed race in and out of RPI's campaign would result in the same type of success they achieved with Proposition 209. It would not.

Unfortunately for Connerly, his post-race, colorblind rhetoric—which invoked the category of mixed race—would not prove as effective for Proposition 54 as it did in getting anti-affirmative action laws passed in 1996. However, aforementioned arguments used to justify Proposition 54 were *not* the motivating factors leading to voters rejecting the bill. In political scientist Daniel Martinez HoSang's comprehensive account of California's most significant post-WWII ballot measures, he argues the protection of racial justice was not a significant justification for voters overwhelmingly deciding against Proposition 54.[107] Martinez HoSang argues that the campaign against, and the ultimate demise of RPI included a combination of strategic and logistical factors. Among them, he suggests the campaign leading up to Election Day, combined with the written argument against RPI presented on the final ballot, mostly emphasized the measure's negative impact on health information and medical

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[107] Daniel Martinez HoSang, "'Dare We Forget the Lessons of History?' Ward Connerly's Racial Privacy Initiative," *Racial Propositions*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. See also, G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States*, 271.

research, not racial discrimination. Also, some who voted "no" on Proposition 54 were among those in favor of Proposition 209, wanting to collect racial data to ensure that anti-affirmative action laws would continue to be enforced. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, the election date at which RPI was to be decided on the ballot was moved up significantly due to the recall of California Governor, Gray Davis. This change of date along with the fact that most attention was paid to the gubernatorial recall election, caused support for Proposition 54 to fall significantly.[108] Given that these factors were the most salient in the campaign against and ultimate failure of RPI, Martinez HoSang underscores that, "Connerly forced his opponents, at least during the campaign, to abandon nearly all explicit commitments to race consciousness linked to a more emancipatory and democratic vision."[109]

Important is that while Connerly's political adversaries abandoned arguments centered on racial justice to lobby against Proposition 54, he and others did the opposite. That is, Connerly and his supporters readily invoked the protection of civil rights, occasionally using the idea of racial justice for mixed race people in order to gather support for the measure. In this context, mixed race functioned as a tool to engage issues of race and identity, yet left behind the complexities of institutional racism. The category of mixed race offered a privatized method to argue for the protection of racial difference without having to confront the very public reality that black and brown students were being drastically underserved in California's universities. Thus, while Connerly was unable to legally divert race solely into the private sphere by convincing Californians to eliminate the collection of racial data by

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[108] For a detailed discussion of the complex reasons California Proposition 54 was defeated, see HoSang Martinez, *Racial* Propositions, 258-63.
[109] Ibid.,263.

governmental agencies, he would not abandon the idea of mixed race as a means to enact his political agendas.

More is Less: Connerly's Push for a Multiracial Category

Connerly's next political project would not only reference the category of mixed race, but would explicitly name multiracial identity as its centerpiece. Just a year after the defeat of Proposition 54, Connerly proposed that the University of California add a "multiracial" category onto the undergraduate admissions application. Yet, this time California voters would not decide the outcome of this new debate over racial data collection, but rather the proposal was brought to university officials directly. The recommendation, referred to as RE-52, asked that the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) ask UC Regents, President, and General Counsel to formally request that Office of Management and Budget (OMB) allow the UC system to implement the additional multiracial option. In November of 2004, Connerly's formal appeal was made at a meeting with UCEP, encouraging them to direct leaders of the UC system to "request that the Office of Management and Budget revise its OMB Statistical Policy Directive 15, *standards for Collecting, Maintaining, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (last revised in 1997) to permit the University of California to adopt a multiracial category if the University conclude[d] that such action [was] warranted (author's emphasis)."[110] Allowing the UC to add a "multiracial" category was a departure from OMB's 1997 federal revision to collecting racial data, which afforded people the opportunity to self-identify with

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[110] Office of the Secretary, "'Multiracial Designation on the Undergraduate Admission Application" To the Members of the Committee on Educational Policy, accessed July 11, http://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/nov04/re521.pdf

multiple races or ethnicities.[111] OMB's change, however, only provided the option for respondents to mark more than one racial category on public forms, while explicitly stating that a "multiracial" category was not permitted to be an available option. In contrast, Connerly's recommended modification would not only allow people to choose multiple races, but also include a stand-alone "multiracial" category.

At first glance, Connerly's recommendation to UCEP seems rather ironic. Campaigning for Proposition 54 just a year prior, Connerly favored completely eliminating the collection of racial data from most local and state agencies, strategically using the category of mixed race only to justify RPI. Now with RE-52, he was advocating for an additional racial category to the UC undergraduate admissions application. How does one go from campaigning for the *subtraction* of racial data within the public sphere to then pushing for an *additional* category to racial data within the same arena? The debates that surrounded Connerly's recommendation to add a multiracial category to admissions applications makes clear how these two positions are not at all antithetical, but rather produce similar outcomes.

Connerly's justification for implementing RE-52 was familiar. Just like his arguments for RPI, he would once again frame race as a private matter. He still claimed that any institutional interference obstructing one's right to assert their personal racial identity was only a hindrance to racial progress. Omitting a multiracial

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[111] OMB's 1997 revision to racial data collection—allowing respondents "to mark one or more" race(s) when asked to racially self-identify on federal forms—was first instituted on a large scale for the 2000 US Census (2.4% of respondents would self-identify with two or more races). However, state agencies were not *required* to abide by the changes made in OMB's revisions to Directive 15 until January 1, 2003. More importantly, educational institutions were not included regarding specific guidelines on whether to aggregate data on those marking more than one race.

category from admissions applications signified the government's attachment to archaic notions of discrete racial categorization, which he believed not only denied the acknowledgement of the growing number of Californians identifying as multiracial, but also further perpetuated racial inequality. Critiquing the lack of a "multiracial" option on the UC admissions application, Connerly stated, "When you walk on these campuses, you see multiracial people, and they want to be acknowledged. Why do we want to deny them the right to identify that way?"[112] For Connerly, RE-52 meant understanding race and identity as exclusively an individual, private right rather than structurally and socially determined. The recognition of mixed race identity through a generic "multiracial" box, where ostensibly people from various racial backgrounds could all identify under the same category, was his latest attempt at masking racial difference. If Connerly could not eliminate the tracking of difference through barring the collection of racial data on UC applications (and other public documents), he would attempt to flatten out these differences through the implementation of a multiracial option on the admissions application form.

Yet again Connerly would draw supporters to his cause. His followers would echo similar arguments, sending in letters of support to the Secretary of the Regents, Leigh Trivette, in hopes of persuading UC officials to advocate for the change. For example, just before the Regents were to vote on RE-52, Lawyer George A. Winkel submitted a letter predictably framing the lack of a multiracial category as a violation

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[112] Tanya Schevitz, "UC Regents/Connerly wants multiracial box on university admissions applications," *SF Gate*, November 15, 2004, accessed August 28, 2014, http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/UC-REGENTS-Connerly-wants-multi-race-box-on-2635836.php.

of private rights, writing, "the opponents' objection to a multiracial identity shows them denying self-identity rights to others."[113] Winkel argued the protection of these "self-identity rights" should take precedent over the preservation of current racial categories because these "different races" were merely outdated "inequality labels" that hurt the university community. Like Connerly, Winkel believed the category of mixed race was not only an optimal tool for expressing race as a private right, but also useful for disavowing racial difference all together. Drawing upon California's diversity, Winkel claimed race should not be a *public* concern since the state no longer had a white majority. In his letter he asked, "What better time to start de-constructing 'races' (e.g. *with multiracial identity*) than now when none is empowered with 'majority'"(my emphasis)?[114]

Winkel's letter demonstrates the type of rationale that made Connerly's recommendation for a multiracial category on the undergraduate admissions application so similar to Proposition 54. No longer advocating for an elimination of racial data, the request for an additional category was another strategic attempt at rearticulating race as a personal issue belonging to the private sphere. Winkel's support of RE-52 communicated an understanding of race that was guided by a neoliberal framework—transforming categories of race from a historically situated, hierarchical mode of organizing people, to a collection of individuals, liberally expressing their "self-identity rights" whereby people are perceived to independently organize themselves into racial groups. By detaching race from larger structures of

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[113] George A. Winkel to Ms. Leigh Trivette, November 15, 2004 "Letter to Secretary, Board of Regents, University of California re: Multiracial Category," accessed September 4, 2014 http://multiracial.com/site/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1010.
[114] Ibid.,

power his letter turned racial data collection into merely a numbers game—those most represented, win.[115]And now that California was no longer comprised of a white majority, in combination with a growing mixed race population, Winkel suggested traditional racial categories were just as outdated as racism itself.

Identifying California as a "major melting pot" and emphasizing the inherent amalgamation of all "minority races," he asserted that "one human race is certain," and thus races cannot objectively be labeled as different. This statement calls to the increasingly ubiquitous commentary—both scientific and otherwise—on how race has no biological truth. The multiracial category on UC admissions applications would supposedly serve as official recognition of this, which would welcome members of all racial backgrounds under a single group. Ultimately, with a growing number of California students identifying as multiracial, Connerly would be able to use the multiracial category to create the perception that racial difference was a thing of the past. In this way, like RPI, Connerly's recommendation for the added category sought to further entrench anti-affirmative action policies by suggesting that race was not an issue dealt within public institutions, but rather by private individuals, often in the context of "choosing" an identity. Thus under RE-52, discourses concerning the consistently low enrollment of black students within the UC system could continue to be framed as a matter of personal responsibility and/or an impermanent problem eventually solved through continued race mixing.

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[115] There is a long history of the use of statistic and numbers in racial politics. For instance, black criminality was in part perpetuated by the racialization of crime in the US, See, Kalil Gibran Muhammed, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Advocacy Groups Respond

Winkel's letter proved that Connerly was not without backing from parts of the multiracial community in getting RE-52 passed. Just a day before the vote on the recommendation, The Multiracial Activist's (TMA) website published Winkel's letter in support. TMA is a self-described "libertarian oriented activist journal" that takes up mixed race related issues, and "advocates abolishing all forms of government imposed racial classification."[116] Despite taking up many issues that span across the political spectrum, TMA is considered by many other mixed race advocacy groups to be among the most conservative.[117] Their support of Connerly's measure would serve as an example of this.

However, Connerly's recommendation would not go without its vocal detractors. Speaking out against RE-52, advocacy groups identified the request for a multiracial option on undergraduate admissions applications as merely a slight of hand, replacing RPI with another method for hindering the ability to monitor low admission rates for minorities. For example, Yvette Felarca, a UC Berkeley graduate student and a national organizer of the pro-affirmative action group, By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), denounced RE-52, arguing the request "would be a more generic designation and reduce the accuracy of data collection…It would [also] undermine the ability to track underrepresented minorities at the University."[118] Other UC students cited the impact the broad multiracial category would have on minority

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[116] "Mission of TMA, *The Multiracial Activist*, November 14, 2004, accessed September 16, 2015, http://multiracial.com/site/index.php/about-tma/faq1/.

[117] See Rainier Spencer, *Spurious Issues* (1999) and See, G. Reginald Daniel, *Race and Multiraciality in Brazil and the United States: Converging Paths?* (2010)

[118] Tanya Schevitz, "UC Regents/Connerly wants multiracial box on university admissions applications," *SF Gate*.

recruitment and retention groups on campus. According to leaders of these student

groups, without the ability to accurately identify the exact racial and ethnic

composition of the campus, it would hamper these organizations' ability to identify

students and evaluate the groups' overall effectiveness.[119] Furthermore, just as many

major multiracial groups had advocated against RPI, they would also rally against

RE-52.

Notably, three of the most well established mixed race organizations in the

US—the Association for Multiethnic Americans (AMEA), MAVIN Foundation, and

Hapa Issues Forum (HIF)—rejected the multiracial category, writing in an official

joint statement, "we feel that this proposal will reduce the accuracy of data collection

on UC applicants, undermine federal reporting guidelines, and threaten the

effectiveness of civil rights research and enforcement…[In addition] one box simply

isn't enough to accurately and completely acknowledge the diversity of mixed race

UC applicants."[120] It is significant to mention that these multiracial organizations'

collective denouncement of RE-52 speaks to the complexities that underlie mixed

race advocates' relationship to the politics of race and representation. In one way

these organizations expressed opposition to RE-52 by arguing that the collection of

enrollment data, especially for underrepresented students of color, was vital for

tracking *structural* inequities within higher education. In another way, however, they

were concerned that Connerly's recommendation for a broad multiracial category on

the UC application failed to account for *individual* variations within the mixed race

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[119] SF Gate Staff, "Students, Organizations Testify Against Ward Connerly's 'Multiracial' Checkbox, *SF Gate,* November 17, 2004, accessed September 9, 2014, http://www.civilrights.org/equal-opportunity/connerly/students-organizations-testify-against-ward-connerlys-multiracial-checkbox.html.
[120] Ibid.

community. These two interrelated positions signaled a larger paradox for using the category of mixed race as the centerpiece for political action.

In a testimony to the UC Board of Regents on the possible multiracial category, AMEA, MAVIN, and HIF acknowledged the threat of RE-52 was to "civil rights research and enforcement," and yet seemed even more concerned with the one-dimensional picture the recommendation would paint of the mixed race student population.[121] For them, the most salient critique against Connerly's proposal was that the "multiracial" category restricted the choice for mixed race students to declare their diverse racial identities. One article cited the organizations' concern that the recommendation failed to acknowledge that "mixed race people represent[d] a diverse cross section of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages, with many multiracial individuals identifying with multiple communities."[122] The fact that these organizations cited RE-52's inability to capture the particularity of mixed race individuals' heritages by denying students a broader range of categorical choices was ironic. It was this very premise upon which Connerly found the category of mixed race so alluring when pushing his colorblind policies in the first place. Connerly framed race as an individualized choice with countless possibilities, and not a structural position; a rationale for evacuating race from public institutions. Nonetheless, these organizations thought it was effective to invoke racial identity as a matter of personal choice in an effort to defend the idea of racial difference as an institutionalized problem. In spite of this, these mixed race organizations agreed with other opponents of RE-52 upon one basic premise—the UC's inability to track the

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

diversity of its student population was dangerous whether for purposes of racial/ethnic specificity or monitoring civil rights.

On November 17, 2004 UCEP convened at UCLA to discuss and vote on RE-52. Connerly found himself the only Regent in support of adding a multiracial option on the UC undergraduate admissions application as university officials overwhelming decided against the proposal, 12-1. Like Prop 54, university officials' virtually unanimous defeat of RE-52 was not made for any one reason, but a complex set of motives, of which placed the protection of civil rights as a ancillary concern.[123] While some explanations did in fact center on the structural impact of implementing a multiracial category in the admissions process, the justification of its defeat largely resided with administrative concerns. This is not to suggest that university officials dismissed the importance of educational equity for students of color, but rather that in California's post anti-affirmative action climate, there existed an awareness of potential backlash for explicitly using racial language in the context of admissions processes.

Consequently, the debate over the multiracial option firmly resided in the politics of bureaucracy. From the outset of the meeting, UC Regents summarized the current federal guidelines of racial data collection, emphasizing that a standalone "multiracial" category went against the current reporting requirements. Because of the incongruence between the current federal procedures and Connerly's recommendation, some Regents saw this as an opportunity to directly address the significance of maintaining the current method of data collection for purposes of racial justice. UC Regent Núñez was the most vocal about the impact of the

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[123] Ibid., 15.

multiracial option on issues of racial equity. Núñez "saw the need to address the issue in the framework of the desired outcome, which is to assess whether or not the University is achieving racial parity within its student body." Regent Anderson backed the idea of mixed race students being granted the "most meaningful choices for racial identification," but ultimately wanted to ensure the university remained "accountable for reporting and colleting racial data."[124]

Still, the meeting revealed that this was secondary to the primary concern brought against Connerly's request for the additional category. The most significant was that "as a recipient of federal funds the University of California is required to follow the federal reporting requirements of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education."[125] Therefore vast majority of justification for rejecting to request a modification to the current UC guidelines would revolve around this concern over government accountability.

While university officials engaged in a significant, nuanced discussion concerning the current method for handling data on "two or more races," which I examine in the following section, I first highlight the primary concern brought against Connerly's request for the additional category. It was noted in the opening statements of the meeting that, "as a recipient of federal funds the University of California is required to follow the federal reporting requirements of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics in the

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[124] Ibid., 15.
[125] Regents of University of California, Committee On Educational Policy November 17, 2004, p.12 accessed September 16, 2015, http://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/minutes/2004/edpol1104.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education."[126] Within this context, UC President Robert C. Dynes expressed serious apprehension with implementing a method of collecting data that was not only out of step with OMB's guidelines, but also inconsistent with other institutions.[127]

For example, weighing in on RE-52, UC President Dynes expressed serious apprehension with implementing a method of collecting data that was not only out of step with the OMB guidelines, but also inconsistent with other institutions.[128] Additionally, President Dynes was concerned that creating a new multiracial category would disrupt the ability to track demographic trends since years of racial data did not include the option. However, he was not completely dismissive of Connerly's demands to officially recognize students identifying with the broad multiracial category. He acknowledged the UC system's need to remain aware of California's growing multiracial demographic and receptive to hearing their opinions on the matter. Nevertheless, Dynes and other Regents believed the decision on whether to add a multiracial category was best made at the federal level.

Still, what seemingly appeared to be yet another devastating loss for Connerly essentially served as an occasion to further popularize arguments on behalf of mixed race that appealed to national discourses on race and racism, particularly in regards to higher education. Specifically, perpetuating the notion that institutional recognition of mixed race subjectivity supposedly signified a transitional step to a post-racial America whereby postsecondary race-based policies were not just undesirable, but no longer necessary. Denying self-identified mixed race students recognition under a

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[126] Ibid., 12.
[127] Ibid., 14.
[128] Ibid.,14.

multiracial category on the UC application was framed as violating the individual rights of a "new" racial group. Framing the debate in this way, Connerly and his supporters' adopted the logic of liberal antiracism that represented national values that celebrated both abstract racial equality and individual rights. Consequently, despite losing the vote he effectively used the logic of racial liberalism to not only prompt university officials to engage in a nuanced debate over adding a multiracial category, but also publicly pressured the UC system to reconsider how they were currently handling racial data for students reporting more than one race on the UC undergraduate application.

Despite the recommendation's overwhelming opposition, a significant point of debate came from the November meeting's discussion of RE-52. That is, the fundamental issue on multiracial data collection procedures for California's public universities had gone largely unexamined in a comprehensive fashion. While the US census in many ways dealt with how to both *count and report* the mixed race population in 2000—by allowing individuals to mark one or more racial categories— Ward Connerly helped to illuminate the fact that such procedures were far from settled in the realm of higher education. In this way, many of Connerly's concerns found their way to the federal level just as some of the UC officials previously suggested.

A Seed Planted: The Impact of Connerly's Proposal

At the same UCEP meeting Connerly made clear that the recommendation for a multiracial option was not simply about the additional category itself, but tied to his

displeasure with the UC system not officially retaining and reporting the statistics on incoming undergraduates checking off multiples races. Connerly was specifically citing data procedures that aggregated the 13 racial and ethnic categories listed on the undergraduate UC admissions application into five—African American/Black, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and White—when reporting to IPEDS.[129] At the meeting he expressed his disapproval with how "the University classifies as Black anyone who checks this and any other box."[130] Connerly attacked this practice for two related reasons: first, he called the practice hypocritical of the UC system because racial data was supposedly based on "self-identification" even though some respondents' answers were being aggregated without even consulting students regarding this change; and second, re-categorizing those students who self-identified as "Black" *and* some other race as singularly "Black" was merely a reinforcement of the one-drop rule. In fact, other supporters of the multiracial category would further emphasize this latter complaint. For instance, in a joint letter of support for RE-52, which included members from two conservative multiracial organizations—James Landrith (founder of The Multiracial Activist) and Charles Byrd (founder of the Interracial Voice)— argued, "the current classification tabulation method, which mimics the classic 'one-drop rule' of the Jim Crow past, should be abolished rather than continue to be used a [sic] means of denying

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[129] While OMB's Directive 15, allowing respondents to mark multiple races on public forms, was officially instituted January 1, 2003, educational institutions were not included in the specific guidelines on whether to aggregate data on those marking more than one race. As a result, the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) informed institutions to continue using the same methods they had been previously using for reporting data on race and ethnicity. This included a total of seven options that included five racial categories (African American/Black, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and White) and two additional categories (Non-resident Alien, Race and Ethnicity unknown).

[130] Ibid., 14.

'multiracial' individuals the same identification rights afforded to the rest of the student population."[131] According to Landrith, Byrd, and others, re-categorizing students who identify with multiple races into just one reflected an archaic form of racialization left over from the Jim Crow era. For them, re-classifying a student identifying as both Black and white as *singularly* black signaled the same logic of the one-drop rule that, for example, legally prevented Homer Plessy (*Plessy V. Ferguson* [1896])—a phenotypically white "octoroon"—from riding in a "whites-only" train car in 1890.[132] In this way, by rejecting the current method of aggregating racial data, supporters of RE-52 thought of themselves as exemplifying a national culture seeking to condemn its Jim Crow past. That is, by situating UC's method of re-tabulating data of self-identified multiracial students within a legacy of white supremacy, supporters of RE-52 strategically drew upon state and national endorsements of anti-racism.

Thus, despite UC Regents essentially being unanimous against the implementation of a multiracial category on the undergraduate application, the attacks against aggregating racial data for students checking off multiple races put university officials in a precarious position. Connerly and his followers employed the language of diversity and anti-racism, which made it difficult for UC leaders to outright reject the arguments for the proposal. Doing so would potentially depict them as unwilling to adapt to California's supposed racially progressive demography, and susceptible to charges of perpetuating a system of racialization attached to an outdated racist

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[131] James Landrith, Charles Bird, Billy Brady, Helen Campbell, Francis Wardle, Valerie, Wilkins-Godbee, Steve and Ruth White, Rita Frazier, "Joint Letter to the University of California Board of Regents re: Multiracial Category, November 16, 2004, accessed March 12, 2014, http://multiracial.com/site/index.php/2004/11/16/joint-letter-to-university-of-california-board-of-regents-re-multiracial-category-2/
[132] Octoroon is an archaic term for a person supposedly possessing 1/8 of African descent.

regime. Officials instead would largely argue that the issue was simply not theirs to decide. UC President Dynes pushed for the matter to be handled at the federal level, claiming the "Census Bureau continues to examine the matter and experts believe that their will be changes in the way that the federal government categorizes these data."[133] Until a federal mandate was handed down that specifically outlined how to treat student respondents identifying with multiple races, the current method would continue to be used.

However, just as UC officials forecasted, the federal government would indeed respond. Just three years later the US Department of Education (DE) offered new guidelines for postsecondary institutions. In October of 2007 the DE issued out its "Final Guidance of Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial Data."[134] The guidelines were essentially the same as OMB's 1997 revisions, except whereas the earlier changes did not specifically apply to educational institutions, these latest instructions explicitly mandated that postsecondary schools follow the procedures for reporting racial and ethnic data to IPEDS. According to the policy changes implemented by the DE, universities would still aggregate racial data when necessary, only now instead of reporting five races it added a sixth category: "two or more races."[135] While universities were given the opportunity to adopt this change as early

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[133] Regents of University of California, Committee On Educational Policy November 17, 2004, p.13.
[134] "Final Guidance of Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial Data to the US Department of Edcuation," *Register Volume 72, Number 202* (October 2007), accessed September 25, 2014, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2007-10-19/html/E7-20613.htm.
[135] As part of the change, the race/ethnicity questions were divided into two parts. The first asked if a respondent was of Latino/Hispanic Heritage. This question would determine a respondent's ethnicity (not race), and serve as its own reporting category. The second question would then ask for a respondents race, including 5 categories—American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races. The remaining two reporting categories would be Non-resident Aliens (For who neither ethnicity or race was reported) and Race and Ethnicity Unknown.

as the 2008-2009 academic year, they were not required to implement the modification until the 2010-2011 academic year. Until then, postsecondary institutions were given the option to maintain their current method of gathering racial data, adopt the new revisions, or use a combination of the new and old system.

While Connerly's efforts to include a multiracial category on the UC undergraduate admissions application failed, I suggest the DE's latest instructions to universities represented a mere modification of his recommendation in two ways: first, the terminology, "two or more races," was chosen over Connerly's "multiracial" label; second, students were not explicitly self-identifying with the "two or more races" category on their application, but rather the school would report respondents as belonging to this group whenever multiple racial options were checked by a student. Nonetheless, adding "two or more races" as a sixth aggregated category carried a resemblance, even if coincidently, to Connerly's 2004 proposal. Although the DE gave permission for institutions to *collect* and *maintain* any variety of racial data individual schools deemed important, they—in line with other federal agencies— were relying on a "two or more races" category that was just as generic as the multiracial option Connerly proposed three years prior. In other words, students selecting multiple choices would be aggregated in a similar fasion to Connerly's proposed "multiracial option."

The point here is not to assess the "accuracy" of the collection of racial data (which has never reflected any categories of essential Truth), but instead emphasize the process by which mixed race has become part of a racial vocabulary within postsecondary education as well as explore the significance of this development.

Connerly demonstrated the strategic ways the category of mixed race could be deployed in relation to the politics of higher education, and while largely unsuccessful in terms of immediate policy changes within California, elements of his recommendation could still be found within the federal guidelines for gathering data on mixed race students. It is important to note that while these changes were not directly a result of Connerly's advocacy, his ideas nonetheless reflected more than just isolated claims coming from a far-Right conservative UC employee. IPEDS now requiring universities to report a generic mixed race category ("two or more races"), which would encompass students racialized in a variety of ways, tacitly signified an ongoing transformation over the *meaning* of racial data within higher education. Whereas racial data served as one tool to track the effectiveness of affirmative action policies passed during the civil rights era, the fading of such programs turned the collection of such data from a means to end. In other words, as civil rights legislation introduced the political importance of being counted, multiracial students prioritized their desires for racial recognition in the 1990s. However, these desires were articulated in an era where the original intent for racial reporting—namely, affirmative action—were retracted.

Sociologist Kimberly McClain DaCosta argues that during the latter half of the 1960s, the civil rights era reconstituted racial classification as "an increasingly important tool for redressing the effects of racial domination" by implementing "administrative systems to monitor compliance with [civil rights] laws."[136] At this

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[136] Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracial*), 40. While DaCosta claims racial data collection has historically sought to define and categorize people as a means for exclusion and exploitation, she suggests the 1960s legislation such as the Civil Rights Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965), and Housing Act (1968) made collecting racial data vital to ensuring that these laws were being enforced.

time, the federal government would continue to rely upon racial categories

historically situated within a framework organized around structural racism of both

the past and present to evaluate the effectiveness of civil rights legislation. In this

context, the particular categories of race would be important only as far as they

functioned as a *means* to an *end*—equal opportunity.

Yet, the increased emphasis on gathering correct racial data in order to

evaluate compliance of the recent anti-discrimination legislation yielded significant

consequences. Specifically, DaCosta emphasizes that a major outcome of tracking the

efficacy and obedience of such laws during this period placed greater importance on

"accurately" identifying one's race. Thus, beginning in 1970, individuals were

granted permission to self-report their race on the US Census rather than the previous

method, which allowed a government employee to racially categorize people through

"visual inspection."[137] Ultimately, DaCosta claims this "fostered the sense that the

purpose of state racial categories was to record the individual's self-identity,

something that only the individual could determine."[138] This mode of gathering data

introduced a sense of possessive individualism concerning racial classification in a

way not previously experienced.

This model of racial categorization would eventually contribute to mixed race

advocates seeking recognition on the US Census throughout the 1990s, Connerly

pushing for a multiracial category on UC admissions applications in 2004, and the DE

laying out new guidelines to include "two or more races" as an aggregated category in

2007. As the institutionalization of anti-racism in the post-civil rights era absorbed

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[137] Ibid.,41.
[138] Ibid., 41.

discourses of visibility and recognition, while filtering out more complex strategies for countering structural inequities, all of these efforts on behalf of mixed race had abandoned a crucial element of collecting and reporting racial data. Ferguson asserts, "as quantification became the standard by which to incorporate racialized subjects, race would be read ironically as an abstraction divorced from historical contexts."[139] Thus, recognition no longer became a means to an end, but a goal in and of itself. Being counted was now the primary objective against discrimination rather just one method among many to identify larger structural networks of power. This mode of thinking was further entrenched by anti-affirmative action policies whereby social redistribution no longer served as a legally viable method for addressing material inequality. In this way, the inclusion of the "Two or More Races" category when reporting racial data on undergraduates to IPEDS was not simply an innocent recognition of the growing number of multiracial students in the US, particularly in California, but also signified how racial data further legitimated race "as an abstraction divorced from historical contexts" of oppression.

Conclusion

Both RPI and RE-52 serve as case studies representing the institutionalization of mixed race in the context of the contemporary university. Some officials and political conservatives seized upon the category of mixed race to advance both the cultural and economic ideals undergirding the neoliberal academy. In this way, equal opportunity programs and even the ability to track racial data were challenged, all under the banner of liberal equality. Even with the ultimate failure of RPI and RE-52,

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[139] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 105.

these policy proposals introduced the category of mixed race to the administrative

sphere of the university in a way that was difficult to ignore. As privatization, racial

neutrality, and entrepreneurialism represent the intrinsic qualities of both the

contemporary US academy and mixed race, students inhabit both of these spaces,

adopting the logic and language from the spaces that they occupy. As a result, the

next chapter moves from the administrative sphere to the social, asking how these

discussions influence mixed race student organizing.

Chapter 2: Legacy's Preferences: On Mixed Race Student Organizing

Figure 6. Source: Dennis Beal, *Happiness is a Warm Club*, 1968 , Fine Arts Department, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA. Available from diva: **https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/strike/bundles/210921** (accessed January 2014.

"Happiness is a Warm Club" is a political poster representing the transformation of political life on university campuses across the U.S. in general, and California in particular. Transformations, I suggest, that have significantly shaped the formation and organizational trajectory of mixed race student groups on college campuses over the past half-century. "Happiness is a Warm Club," was created at the time of the college strike at San Francisco State University (SFSU) during the 1968-69 academic

year. Led by the Black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)—a
coalition between the Latin American Student Organization, Filipino-American
Students Organization, Mexican American Student Organization, El Renacimiento,
and the Black Students Union—the strike sought to achieve campus reforms,
including an expansion of the Black studies program, the creation of and primary
control over the School of Ethnic Studies, and increasing admissions of people of
color. After months of protest and TWLF's march on the student administration
building, these clashes between students and police on campus eventually led to a
brief, but significant, closure of SFSU.[140]

The image illustrates these confrontations, depicting a white police officer
donning a riot protection helmet and wielding a baton. At the top, the words
"Happiness is a Warm Club" are written in white upon a red backdrop. Perhaps the
phrase was drawn from Charles Schultz's popular saying during the 1960s,
"happiness is a warm puppy," from his comic strip, *Peanuts*, or possibly borrowed
from the Beetles 1968 hit, "Happiness is a Warm Gun." In the latter context, a "warm
gun" implies a weapon that has been recently fired. In this context, referring back to
the image above, a "warm club" might symbolize a recently used police baton. In this
way, I suggest the picture visually narrates the university protesters' distrustful
perspective of police presence on campus by identifying the use of force as a method
for maintaining institutional "happiness" through social order.

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[140] Helene Whitson, "Introductory Essay," *The San Francisco State College Strike Collection*, accessed
October 6, 2013, http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/essay.html. Among the most
significance achievements of the strike was the establishment of The School of Ethnic Studies, which
began operation in the Fall Semester of 1969.

However, if we reimage the poster in a more contemporary context, then this gives the image a different symbolic meaning. That is, in an era when discourses of multiculturalism and diversity permeate campus politics, reenvisioning the image offers a heuristic for framing the larger themes of this chapter: The university facilitates mixed race student organizations' propensity to focus more on individual identity formation and recognition rather than structural inequality within higher education, and thus is antagonistic to radical student politics, even if unintentionally so.

Thus, instead of understanding the "warm club" from the image as a weapon, I want to briefly reconceptualize "club" to refer to the multiple on-campus groups that organize social and political life for students on campus. That is, to reimagine the "warm club" as not a recently used baton, but rather a welcoming student organization. I propose such a shift in meaning provides a useful heuristic device for introducing the relationship between identity-based student organizations and the institutions they belong to in the context of the institutionalization of minority difference.

If the phrase "Happiness is a Warm Club" represents the joy (i.e. warmth) that might come from participating in an inclusive culturally-based organization, then this transforms the illustration of the police officer into a figure surveilling and disciplining that hypothetical "warm club." As the officer signifies the state and its academic institutions, the words hovering over him appear as though he, as an institutional symbol, is the one endorsing the notion that clubs are a welcome source of happiness. While his half-cocked smile serves as a supportive gesture, as if pleased

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by the diverse cultural formations on campus, the ~~club~~ baton gripped in the officer's

hand symbolizes how a club's joy is organized around particular regulations. In this

way, as Sara Ahmed reminds us, happiness functions as a disciplinary technique that

makes certain institutions and "forms of personhood valuable" and desirable.[141]

Herein lies the significance of the image's double meaning: in its original 1968

context, the illustration imagines an authoritative academic institution, forcefully

resistant to the broadening of culturally-based knowledges; whereas my rereading of

the image identifies the ways in which minority difference is *welcomed* with an

institutional smile, and *managed* through the support of particular identity-based

clubs.

Ultimately, this dual reading of the poster narrates the relevance of the 1960s

and 70s student movements to mixed race student organizing around the turn of the

21st century. Specifically, these past political contestation within the university

represent a period in which students and administrators were seeking to effectively

address post-war promises of democratizing higher education. It was this period

whereby the logic and terms for the university, and the US more generally, would, as

Roderick Ferguson asserts, "become one of incorporating difference for the good

rather than the disruption of hegemony."[142] By the 1990s multiculturalism and

diversity would become ubiquitous concepts, asserted by the academy just as much as

student organizers. Mixed race student organizing draws upon the legacies of these

cultural logics to help constitute its claims for recognition and legitimacy of their

organizational demands. It is under this premise that I explore organizers of

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[141] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press), 11.
[142] Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Thing: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2012).

multiracial student groups and the ways in which they conceive of their organizational investments. Therefore, as my first chapter provided case studies to explain the ways in which California's higher education system has functioned as an institutional apparatus that uses mixed race—through discourses of diversity and representational politics—to manage difference and inequality, this second chapter looks at how organizers of mixed race student groups maneuver within the terrain of these institutional spaces. Such a conversation is critical in understanding the subtle ways in which low Black student enrollment becomes normalized within spaces of higher education.

As I outlined in my introduction, the foundations of work on mixed race identity, particularly work throughout the 1990s, sought to increase visibility of multiracial people by prioritizing (and celebrating) the personal experiences of mixed race people.[143] Much of this literature was located within social scientific fields often conducting qualitative analyses and/or prioritizing personal narratives of mixed race individuals. However, since literary and cultural studies scholars have more recently propelled the so-called critical shift within the field, interdisciplinary work on the sociocultural significance of multiracialism has been engaged by way of textual and literary analysis.[144] The use of poststructuralist critique to challenge essentialist representations of experience has encouraged scholars writing about mixed race to

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[143] See, Maria Root, *Racially Mixed People in America* (1992) *& The Multiracial Experience* (1996); Lise Funderberg, *White, Black, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity*, 1 ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994); Claudine Chiwei O'Hearn, *Half and Half, Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

[144] Examples include: Jared Sexton, *Amalgamtion Schemes: Anti-Blackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (2008); Michelle Elam, *Souls of Mixed Folks: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (2011); Habiba Ibrahim, *Troubling the Family: The Promise of Personhood and The Rise of Multiracialism* (2012); Ralina Joseph, *Transcending Blackness: From the New Millennium Mulatta to the Exceptional Multiracial* (2012).

remain skeptical of the use of personal narratives within their research. However, where studies of mixed race issues have traditionally featured celebratory voices of individuals on the one hand or focused on a more abstract critique of institutional discourse on the other, this chapter considers both. To account for the personal experience I interviewed 6 student organizers of mixed race organizations on two UC campuses—UC Berkeley (UCB) and UC Los Angeles (UCLA)—in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Exploring these issues with student organizers at MSU at UCB and UCLA reveals the complex ways in which these groups have inherited a post-civil rights vocabulary that focuses more on individual identity formation than structural inequality within higher education, often inadvertently obscuring critiques of institutional investments in minority difference. To elaborate upon this claim, I first consider how institutionalized notions of difference constitute the organizational and personal identity of MSU organizers that I interviewed, particularly as mixed race becomes synonymous with the concept of diversity for the groups' participants. Then I analyze the cultural significance of the 1978 Supreme Court case, *Board of Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* to discuss how these institutionalized notions of difference have become the most readily available vocabulary with which to imagine and articulate diversity and its perceived benefits. In the third section, I explore how MSU's conceptualization of diversity serves as an organizational model that impacts how the group understands the conditions of social inclusivity and exclusivity. The focus of fourth section builds upon the previous, suggesting that MSU's model of inclusivity relies upon a mode of political neutrality in order to

maintain solidarity, yet limits its political vision in regards to larger goals of social justice.[145] Lastly, I explore how these aforementioned discussions play out in the context of a specific political event on the UCB campus—namely, the UCB Republican's Anti-Affirmative Action Bake-Sale, which received national media coverage. Discussing these issues reveals a contemporary cultural logic that undergirds the ways in which rights and resources for students of color, particularly Black students, are being left behind amidst both the institutionalization of minority difference and the transformation of racial boundaries in the 21st century.

Hapa Issues Forum: Origins of California Mixed Race Student Organizing

The founding of MSU at UCB has made the most significant impact on the establishment of mixed race student organizations across many of California's university campuses. Before adopting the name Mixed Student Union in 2005, the origins of UCB's chapter of MSU began in 1992 with the founding of Hapa Issues Forum (HIF). Hapa is a term indicating a person of mixed Asian ancestry.[146] Established by three UCB students, HIF emphasized inclusiveness of mixed race Japanese Americans within the larger Japanese American community through

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[145] Following Kandice Chuh's conceptualization of "justice," I use the term "not as the achievement of a determinate end, but rather as an endless project of searching out the knowledge and material apparatuses that extinguish some (Other) life ways and that hoard economic and social opportunities only for some." See, Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.

[146] The term "hapa" was originally a native Hawaiian phrase, "hapa haole," to mean "mixed" or "half" or "part." More specifically, the phrase was generally, but not exclusively, used to describe someone who is half European and half native Hawaiian. According to Asian American studies scholar, Wei Ming Dariotis, some Native Hawaiian's object to the usage of the term hapa to refer to *anyone* who is mixed Asian or Pacific Islander. More specifically, some Native Hawaiian's believe that the term loses the its colonial context when applied to multiple groups. See, Wei Ming Dariotis, "Hapa: The Word of Power," *MAViN*, December 2, 2007, accessed February 3, 2015, http://www.mixedheritagecenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1259&Itemid=34.

programming and outreach. The organization originally sought to inform the community of issues facing mixed race Japanese Americans. HIF eventually branched out beyond just a campus organization—the organization gained non-profit status in 1993—and a year later broadened its focus by becoming a pan-Asian mixed race group. The organization never imagined itself as entirely mutually exclusive from the broader Asian American community, but rather an "independent" sub-group that could focus primarily on *multiracial* Asian American issues. HIF encouraged members to discuss their mixed race identity and challenge the nation's "rigid" notions of race, while also "maintain a political role in the larger multiracial and monoracial communities; collaborate with campus and community organizations interested in mixed race issues; and providing a setting where people can celebrate their diversity and come together as a community."[147]

Looking to extend these goals beyond UCB and the local community, HIF established several chapters throughout Northern and Southern California, many of which were located on California's college campuses.[148] Local chapters held meetings to plan social events and offer a space to discuss identity, culture, and the ways "Hapas" were situated within the Asian American community. These chapters would then collectively meet for HIF's annual conferences, which were organized around a variety of themes. For example, yearly conferences asked its members to consider questions like what it meant to be Hapa, whether multiracials represented the

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[147] "Hapa Issues Forum Pamphlet," 11 August 1996, Hapa Issues Forum Collection, Folder: "HIF Core Spring 1998," Carton 1, Ethnic Studies Library Archives and Special Collections, University of California, Berkeley.

[148] HIF Chapters throughout California include: Southern California (later became Los Angeles) chapter in 1997, followed by UC Irvine (1999), San Francisco (1999), Stanford University (2000), UC San Diego (2001) and UC Los Angeles (2001). See "HIF Through the Years," *Hapa Issues Forum*, http://www.csun.edu/~smr78195/hif/, accessed July 11, 2013.

end of racism, and the ways in which Hapas promoted diversity.[149] HIF found it important to not only discuss these matters amongst its members, but also work to inform Asian American organizations and local communities about Hapa related issues. The organization also held symposiums, workshops, and youth programs on issues of multiraciality and diversity.

HIF organizers eventually developed affiliated chapters throughout the country, and their work went on to be officially recognized in 1998, receiving the National Youth/Student Vision Award from the Japanese American Citizen League in Philadelphia.[150] The organization continued to advocate for political issues impacting mixed race Asian Americans, occasionally working in coalition with national multiracial organizations like the MAVIN Foundation and the Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA). For example, in 1997 HIF sent a representative along with members of MAVIN and AMEA to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) meeting in Washington D.C. to urge officials to allow mixed race individuals to mark more that one racial category on the 2000 US Census.

Overall, HIF considered its efforts to broaden recognition of mixed race identity, particularly within parts of the Asian American community, largely a success. However, a conflict concerning the organization's collective identity would eventually cause the nonprofit to disband. Members of the organization became increasingly uncertain and conflicted as to the direction of its political objectives. In 2000, a HIF board member described his lack of commitment to the organization in a

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[149] Hapa Issues Forum Constitution, Spring 1998, Hapa Issues Forum Collection, Folder: "HIF Core Spring 1998," Carton 1, Ethnic Studies Library Archives and Special Collections, University of California, Berkeley.
[150] "HIF Through the Years," *Hapa Issues Forum*, http://www.csun.edu/~smr78195/hif/WHtimeline.pdf, accessed March 10, 2016.

letter to other leaders, writing, "I don't carry the same level of determination or willingness to give of my time and energy as I do in my service to the Japanese American community because I am not clear on our vision for this 'community' or this 'space' we've created."[151] This board member's uncertainty with HIF's organizational vision foreshadowed a significant reason for the organization's demise seven years later. The former executive director, Sheila Chung, spoke about the reasons HIF was disbanding at an event that marked the official closure of HIF in 2007. She explained that although one reason was the organization's belief that HIF had largely achieved their goal of mixed race recognition within Asian American communities, another significant cause of the group's closure was conflicts over its larger goals. Chung stated:

> Folks who had been around the organization for a long time wanted something different—they wanted to get more politicized, they wanted to start working on other issues besides talking about ourselves. When we tried to move in that direction and leave the identity piece behind, we ended up having a real rift of what the national organization wanted and what some of our chapters wanted—hapa 101 identity development.[152]

Here the former Executive Director noted an important desire for HIF to move beyond a focus on identity and towards an emphasis on organizing around a politics of difference, which created a rift amongst many of the local chapters—most of which were located on college campuses—who wanted to prioritize identity as its organizational focus. I suggest this over-emphasis on identity development among many of the organization's chapters not only gestures towards a significant reason

[151] Letter to HIF Board Members, 10 May 2000, Hapa Issues Forum Collection, Carton 4, Ethnic Studies Library Archives and Special Collections, University of California, Berkeley.
[152] Quoted in, Emily Leach, "After 15 Years, Hapa Issues Forum Disbands, *Asian Week: The Voice of Asian America*, September 15, 2007, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.asianweek.com/2007/09/15/after-15-years-hapa-issues-forum-disbands/.

HIF disbanded, but also characterizes the motivation for many of its chapters to transition to the current multiracial organizations now present in California's colleges and universities. HIF's university chapters were increasingly concerned with incorporating more "mixed" identities into its organizational focus by broadening its membership to becoming a pan-multiracial student group. For instance, two years prior to HIF officially disbanding, its UC Berkeley chapter officially changed its name to the Mixed Student Union (MSU) in order to recognize its members not of mixed Asian American descent. Whereas "Asian American" represented a pan-ethnic alliance—of which, HIF tried to gain recognition from—these new student group represented complex reconfiguration of coalition building. Ultimately, this transition would institute MSU chapters across several other California university campuses.

Today, each chapter of MSU is classified as a culturally based-organizations on their respective campuses. Their overarching goal is to provide a community of support for multiracial, multi-ethnic, multicultural, and transracial adoptee students by creating a safe space to share personal experiences concerning issues of race and culture. MSU has also developed semiformal relationships with other identity-based organizations on their respective campuses and are highly encouraged, if not expected, to contribute to a collective commitment toward social justice. MSU chapters conduct weekly or bi-weekly meetings for its members to discuss various issues impacting the "mixed" community. Such topics vary, from being asked, "what are you?" to interracial dating to being subject to differing parenting styles. The organizers generally pose questions around these topics in order to facilitate discussion amongst the groups' members. Beyond these meetings, the organizations

occasionally hold social events on and off campus as a way to foster camaraderie among participants. These social events are believed to help recruit new members as well as retain current ones.

In fact, recruitment is a primary concern for these organizations. All my interviewees expressed that retaining membership, and even the leadership in some cases, was a challenge. Most organizers claimed that the lack of awareness and inability to provide a clear and sustained goal for the organization were the central issues in recruiting and keeping members—much like the issues that faced HIF before disbanding.

HIF Significance to Mixed Race Student Organizing

What is the ideological significance of HIF's transition to the more pan-multiracial organizations currently established on many of the universities and college campuses in California? Both the original mission of HIF and its reasons for closure uncover significant consequences for the politics of mixed race student organizing. Consequently I evaluate the how this organizational transition established a basis for the current dynamics of the present-day multiracial groups I spoke with. More precisely, the transition between HIF to MSU imparted an organizational trajectory that impacted how multiracial student groups engaged in racial politics on campus. MSU anchored in multiracial Asian American identity (HIF), the organizations' chapters at UCB and UCLA continued to emphasiz identity over broader political action, and drew upon prior student movements as well as university discourse to form its organizational priorities.

HIF was originally less interested in issues like racial classification, but instead focused more on "building relations with the Japanese American community."[153] It was important to the organization to emphasize the dynamism of the community rather than separating from it. In a "proposal for the vision and mission of Hapa Issues Forum" from 2000, board member Steven Ropp wrote, "Instead of creating yet another separate ethnic community, we will work to institute a broader vision of community. Many of us in fact belong to and participate in multiple communities and it is this 'both/and' philosophy that should be a central feature of our vision."[154] According to Ropp, fundamental to HIF's advocacy was expanding the vision of community to allow for the right to not only claim multiple social and/or political positions, but to be legitimated within them as well. This meant the recognition of the multiracial Asian American experience inside the broader Asian American community. DaCosta claims HIF founders not only believed an ethno-racially specific mixed race organization helped underscore that the term "multiracial" represented more than just mixed race black/white people, but also, and more importantly, better addressed issues particular to them as multiracial Asian Americans. In this sense, HIF members seeking full acceptance within the Asian American community was central to the creation of the group. For instance, "some Japanese American civic organizations like basketball leagues and beauty pageants, have rules, formal and informal, specifying ancestry and name (a proxy for ancestry)

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[153] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 35. DaCosta goes on to explain that it was not until multiracial acitivist, Ramona Douglass of AMEA, urged HIF to join the classification lobbying effort that the group took the issue head on. It was believed by multiracial leaders that HIF's presence was vital to the racial classification lobbying effort because it would demonstrate multiracial Asian American support for the movement. Such an endorsement would give credence to the claims that the movement was broadly based and not simply multiracials attempting to be "less black."

[154] Steven Ropp, "A proposal for the vision and Mission of Hapa Issues Forum," Fall 2000, Carton 2, Ethnic Studies Library Archives and Special Collections, University of California, Berkeley.

requirements for their participants."[155] Such regulations sometimes excluded

multiracial Asian American from participating. It was these mixed race Asian

American-specific issues that helped contextualize the creation of clear and targeted

goals for HIF organizers.

Cultural historian Paul Spickard cites Orientalism and geographic proximity

due to Asian immigration to the US as two major factors in the construction of the

idea of "Asian American."[156] Spickard goes on to discuss that by the 1960s the influx

of Asian Americans enrolled in college, particularly in California and other parts of

the west coast, would collectivize and become increasingly politicized in the context

of the civil rights movement and Vietnam war. Taking inspiration from the Black

power and Chicano movements, along with white American racist backlash due to the

war, Asian Americans became solidified as a pan-ethnic, social and political category

of difference, advocating on behalf of a racialized group.[157] Just as this categorical

formation afforded some opportunity for Asian Americans to both assert intra-ethnic

differences and strategically forgo them in the name of "Asian American-ness," HIF

wanted the same opportunity. That is, HIF members desired recognition under the

umbrella of Asian American, but simultaneously demanded acknowledgment for their

unique experiences as "hapas."

Questions over what it meant to be "hapa" caused its members to reevaluate

the group's collective identity. Kimberly DaCosta remarks, "defining 'hapa' as those

[155] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 223.
[156] Paul Spickard, "Wither the Asian American Coalition?," *Pacific Historical Review* 74.4 (November 2007), 587. Other sources on the construction of Asian American pan-ethnicity include, but not limited to:
[157] See, Lisa Lowe, *Immigration Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

with partial Asian ancestry necessarily highlights experiences as Asian as the glue

that holds the group together. But since delineating a 'we' always entails defining

who is *not* 'we,' the effort to construct a unified concept of hapa always threatened to

collapse" (author's emphasis).[158] In this way, HIF faced the challenges of community

building as the word "hapa" inadvertently set certain boundaries around who fell

under the multiracial term. As previously mentioned, HIF chapters consequently

transitioned to what they believed was a more inclusive approach, and replaced the

term "hapa" with the more broadly identifiable term, "mixed." This addressed the

concerns of HIF members who believed the organization limited the

conceptualization of the term "hapa," which tacitly excluded the experiences of "non-

white hapas." DaCosta indicated HIF mostly focused on Asian/white multiracials,

citing one of her respondents—Elaine, a member identified as Japanese/black—who

said, "even within the multiracial community there is a problem related to

blackness…They form an organization and they don't focus on Afro/Asian issues and

Latino/Asian issues. They focus on white/Asian issues."[159] Elaine's observations

demonstrated the limiting logic with which "hapa" identity was imagined amongst its

members. While HIF's lack of recognition of "non-white hapas" tacitly facilitated the

transition to a more inclusive pan-multiracial organization, the more explicit reason

was because mixed race students (as well as those identifying as "multicultural") who

were not of Asian American background began to participate in the group. Former

HIF chapters abandoned the term hapa to include a broader spectrum of multiracial

people, including those who identified with not just two or more racial groups, but

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[158] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 143.
[159] Ibid.,143.

multiple ethnicities and cultures as well. This organizational model would come to define the mixed race student groups I met with, namely MSU at UCB and UCLA.

Ironically, some of the obstacles HIF members confronted in terms of the group's inclusionary racial politics remained, even exacerbated, with the formation of MSU. As some HIF chapters moved away from its racial specificity—ultimately disappearing in favor of pan-multiracial organizations like MSU—these new student groups were still forced to contend with the different racialized experiences of its members. While it was believed among some HIF members that the group merely represented the Asian/white hapa experience, after these new organizations expanded their membership it became even more precarious to discuss the "multiracial" experience in strictly racialized terms. The transition to MSU now required bringing together members whose racialized bodies (and histories) yielded an even wider range of experiences.

Yet, this shift to MSU still attempted to rely on the organizational logic of HIF— tactically forgoing ethnic differences to politically organize under a single category. However, the primary difference was that MSU no longer dealt with cultural and ethnic differences, but racial. Asian American no longer served as an umbrella term, but rather multiracial. In order to continue the strategy of their multiracial Asian American predecessors, MSU organizers deemphasized members' racial differences in favor of celebrating *cultural* differences. In this way, some members would sacrifice their particularized racialized histories in favor of multiracial (or multicultural) identities.

Former co-president of MSU, Michelle—a self identified Latina and white, UCB alum that majored in biology and art—commented on this transition to a more multi*cultural* emphasis when moving from HIF to MSU. She stated:

> *So I joined shortly after that transition, maybe a semester or two… And it was just a general consensus among the members that were involved that— HIF always included members of…people of other than Asian or part Asian descent. You know that was implied in the name. And so they wanted to reflect that change. Well, not change, but inherent fact that this experience applies to more than just particular subgroup or ethnic identity. So the name change was supposed to reflect that. And I think also that's when we drafted up a new constitution. So we put in the language it could be just like multicultural. You know, have people whose parent's are just from different Latin America countries, but they still face a lot of the same issues. So it expanded to include people who identified as multiethnic, multiracial, multicultural, and transracial adoptee.*

Here Michelle's comments suggest that while HIF drew upon members' varying Asian/Asian American heritages as a racialized foundation for the group (even despite its aforementioned shortcomings), MSU needed to find other commonalities, although doing so created challenges. While Asian American—understood as a political formation contextualized by ethnic migration from Asia and orientalist discourses—served as an overarching category for which HIF secured itself, MSU's overarching category of multiracial represented a more ambiguous formation that organized around the broad category of "mixed identity" or in some cases, "multicultural," or "multi-ethnic."[160]

Consequently, some MSU members overlooked certain elements structuring racial difference—particularly significant factors informing group position, like

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[160] DaCosta's own interviews hint at this with a former HIF member revealed members of HIF thought of themselves as advocating for multiracial awareness *within* the Japanese American community (and broader Asian American community) whereas other pan-multiracial groups—which did not have a "common" racial ancestry—functioned more like a "support group." This former member's assessment of the major differences between HIF and pan-multiracial organizations accurately describes the organizational priorities of the MSU organizers I spoke with. See, DaCosta, *Making Multiracials,* 56.

physical appearance or racial history—and turned their focus toward shared *personal* and *private* affective connections. For example, the shared experiences of appearing racially ambiguous or being deemed racially "inauthentic" constituted an affective bond that undergirded multiracial student mobilization. In other words students who did not appear to look or act like others accepted as "racially authentic" actually became bound together on the grounds of shared exclusion and the similar experiences that followed. Racial exclusion, in short, begot multiracial identification and inclusion. That is, members anchored themselves to the multiracial organization through, to borrow a phrase from feminist scholar Robyn Wiegman, "a discourse of cross-racial *feeling*."[161] In DaCosta's own mixed race interviews, when she asked, "what was it like to get together with other multiracials?" Her respondents "descriptions centered on how they *felt* (rather than what they thought) about the [multiracial] experience (author's emphasis)."[162]

My interview with one student, Mya—Mexican and White identified, fourth year history major—revealed the importance of emotional connectivity with other members of the pan-multiracial group, MSU. She stated:

> And when [other members] joined and went to the first general [meeting], they're like, 'wow this is what I was feeling like when I was twelve years old. I didn't know why I was feeling that way.' So, I feel like that excitement of people finally finding that space is kind of my reason for being there or why I kept doing it because I remember the first time I felt like this is a space where I can talk about what I feel or make sense of what I felt.

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[161] Robyn Weigman, Intimate Publics: Race, Property, and Personhood, *American Literature* 74, no. 4 (December 2002), 859-885.
[162] Further illustrating this point: When Dacosta asked interviewees "what was it like to get together with other multiracials?" Her respondents "descriptions centered on how they *felt* (rather than what they thought) about the [multiracial] experience (author's emphasis). See, DaCosta, *Making Multiracials,* 134.

Mya revealed that for her, as well as many other participants of MSU, the group validated members' potentially long held feelings associated with their multiracial identity, and provided a space to ruminate on these emotions. Issues of identity were a priority for the group, expressed by way of members' shared feelings of the multiracial experience. The group collectivized around the celebration of a shared multiracial sentiment, rather than a shared racial past. This heavily relied upon a collective effort to ensure students were afforded a space to reconcile their racial identity with the support of other members.

Wiegman is useful for understanding the ways in which sentimentality is used to address a crisis of subjectivity, discussing how cross-racial feeling "produce[s] a multiracial family as the cultural destination for a distinctly new American kinship relation[.]"[163] While Wiegman is not deploying "multiracial" to explicitly refer to "mixed race," but instead, intimacies between multiple racial formations, her argument proves fruitful nonetheless. Wiegman suggests as a refusal of white supremacy, liberal whiteness produces a "new sentimental white masculinity," integrating "multiracial desire as its dominant cultural affect."[164] She asserts that an acceptance of multiracial kinship—through discourses of love and family and *not* sexual relations—is part of both an individual and national affective economy, which sets the terms of diversity and multicultural discourse.

In the case of MSU, sentimentalism affectively reconciled multiple histories of racialization, which might have otherwise threatened the group's focus on personal and collective identity. The members' affective connection, which undergirded by

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[163] Wiegman, "Intimate Publics: Race, Property, and Personhood," 874. Wiegman refers to the multiracial family
[164] Ibid., 872.

discourses concerning multi-racial family, facilitated a safe space to, in the words of

Mya, "make sense of what [they] feel" as multiracial/multicultural people. The

sentimentality attached to the inter-racial/cultural *family* served as the undercurrent to

a cross-racial feeling that united members across a variety of racial and cultural

backgrounds, and provided coherence to their personal and organizational identity.

However, such attachment to intimacies within the realm of family fostered

conversations of private identity, but rendered political discussions around the public

university a challenge.

In this way, MSU represented an organizational formation that operated under

a logic of racial liberalism whereby, as Wiegman reminds us, "political economy of

historical processes of racialization are rendered secondary to the property forms of

contemporary identity discourse…function[ing] to make equality the founding

sensibility of the language (and leger) of personhood characteristic of the

multicultural national imaginary."[165] This language of personhood is driven by the

emotional attachments to the multiracial experience rather than a common racial

history. The multicultural basis, for which MSU represented, in this way, became less

attached to historical processes of racial formation, but rather focused on an identity-

based reconciliation through mixed race recognition. The trajectory of MSU—with its

attachments to the Asian American roots of HIF—fully embraced the pan-ethnic

strategy to generate a sense of community by operating as a pan-multiracial

organization, but ultimately found sentimental ties to mixed race as its anchor.

Consequently such private affective connections significantly shaped MSU's

relationship to university politics. Contextualized by the legacies of racial liberalism

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[165] Ibid., 876.

and previous student movements of the 1960s deeply informs how MSU organizers

not only advocate for campus diversity, but also conceive of the term. Thus in the

next sections I interrogate MSU's views on organizational inclusion and exclusion,

which I suggest is symptomatic of the group's approach to diversity. I also discuss

how the group strategically invoked other culturally-based student groups to

distinguish themselves as the most inclusionary in their approach.

"United in Our Diversity": MSU and Discourse of Diversity

Diversity has become a ubiquitous concept, developed to simultaneously celebrate

minority difference *and* liberal individualism—two models that have come to

underlie multiracial politics in general and mixed race student organizing in

particular.[166] Yet, it is important to emphasize that mixed race student activists and

student organizers did not create such a framework for diversity, but in many ways

were birthed by it.

From the time student protestors during 1960s and 1970s advocated for the

recognition of people of color and their knowledges within the university, to

administrators' subsequent incorporation and reorganization of these claims, the

university began serving as a primary site that would, at once, embrace minority

difference and liberal individualism (even if a genuine commitment to these ideas

functioned in politically contradictory ways). Student strikes—like the Third World

Strike at San Francisco State University (SFSU) during the academic year of 1968-

1969—sought institutionalization of minority difference, setting in motion discourses

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[166] See Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence* Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*; Ahmed, *On Being Included*.

of official recognition of minoritized identities and histories on college campuses.[167]

For example, student activists of the "The Third World Liberation Front demand[ed] a School of Ethnic Studies organized for the purposes of offering studies concerning the culture of non-white people of the United States." They also demanded "that in the Fall of 1969, all Third World students that apply for admission be admitted." For student liberation movements like these, gaining recognition required *both* the institutional acknowledgement of minority difference and the complex power relations that rendered women and people of color invisible within the academy. Ultimately, it was believed a disruption in the universalizing of western subjectivities and thought within the academy, through both increased representation and the institutionalization of an Ethnic Studies program, would offer legibility to alternative ways of being and knowing.[168]

However, student movements such as the SFSU college strike rest on a contradiction that presents, as Roderick Ferguson argues, "the dynamism of minority communities, on the one hand, and the desire for institutional forms that would ultimately restrict and arrest that dynamism, on the other."[169] As state legislatures and university administrators responded to student demands, motivated by a foundational logic of liberal individualism, they would disavow histories that systematically structure racial difference in favor of addressing representation through the celebration of private, individualized difference. This configuration would adopt a model of multiculturalism that favored free market principles over equal opportunity

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[167] Ibid., 5

[168] Helene Whitston, "The San Francisco Strike Collection: Introductory Essay," San Francisco State University, accessed June 12, 2014, http://jpllweb.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/essay.html.

[169] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 104.

programs. By the 1990s, *diversity*—officially signifying an amalgamation of the recognition of racial difference and the ongoing endorsement of liberal individualism—would serve as a ubiquitous concept shaping higher education policy and motivating student collectivizing. Nonetheless, we must also understand that the historical entrenchment of diversity discourse within the university, which has been endorsed by administrators and students alike, not only functions as a structuring ideology, but also facilitates the formation of so-called "new" subjectivities.

Given this historical context, my conversations with MSU organizers from chapters at UCB and UCLA emphasized how racial diversity was vital to their personal and collective identity. Members of MSU identified their organization and themselves around the concept of diversity. This concept served as a significant subtext for mixed race student organizing, which possessed the potential to both challenge and support ideologies of the contemporary university. The challenges potentially emerged through MSU's critical examination of their diverse membership whereby members' differences were understood as symptomatic of complex processes that motivated racial inequity within the university space. For instance, when I asked MSU organizer, Erin, to discuss some of the goals of MSU, she mentioned that for her, the group provided a space to not only relate to each other through members' commonalities, but also to discuss their differences. She stated:

> *So the goal would be to bring those [mixed] people together, and to give them a space where we can all talk about the shared experiences of being mixed. Things we have in common, but also when you meet different kinds of mixed people, they've had different experiences even though they're technically mixed just like you. It's a combination of shared experiences and learning about new perspectives on the mixed experience.*

For Erin, discussing a wide range of multiracial perspectives was as equally an important goal as members identifying a collective mixed race experience. She believed that coming together to understand the diversity within the multiracial organization revealed the complexities and depth of the community. By making the discovery of intra-multiracial differences an objective of the organization, this would open up the possibility for mixed race organizations to ask of themselves, "who are we, really?"[170] Doing so created a healthy skepticism towards multiracial coherence, and presented the opportunity to account for both the experience of its mixed race members as well as pinpointing processes of racialization that align with traditional racial formations. Put differently, her comments about the groups' diversity held the potential to simultaneously trouble boundaries of race—which served as a organizational priority for these mixed race student groups—but also acknowledged the ways in which traditional racial categories still shape group position. As a result, complex processes of racialization, which remains fixed to historical formations of race even amongst this supposed "new" multiracial community, could potentially index mixed race experiences within discussions broader discussions of race and racism.

Yet, the potential for this approach to mixed race advocacy was often foreclosed in favor of an approach that aligned more closely with the academy's embrace of discourses of diversity. That is, even as "mixed race" and "multiracial" represented terms designed to organize the community around a single identifier, the organization advertised the broader concept of "diversity" as a central tenet of the group. For instance, both MSU at UCB and UCLA employed the slogan "united in

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[170] http://mixedreamers.blogspot.com/2014/02/who-gets-to-be-poc-self-identifying.html

our *diversity*."[171] This tagline signified more than just an organizational commitment to cultural difference.

I contend that as MSU organizers articulated a unified commitment to diversity with the phrase "*our* diversity," the use of the possessive pronoun, "our," suggests that diversity belonged to each group participant. That is, the concept was understood as inscribed onto the body of every member through an intimate connection—often personal and familial—with racial difference. In this way, the groups' individual members were not only driven by a goal of diversity, but also believed they were constituted by it. Consequently, MSU organizers prioritized diversity in the most personal of ways—as the recognition, representation, and ownership of individualized, embodied difference.

This formulation signified the ways in which diversity discourse has developed within the academy over the past half-century, ultimately cultivating an understanding of racial difference both as a way of knowing and being.[172] As a result, I argue the university's collective celebration of diversity creates an ontological foundation that helps constitute mixed race subjectivity. In other words, the intimate relationship between MSU members and the concept of diversity demonstrates how mixed race organizations, borrowing the words of Ferguson, are not only in the

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[171] Taken from organizations websites, "Welcome to Mixed Student Union's Website," http://mixed.berkeley.edu/Home.html, accessed February 25, 2013. "MSU Bruins," http://www.msubruins.org, [add on interview dates accessed February 25, 2013, & "Welcome to Variations," http://variationssfstate.weebly.com, accessed February 25, 2012.

[172] See Reddy, "Rights-Based Freedom with Violence," *Freedom with Violence*; Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*; Ahmed, *On Being Included*: *Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

institution, but also of it.[173] Thus, as members claimed they signified the embodiment

of diversity through their "mixedness," these students became physical

representations of diversity's discursive investments in *both* racial difference (the

representation and recognition of cultural multiplicity) and (neo)liberal individualism

(prioritizing self-governance, privatization, and individual responsibility).

As past student protestors and organizers, administrators, and state legislators

have collectively contributed to the archiving of institutional power within higher

education by "calculating and arranging minority difference" under the umbrella of

diversity, these mixed race organizations seemed to draw upon this archive to help

construct and articulate their investments in racial difference.[174] The most readily

available mode with which to articulate mixed race experiences is through private

assertions of identity often detached from normative, structural racial formations. In

other words, MSU's proclamation, "united in our diversity," simultaneously

celebrates their embodiment of and commitment to racial difference, while also

understanding that that difference is rooted within the private sphere—i.e. their

personal and familial attachment to interraciality. Herman Gray claims, "the

deployment of difference in neoliberalism discourses of diversity consolidates the

shift from group position to self-enterprise."[175] In this way, the group's slogan

implicitly suggests its members represented diversity personified, *becoming* the very

term that defines the group.

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[173] Here, I am using Ferguson as my guide to articulate the ways in which mixed race identity is constitutive of the university's incorporation of minority difference in the post-civil rights era. See, Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*.
[174] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 7
[175] Herman Gray, "Subject(ed) to Recognition," *American Quarterly* 65.4 (December 2013), 779.

Valuing Diversity: Bakke and the "Plus Factory"

MSU's emphasis on diversity and the way organizers articulated its importance

narrates the ways in which some individuals and collective forms navigate through

the legacies of institutional incorporation of racial difference. To further illustrate this

point, I read one organizer's comments concerning his decision to join MSU over

other cultural organizations on campus (comments I observed among other students I

spoke with) alongside the Supreme Court case, *Regents of University of California v.*

Allan Bakke (1978). The *Bakke* case represented the first major challenge to

affirmative action programs within California's public higher education system,

ultimately deciding that UC Davis' medical school admissions program was in

violation of the equal protection clause under the fourteenth amendment.[176] The

decision effectively ended racial quotas in university admissions, while still allowing

race to serve as just one factor, among others, in admissions decisions. Following

Christopher Newfield's analysis of Justice Powell's majority opinion, I suggest the

court's decision reaches beyond an institutional framework for diversity, and tacitly

facilitated a cultural logic of difference that members of MSU organized around.

Ultimately, discussing this case alongside the motivations underlying some members'

decision to participate in MSU offers insight into how organizers conceived of

diversity under neoliberal governance.

Responding to a question concerning his decision to join MSU, Charles—a

self-identified Vietnamese, third year history major—recalled that before ultimately

deciding to join the organization due to its diverse membership, he participated in a

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[176] Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, *Oyez*, accessed February 18, 2013,
http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1977/1977_76_811/.

summer recruitment program sponsored by the Southeast Asian organization at

UCLA, and then spent his first quarter as a member of the Vietnamese Student Union

(VSU). Charles went on to discuss that unlike these other culturally based student

organizations, he appreciated the way in which the concept of diversity was

advocated in and through MSU's membership. Charles stated:

> *I wanted a more diverse type of organization where I could be a part of...VSU doesn't give me that diversity, you know? And when I'm going to college I want to be in a situation where I have all types of people, from all types of backgrounds. I prefer it that way, instead of staying in a niche.*

The quote above reveals Charles' belief that because the vast majority of its members

were of Vietnamese heritage, VSU denied him the opportunity to interact with

students from a wider range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, which he believed to be

an integral part of the university experience. As a result, Charles discussed that in

contrast to VSU, MSU's racial diversity was representative of the overall college

experience he was looking for. Considering these comments, it appears members not

only made subtle claims to personally embody diversity, but also valued the variety of

racial backgrounds across each group member. That is, MSU possessed racially

diverse membership, unlike what he considered a racially overdetermined VSU,

which ultimately possessed more opportunity for personal growth. He went on to

suggest that his personal encounters with people from diverse racial heritages on a

college campus served as an experiential microcosm of the "real world," and would

prepare him for life outside of southern California. Given this, by applying

Newfield's examination of the majority opinion delivered in the *Bakke* case, I suggest

that Charles' characterization of diversity as an integral part of the college experience

deploys a model of racial liberalism, prioritizing the representation and recognition of

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difference as a conduit for personal growth rather than systemic critique. Thus diversity, here, is conceived of as a personal advantage rather then a mode of redistributive policy.

Newfield claims the *Bakke* decision conceptualized diversity as a goal to protect the rights and interests of academic institutions rather than discriminated racial groups.[177] In what he identifies as the "Powell Precedent"—named after moderate conservative Justice Lewis F. Powell—Newfield highlights the significance of Justice Powell's majority opinion, which reads, "Ethnic diversity is only one element in a range of factors a university may properly consider in attaining the goal of a heterogeneous campus."[178] Powell later goes on to state that such race-based considerations must serve a "compelling state interest" and that "limitations protecting individual rights may not be disregarded."[179] Newfield argues universities were able to consider diversity as a "plus factor" among other features benefiting the institution, as long as it used "wide discretion" and preserved "individual rights" in that pursuit. He asserts this essentially changed the concept of diversity from a means to help facilitate the fight against discrimination to a self-interested commitment for elites to improve academic institutions. Put simply, diversity could now offer an individualized mode for recognizing identity and difference. As a consequence, a focus on diversity, in essence, had become an à la carte-type method for addressing difference whereby institutions could grant recognition to marginalized subjectivities

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[177] Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, 110-115.
[178] "Regents of the University of California v. Bakke," The Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, accessed October 30, 2014, http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1977/1977_76_811/.
[179] Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, 112.

without having to buy into a full engagement with the relations of power that reproduces racial inequality.

While Newfield claims that the Supreme Court's majority opinion disarticulated diversity from the larger goal of addressing racial inequality ("Powell precedent"), he primarily focuses on the ways the concept signifies managerial authority over the concept of diversity at the institutional level. However, adjusting scale, I suggest this framework of diversity has entered into the rationale of individual students, particularly in terms of understanding the concept's fundamental value. Just as Powell argued that a commitment to diversity is limited to "an element in a range of factors" concerning the interests of the university, MSU organizer, Charles, articulated how MSU's diversity, for him, functioned as a valuable aspect of personal growth. That is, diversity represented a beneficial factor (among others) in enhancing the personal college experience. Even as the engagement with cultural difference holds the potential to broaden perspective and serve as a tool for the tolerance of other ways of being and knowing, the self-interested conceptualization of diversity as an aspect of personal growth renders diversity as not a means to an end, but rather a goal in and of itself. The *Bakke* decision reconstituting diversity as an institutional benefit proliferated a cultural logic that encourages Charles's desire to identify, even prioritize, MSU's diverse membership as most suitable because of its *personal* benefits. Given this conceptualization of diversity, the common sense question has become: does diversity serve a compelling interest for the academic institution? Does diversity serve a compelling interest for me, personally?

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Charles was not the only organizer to share this view of MSU. Diversity as private benefit is further evidenced by comments made by Tanya—a Korean and Jewish identified, second year biology major—regarding the support of the personal advantages that MSU offered her. When asked about the unique contributions that MSU provided its members, she explained:

> *So I think MSU is important to have on campus because I want to meet a diverse group of people and just—*
> *I do identify as being Korean and identify as being Jewish and other things like that, but going into those single ethnicity communities is really limiting in my opinion. So if I can meet a whole bunch of people of different backgrounds, regardless if they're mixed (and if they're mixed I want to meet them more) I want to have that connection with people.*

Again, the benefits of MSU are partly attributed to the individual advantages of its diverse membership. While in the next section I examine the underlying sentiments that motivated Tanya's comments regarding the limiting effects of "those single ethnicity communities," here I emphasize how, like Charles, she imagined MSU as an organization that uniquely facilitated a type of personal fulfillment that came along with encountering social difference. To reiterate, I am not suggesting that encounters with a diverse group of people is irrelevant to creating meaningful spaces for social acceptance, but rather that this has become the common sense way to understanding diversity.

In this way, the rise of diversity discourse—the *Bakke* decision serving as one noteworthy example—is the historical linchpin shaping the ways in which some MSU organizers understood themselves, their group and organizational priorities. In the context of the university, the group exemplifies the reconciliation of minority difference and liberal individualism, signifying a subject formation constituted by a

complex arrangement of historical claims for institutional recognition of racialized

difference and a neoliberal social vision that emphasizes a cultural logic of self-

enterprise. As recognition, representation, and self-determination have become the

common sense terms for diversity discourse, university legal and administrative

policies provide a historically situated vocabulary from which MSU interviewees

articulated the benefits of their student group. The *Bakke* decision demonstrates one

of the ways diversity discourse is reorganized to stress minority difference as being a

necessity of self-enterprise, whether at the institutional level or the personal. With the

ideals of diversity motivating MSU, in the next section I not only examine *who*

belongs and who does not within their organizational commitment to diversity, but

also *what* belonging is imagined to mean for its members, and the context under

which such an understanding was formulated.

**"The Most Comfortable and Open Space for Everyone": On Inclusion and
Exclusion**

A 1969 college poll, reprinted in the *San Francisco Examiner* in the light of the SFSU

college strike, addressed black student violence on university campuses across the

country. In the article the author cited a white student's perspective on Black student

advocacy, before concluding, "Black groups are not for change of the university

generally. They demand special programs and black-oriented courses and facilities,

and show little interest in the student demands of white groups. *It is the self-isolation*

of the black that presents a growing disaffection with the black cause on campuses

where both black and white students reside (my emphasis)."[180] Here, Blacks are

characterized as self-interested and unwilling to participate in ways that benefit the

institution as a whole. It is these students' "self-isolation" that is believed to cause

their own stigmatization and prevent social integration. Essentially, black students

and protesters are characterized as the main antagonists of a diverse campus,

hindering institutional commitments to the peaceful inclusionary campus where "both

black and white students reside." Hence, the article's concluding statements re-

imagine the university as a potentially inclusive, multi-racial space only to be

hindered by the racial exclusivity of Black organizing. The article's summation of the

college poll reveals the ways in which the university space no longer foregrounds

discourses of exclusion to alienate black student movements (as well as other

liberation movements), but rather a willingness toward social integration; if only

Black students would participate. As a result, the discursive distinction between

modes of inclusion and exclusion become blurred, and often indistinguishable. [181]

I cite the *Examiner* article above to introduce the ways in which some of MSU

organizers I spoke with tacitly applied this new hegemonic arrangement of inclusion

and exclusion within their organizational vernacular in order to distinguish

themselves from other groups on campus. MSU organizers I spoke with certainly did

not nearly articulate the same antagonistic characterization of Black student

organizing. However, some did imagine the other culturally based student groups on

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[180] "The College Poll: 60% Say Violence Hurts Blacks' Cause on Campus, *San Francisco Examiner*, May 27, 1969.
[181] Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*, 200. Discussing the diminishing distinction between that of social inclusion and exclusion in the post-Civil Rights era, Ferguson claims, "in relation to the institutional transformations inspired by the civil rights movement, the post civil right moment suggests historic formations that prove the inseparability of inclusion and exclusion, undermining the presumption that they are diametrical opposites" (200).

campus as less inclusive. They did so in order to emphasize how mixed race student organizations more effectively *recognized* diversity and served a broader range of students. Even as MSU organizers articulated an understanding of the important role black student groups, as well as other student groups of color, played in addressing campus racial politics, they also suggested that some students might display, to borrow a word of the *Examiner* article, a "disaffection" with their inability to be more inclusive. In what is believed to be a contrast from other groups, MSU organizers believed its diverse membership was its strength, and therefore, placed issues of inclusion and exclusion at the center of its organizational priorities. Speaking about the various racial "mixes" of the students involved, and the group's responsibility to acknowledge everyone in the club, for example Tanya stated:

> *"...we are all really different and we're all open to everyone, and we want to avoid excluding anyone...We want to include everyone. And I know that the other communities also want to include everyone, it's just that we have to also be careful not to exclude anyone by something we might say."*

According to Tanya, this type of inclusionary/exclusionary awareness is more evident in MSU than in any other community organization. She created a subtle group distinction by claiming that while the desire to "*include* everyone" was something every group wanted to achieve, the effort to "not *exclude* anyone" was an especially important priority for MSU. Slight contrasts such as these illustrate the ways in which MSU organizers suggested that other culturally based student groups on campus— who represented normative racial categories— sometimes unintentionally excluded students, while alternatively, their multiracial group troubled these boundaries through its diverse membership. For them, it was believed that the category of mixed

race indexed a move beyond strict boundaries of normative racial categories, which were thought to refuse the complexity of racial identities. While many of the MSU organizers were clear that they were not indicting other groups for being exclusive, they used other communities on campus to emphasize their organizational diversity, and suggested that MSU opened up possibilities to "not exclude" a broader range of racial experiences by moving past notions of discrete racial categorization.

The pervasiveness of diversity discourse within the university normalizes racial difference (often recoded as cultural difference) marking race-based organizations, particularly Black student groups, as self-segregating, special interest groups that while often deemed important to students of color, are ultimately inimical of what is perceived to be a potentially harmonious, diverse campus. This is the institutional articulation of a broader hegemonic turn toward neoliberal racial discourse, which strategically masks its racial antagonisms. Jodi Melamed articulates this turn, arguing, "racial liberalism's model of race as culture normed by an ideal national culture also made it possible to ascribe stigma to segments of African American society without the act of ascription appearing to be an act of racial power."[182] Operating under the guise of "national culture" enables both whites and people of color to ascribe stigma to those falling outside of the American ideal, further concealing such ideological regimes as a form of *racial* power. Diversity, particularly in the context of the university, is a vital part of this national ideal. However, as diversity discourse—articulated by students, administrators, and policy makers—is framed as the abstract inclusion of individualized racial, gender, sexual

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[182] Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism" *Social Text* 89 (Winter, 2006), 8.

difference rather than a critique of structural inequality, according to some MSU

organizers, the racial politics asserted by organizations of color were sometimes

believed to challenge campus cohesion, rather than support it. For MSU, instead of

focusing on a structurally political model with which to make its claims, personal

issues of race and representation were foregrounded.

MSU's commitment to inclusion centered on the desire to create a level of

personal comfort that members did not think was always achieved in other culturally

based organizations on campus. By fostering a space believed to challenge racial

expectations—i.e. physical appearance, behavior, and personal beliefs—organizers

claimed that they create a so-called "safe space" for members. For example, Tanya

distinguishing MSU from other communities, stated:

> *I'm not as comfortable in some of those other spaces maybe due to barriers*
> *they put up or barriers I put up, or a language barrier or anything like that.*
> *So I felt like this was the most comfortable and open space for me. And I*
> *hope this is the most comfortable and open space for everyone because*
> *that's kind of one of the things—*
> *we don't cater to a certain community—*
> *We cater to the mixed community, but we are open to everyone and its more*
> *inclusive than some of the events other ethnicity groups will put on.*

Tanya's comments suggest that MSU's inclusiveness is facilitated by not explicitly

catering to any one community. She emphasized that the "barriers" existing between

her and other culturally based groups on campus, which ultimately denied her an

"open and comfortable space," did not exist in the multiracial organization. Rather,

the group was believed to be open to "everyone" in a way unlike other student

groups, even despite her concession that the organization did focus on a single, albeit

broad, pan-multiracial community. It is the absence of perceived barriers, brought on

by accommodating a single racial or ethnic community, that are believed to make this emphasis on inclusion and sense of "belonging" possible.

On the surface, Tanya pointing to the "barriers" that kept her and other members of MSU from feeling comfortable in other racial communities elicits a discussion of the ways in which, to quote Kimberly DaCosta, "multiracials must deal with understandings of race that entail requirements of authenticity and loyalty and that leave those who fall outside prevailing modes of acceptable behavior vulnerable to accusations of being traitors or disloyal."[183] In fact, accusations of inauthenticity are considered a part of the multiracial experience and often a topic of discussion in these multiracial student groups.[184] The barriers Tanya alluded to partially represented the possible expectations of racial authenticity that other student groups possessed, creating bounded notions of race and identity. Members of mixed race student organizations sought to challenge such narrow definitions of race in an effort to foster a sense of community belonging. As this line of thinking parallel many scholarly accounts of the importance of multiracial organizations on campuses, I suggest the barriers Tanya is discussing reveals a more complex logic that has come to permeate race based student organizing, particularly of black and brown students. Specifically, the barriers believed to be constructed by traditional culturally based organizations supposedly demonstrates, as previously alluded to, a monoracial interestedness by "catering" to a certain community, rendering themselves isolated from a more diverse community of students. This racial separateness gets

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[183] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 127

[184] Racial authenticity has become a ubiquitous theme within mixed race literature, discussed to varying degrees depth. See Root, *The Multiracial Experience*; Ifekwunigwe, *'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader.*

reinterpreted as a group's implicit exclusivity, particularly when juxtaposed with what is believed to be a much more open and inclusive multiracial organization. The effort to move beyond these traditional racial formations, however, leaves the group susceptible to organizational pitfalls, which I elaborate on in the section. Sociologists Katerina Deliovosky and Tamari Kitossa serve as a useful guide here. Taking to task scholars who claim that fully addressing the complexities of race and racism requires moving past the black/white racial "paradigm," Deliovosky and Kitossa suggest these arguments overlook the "real historical and contemporary experience" of this structural formation. In a similar fashion, I suggest as Tanya advocated a move beyond the monoracial paradigm, it makes difficult the ability to fully engage in the racial politics that renders this historical racial schema socially relevant. The authors claim an uncritical "move beyond would render unintelligible the vital elements involved in racialized processes of inclusion and exclusion."[185] While MSU organizers' investment in troubling the logic of discrete racial categorization is viewed as freeing individuals from the "limiting" structure of race that many members do not identify with, the organization must then strategically bypass these formations in order to construct mixed race intelligibly. In the next section, I explore the strategies organizers deploy to achieve just that, and the resulting political pitfalls.

"Let's Get the Whole Picture and See Both Sides": Politics of Mixed Race Neutrality

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[185] Katrina Delovski & Tamari Kitosa, "Beyond Black: When Going Beyond Takes US Out of Bounds," *Journal of Black Studies* 44 (2013), 171.

Drawing upon Habiba Ibrahim's discussion of the legacy's of women of color feminism, and its relationship to multiracial advocacy is useful in thinking about the ways in which the progress narrative in the US, particularly in the post-WWII era, is able to incorporate and then restructure the ways in which multiracialism imagines its connection to earlier liberation movements. Ibrahim identifies mixed race voices as presenting a specific version of "racial time" that "begins with racial consciousness and ends with racial transcendence."[186] She suggests in developing the link between personal experience and political community building, multiracialism implicitly articulates a temporal logic of racial progression that moves through the following steps: First, mixed race individuals express a lack of belonging or authenticity within traditional racial or ethnic groups. Second, these individuals form and embrace a "new" racially mixed community. And third, this racially mixed community eventually gives way to a community whereby experience (both public and private) is lived through the achievement of universal humanity. This trajectory towards racial transcendence prioritizes turning racial identity into a politically private matter, ultimately succumbing to "modernity's unifying temporality," which effectively neutralizes alternative modes of engaging multiracial politics.[187]

In my interview with Tanya, she suggested overly supporting a political issue along the lines of race potentially excludes students with differing opinions, which

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[186] Ibid., 14-15. To illustrate this point, Ibrahim uses Cynthia Nakashima's claim that the multiracial movement was made up of three separate voices, which come together to form an integrated conversation: (1) The struggle for inclusion and legitimacy in traditional racial/ethnic communities. (2). The shaping of a shared identity and common agenda among racially mixed people into a new multiracial community. (3) The struggle to dismantle dominant racial ideology and group boundaries to create connections across communities into a community of humanity. See Cynthia Nakashima, "Voices from the Movement," in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*, ed. Maria Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 81.
[187] Ibid., xxvii

then may hinder their emphasis on diverse and inclusive membership. Some MSU

organizers claimed they avoid endorsing or collectively engaging controversial issues,

particularly around race. Because the experience of race along traditional boundaries

is understood to be that of potentially polarizing politics, the MSU organizers I spoke

with struggled to create any organizational momentum to spearhead mobilizing

efforts around these issues. That is not to say that they would not participate in issues

that have been collectively taken up by other culturally based student organizations.

For example, in October of 2012 MSU participated in a student led protest to allow

race to be factored into admissions within the University California system.[188]

However, members of MSU found it difficult to deal with political issues within the

group and *collectively* organize around. Erin said:

> *A lot of the times when you hear about something racial in the news or*
> *something, like a hate crime against one racial—*
> *Someone of a different race then that particular racial group, or that*
> *community can sort of respond to it and have sort of an emotional response*
> *to it. So say there's a hate crime against Hispanics; then the Latino*
> *community might react to it, and then individuals in MSU who are Latino*
> *will react to it. And everyone else in the group might have an opinion about*
> *it, but its hard to mobilize the whole group to say, "oh we're gonna identify*
> *with the Latino community right now." Whereas you don't really hear about*
> *hate crimes against specifically mixed race people. It's harder to find issues*
> *that are targeted specifically at mixed race individuals.*

Suggesting that acts of oppression specifically targeted against multiracial people are

largely unheard of, particularly on campus, Erin discussed the difficulty to get all

MSU participants to collectivize around issues understood as impacting members of

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[188] Ryan Nelson & Zachary Lemos, "Student Protest Claims That Race May Be Factored Into Admissions" *Daily Bruin*, October 30ʹ 2011, accessed January 19, 2014, http://dailybruin.com/2012/10/30/students-protest-claims-that-race-may-factor-into-admissions-decisions/.

more traditional communities of color.[189] As MSU focused its efforts on troubling boundaries of race through claims of self-determined identities, their organizational logic inadvertently disallowed a critical examination of the collective stake that multiracial members might have in directly engaging with a hypothetical situation like the one Erin raised. Here, understanding racial identity as *primarily* determined by private declarations of personhood informed through familial ties, rather than a subject formation situated within the same racial structure impacting, in this case, the Latino community, makes difficult the ability to mobilize around issues believed to not directly impact *all* MSU members.

MSU had trouble reconciling the genuine desire to work in coalition with these culturally based organizations on campus, while also attempting to create a safe distance from the racial politics impacting these other groups. For them, maintaining organizational coherence around the categorical ambiguity of "mixed" registered a certain level of distance from what are viewed as normative, monoracial political issues.

MSU organizers invoked a type of disinterested diversity as a strategic approach with which to resolve such tension, whereby categories of difference were addressed through discourses of "fairness" and "objectivity." Embracing a type of disinterested diversity was the strategy for inclusion. More precisely, in order to address the challenges of coordinating a group whose members were racialized in a multiple ways, MSU organizers articulated an organizational model that largely remained apolitical in hopes of creating inclusionary membership. Mya stated:

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[189] Here, Erin is speaking in an U.S. context concerning oppression and mixed race people.

> *[Some board members] don't want to make it a political space. There are a couple individuals who do try and say we should talk about this issue (like "this" current event) but there're always other people who are like, "yeah we should talk about it, but let's not present it in this one way. Let's really try and inform people of both sides." And I think that comes from the fact that a lot of people grew up as mixed individuals. There're always many sides to be heard, but they're not like one is right and one is wrong. It's more like let's get the whole picture and see both sides.*

Mya's comments echo the sentiments amongst many of my interviewees, which revealed the concern that taking a particular position on political topics considered overtly racial could alienate students from participating in multiracial organizations. For MSU organizers, racial politics were often understood as overdetermined, much like the monoracial categories they sought to complicate, consequently threatening an atmosphere of "inclusion," which was of the utmost importance. The divisiveness with which racial politics were associated constructed boundaries, whereas MSU organizers wanted to blur them. That is, if we consider the "political" to metonymically signify terms like "partisan" and "factional," then one begins to recognize the ways in which MSU implicitly charged racial politics with reinscribing traditional categories of race. In other words, we can consider how members of MSU might have understood the political in partisan terms whereby one *either* is democrat *or* republican, liberal *or* conservative, for example. For them, such binaries mirror what they believe to be overly simplistic racial boundaries that potentially serve as grounds for members to feel alienated. This sentiment was exactly the feeling that MSU members worked against, and thus devised a framework to counteract potential difference.

As a solution, Mya suggested some organizers maintained a neutral approach to controversial topics by informing students about issues with an "unbiased"

approach. Consequently, the stability of the club was perceived to rest on internally maintaining an apolitical space, or at least ensures that political positions are not overly pursued within the group, potentially isolating members. In this way, neutrality serves as a reconciliatory mechanism meant to maintain cohesion amongst the group's current members and also a strategy to avoid alienating potential members. Put differently, political neutrality is vital to MSU's cohesion and the group's inclusiveness. Neutrality as a basis of inclusiveness is made possible under the neoliberal formulation that makes the political, private.

Thus, race as an always already political category moving into the realm of the private—by first, detaching it from its historical formations, and second, understanding it strictly on identitarian grounds—multiracial politics maneuvers its discourses to the private sphere most often through claims of self-identification. MSU organizers found it necessary to maintain stability by fostering politically neutral space. In fact, Mya found it important to mention that such an approach to organizing was directly tied to members' mixed race identity. That is, because members possessed multiple racial identities (sometimes imagined as contradictory), organizers wanted to create a space that was accepting of a wide range of opinions. It was believed that politically charged ideas potentially interrupt the important process of coming to terms with their personal racial identity. For Charles, identity development was one of the central reasons mixed race students participated in the organization:

> *It's just a lot of times people have a tough time identifying who they are…They don't know, should they identify one way or identify as another. So that's [members] just trying to find themselves—that's probably the most important part.*

Organizers focus on maintaining a neutral space so that MSU might achieve what

Charles described as "probably the most important part" of the group—helping its

members reconcile conflicts with their personal (racial) identity—i.e. "finding

themselves." Again, in the interest of "inclusion," the perceived instability of overly

politicized discourses of race was excluded so as to allow individuals to come to

terms with a multiracial identity that was recognized and validated. If "the appearance

of neutrality is required to produce particular forms of racial visibility," as Ibrahim

asserts, then MSU organizers identified political neutrality as necessary for the

acknowledgement of the multiple subjectivities within the organization. In other

words, MSU organizers started by creating an atmosphere of disinterestedness to

subsequently create a sense of belonging amongst its diverse membership.[190] The

organizers' emphasis on neutrality attempted to create a sense of non-exclusion by

detaching discourses of race with overly politicized conversations of racism.

Avoiding such politically charged rhetoric was believed to cultivate a space for

personal realization and community support, ultimately defining the group's emphasis

on inclusion. Moreover, it is this neutralization of mixed race politics that members of

multiracial organizations contended with when seeking personal and communal

meaning for their student group. While the MSU organizers were certainly not

ambivalent to social justice, the logical and rhetorical limits of their collective goals

often hindered a more complex evaluation and implementation of an anti-racist

project.

In this way, the university sets the stage whereby diversity scripts are read by

both students and administrators alike. In the case of mixed race student organizing,

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[190] See Ibrahim, *Troubling the Family*, xxvii.

the concept of diversity not only informed the logic of these multiracial student groups' notion of inclusion and exclusion, but also motivated its organizational practices. MSU created a sense of racially discursive neutrality to strategically maintain a sense of inclusion inadvertently excluded some of the politicized visions of the other cultural organizations on campus. Yet, after speaking with some MSU organizers, conversations revealed that the mixed race group reversed this rational, understanding themselves as the most inclusive organization; an alternative to the subtle exclusivity enacted by these other culturally based groups. Turning back to the college poll found in the 1969 *Examiner* article, its conclusion attempted to highlight the ways in which Black student organizers were the primary culprits of racial exclusivity and tension within the university. Roughly forty years later, as neoliberalism reconceptualizes racial politics as private matters rather than public, MSU unconsciously reproduced a similar logic applied in the *Examiner*, even if articulated in a much more favorable, supportive tone. That is, MSU acknowledges the political importance of the other cultural groups on campus, yet simultaneously charges them with not being as inclusive as MSU at best, and exclusionary at worst. It is believed the over-determinedness of racial and ethnic student groups—manifested through both physical appearance and the groups' politics—potentially hinders an inclusive environment within the group, while MSU believes they are more open to "everyone" on campus by fostering a sense of racial neutrality. For many of these members, neutrality was what enabled the acknowledgment of its multiracial members who represent multiple racial backgrounds. Ultimately, it was the politics of recognition that became prioritized within the group, serving as a basis of their

organizational coherence (and happiness). Consequently in the next section I consider

if "recognition" is indeed the primary focus of these multiracial groups, then how

does this play out in terms of on-campus politics? I discuss the ways in which MSU at

UCB deployed many of the aforementioned ideas around race, representation, and

diversity during a controversial affirmative action bake sale that was held on its

campus.

"How Are Multiracial/Multicultural People Going to Pay?": UC Berkeley Bake Sale Controversy

In September of 2011, the Berkeley College Republicans (BCR) organized a

controversial bake sale on campus to protest the consideration of race and gender in

UC and CSU admissions. BCR claimed the bake sale was meant to bring widespread

awareness of their objection to California Senate Bill (SB) 185, which would allow

race and gender (along with other factors) to be considered on college admission

applications.[191] Berkeley's Associated Students of University of California held a

phone-bank sponsoring SB185, and BCR thought the bake sale an effective way to

protest the student government's support of the bill. Labeling it the "Increase

Diversity Bake Sale," the conservative student group—with then-former UC Regent

Ward Connerly in attendance showing his support—sold baked goods with scaled

prices determined by the race of their customer. At the sale, whites were charged two

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[191] Despite claiming to agree with the intentions behind SB 185, Governor Jerry Brown would veto the bill, stating, "I wholeheartedly agree with the goal of this legislation...[However] Our constitutional system of separation of powers requires that the courts–not the Legislature—determine the limits of Proposition 209...Signing this bill is unlikely to impact how Proposition 209 is ultimately interpreted by the courts; it will just encourage the 209 advocates to file more costly and confusing lawsuits." Robin Wilkey, "SB-185 vetoed: Jerry Brown Vetoes Affirmative Action-Like Bill," *Huffington Post*, October 10, 2011, accessed May 11, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09/sb-185-vetoed_n_1002099.html

dollars for a baked good, while costing Asians $1.50, Latinos $1.00, African

Americans 75 cents, and Native Americans 25 cents; with all women receiving a 25

cent discount. The bake sale, certainly not the first of its kind, gained national media

attention and raised outcry amongst student groups at UC Berkeley. Many students

deemed the event as racist and offensive due to the tier-structured pricing. Leaders

from a variety of student groups suggested BCR's satirical gesture oversimplified the

complex history of race and higher education, particularly in California. The chair of

the Black Student Union criticized the sale, protesting, "We're not open to being

reduced to a price at a bake sale."[192] Despite many of the cultural groups on campus

taking offense to being "reduced to a price," MSU felt offended for the opposite

reason—their mixed race identity was not explicitly designated any specific monetary

value. That is, MSU did not reject BCR's metaphor—likening a bake sale tiered

pricing structure to affirmative action—but rather the way in which it presented its

prices according to traditional categories of difference.

According to one board member of the multiracial organization, members

objected to the structured prices failing to consider the complexities of potential

mixed race customers. Asking Mya to discuss MSU's position on the controversial

sale, she stated:

> *As MSU, when we were looking at…whites pay this much, Native Americans*
> *pay this much, we asked the question, 'well, how are multicultural,*
> *multiracial people going to pay for that? Are they going to give us half off?*
> *Are they going to give us more money if we're part white? Do we have to*
> *pay more?'…Like if we wanted to buy something, how would we go about it.*
> *Or if that was something they even considered. That was the question that*
> *was brought up. They only categorized it singular identities.*

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[192] Sara Grossman, "Bake Sale Stirs Up Racism Debate," *The Daily Californian*, September 25, 2011, accessed May 11, 2013, http://www.dailycal.org/2011/09/25/bake-sale-stirs-up-racism-debate/

Given this comment, we might understand MSU member's critical response to BCR's bake sale in two possible ways. First, the group's opposition to the event might demonstrate MSU's emphasis on representation. The communities listed within the pricing structure correspond to normative racial categories, while self-identifying mixed race people go unrecognized. Thus, their critique of the bake sale signified MSU's greater goal of achieving more widespread recognition of multiracial identity within the academy. However, an alternative reading of the group's objection to the bake sale might claim MSU hypothetically introduced multiraciality into the tiered-structured pricing in order to deconstruct its very logic. That is, by emphasizing the way multiracials complicate the structured pricing, MSU members might have revealed the instability of all the racial categories listed on the menu, and the illogic of assigning different prices to them. Such a critique corresponds to the group's emphasis on rejecting discrete racial categorization, particularly within institutional settings, in order to emphasize the socially constructed nature of race.

These two possible explanations of MSU's response to the bake sale are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact when taken together, both interpretations—the lack of multiracial recognition *and* failure to deconstruct normative racial categories—collectively motivated mixed race student organizing and shaped their identity claims. MSU members attempted to deconstruct traditional racial formations in order for "mixed race" to represent a legitimately meaningful category.[193] DaCosta writes, "at the same time that they [the multiracial community] elaborate a sense of shared groupness, multiracial are deconstructing the basis upon which racial

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[193] Mary Bernstein, Marcie De la Cruz "What are You?": Explaining Identity as a Goal of the Multiracial Hapa Movement Source: Social Problems, Vol. 56, No. 4 (November 2009), pp. 722-745.

membership has been erected."[194] Thus, MSU understood BCR's bake sale as another example of the policing of racial boundaries through their failure to include multiracial people within their pricing structure. However, by placing recognition as the focus of their critique, MSU missed an opportunity to engage larger, more complex discussions of race and racism. Correspondingly, Mya admitted that beyond the absence of a multiracial option on the bake sale's menu, MSU was unsure how to articulate the problems with the event. She stated:

> *I don't know. I feel like the reaction to [the bake sale] was definitely big. I mean it was on the news. And from MSU's perspective, we were all like I don't know how they are going to go about this, and with the more singular groups they were very much outraged. We were like that's messed up, but we didn't know exactly what to say aside from they shouldn't have done that.*

Here, as Mya recalled MSU's ambivalence about broader issues concerning the controversial bake sale, her comments revealed the constraints around the identity claims that seemed to motivate the organization. I suggest MSU's uncertainty concerning how to express a more complex critique of BCR's event was linked to the foregrounding of a politics of recognition that failed to consider the historicity of race and education in California specifically, and the U.S. more broadly. The limitations of mixed race student advocacy became more transparent when directly situating MSU's emphasis on a politics of identity-based recognition within the larger debates concerning affirmative action (the central issue of bake sale controversy).

These minoritized groups are part of a history of racialization in the U.S. that has not included the "mixed race" population per se—at least not as a mutually exclusive category of difference. Perhaps MSU found it difficult to articulate its issues with BCR's bake sale beyond lack of recognition precisely because their

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[194] DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 147.

critique was detached from a broader history of race and racism. Neglecting the ways in which past racial formations permeate the economic, political, and cultural ideologies of the present, MSU's displeasure with the bake sale inadvertently represented the same logical failures affecting BCR's decision to host the event— namely, a lack of historicity.

Consider the Berkeley College Republicans. Their bake sale tried to duplicate the fundamental logic of affirmative action by offering a pricing structure based on it's customer's race and gender to emphasize the supposed unfairness of such identity-based policies. However, the history of race and racism (as well as sex and sexism) in the U.S. is not and has never been organized around the production or consumption of baked goods. The bake sale's attempt at allegory, albeit satirical, operated in a vacuum detached from larger historical contexts. The genealogy of race is constituted by a history of systematic exclusion of particular groups, and thus hindering these communities from accessing full citizenship rights, including access to education. Consequently, we might consider the conservative group's bake sale as an event that failed at revealing the supposed "unfairness" of affirmative action policies, but successfully illustrated the ways in which the history of racial inequity is disavowed in order to attack policies characterized as redistributive. One student's Facebook post creatively reiterated this point, explaining:

> If you're going to compare the Bake Sale to Affirmative Action…the only way it would be comparable is if the flour, oven, and all baking materials were stolen from the people that are required to pay the lowest prices. And if the baked goods from all prior bake sales were made for free by the

> minorities while white students reaped all the profits… which resulted in unequal opportunities to purchase baked goods in the current sale.[195]

This student's comments insightfully draw attention to the aforementioned incommensurability of BCR's bake sale with affirmative action policies. Essentially the student argued, to put it simply: history matters. Yet, for BCR, historical situatedness was lost in favor of discourses of racial neutrality. It is this racial (and gender) neutrality that allowed BCR to make claims in support of diversity, while simultaneously rejecting any governmental policies that might effectively lead to its fulfillment.

In fact, BCR deployed diversity discourse to deflect, and protect against charges that the event reinforces fundamental logics that perpetuate racism. Shawn Lewis, president of BCR, responded to the backlash of the bake sale in the *New York Times*, "This event was not organized by a bunch of white guys…we're not racists."[196] The article subsequently revealing that "the group's 10-member board of directors includes several Asians and a Latino, and he [Lewis] said, more than half the board members are women."[197] While the members' racial and gender makeup was most likely indicative of UC Berkeley's demographics more so than representative of a commitment to antiracism, Lewis attempts to emphasize BCR's diverse membership was proof of the latter. Without tending to the historical relations of power within these institutional settings (in this case the university) diversity merely referenced the representation of difference, absent a redistributive

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[195] Student quoted, "UC Berkeley 'Racist' Bake Sale Sparks Outrage," *Huffington Post*, September 24, 2011, accessed August 2, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/24/uc-berkeley-racist-bake-sale_n_979184.html

[196] Malia Wollan, "A "Diversity Bakes Sale' Backfires on Campus," *New York Times*, September 26, 2011, accessed January 23, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/us/campus-diversity-bake-sale-is-priced-by-race-and-sex.html?_r=0.

[197] Ibid.

commitment toward social justice. Interestingly, the problems brought forth by MSU did not challenge the bake sale metaphor but questioned its place within it, ultimately reproducing its very logic in the process.

Even in its disapproval of the event, MSU was confined to a similarly fundamental rational as that of BCR, which ultimately represents the flexibility of neoliberalism's logical application across political affiliations. Just as BCR's bake sale dismissed the history of racial inequity—and the current projects perpetuating it—in their indictment of affirmative action policies, MSU's displeasure with BCR's event neglected how this history of inequity is entangled with specific racial formations. More specifically, MSU dismissed how the legacies of U.S. racial formations are constituted by a history of social, political, and economic inequities that have not historically organized "mixed race" as a discrete category of difference (at least not in terms of access to resources). Rather it must focus on the reordering such formations to insert themselves into the racial conversation. Thus, MSU's emphasis on identity-based recognition created an analytical blind spot, which refused a contextualized understanding of the omission of mixed race from the bake sale menu, and the subsequent affirmative action debate. The emphasis on recognition prevented the organization from imagining a more complex critique of BCR's event; leaving members uncertain of what to say other than "they shouldn't have done that." The group's basis of advocacy falls upon identity-based politics that centers on a model of inclusive neutrality—a much more institutionally digestible frame, even if unintentionally so.

Ultimately, MSU demanding recognition within the context of the bake sale reveals the ways in which the academic community cultivates discourses of identity absent of historicity. In this case, MSU's well-meaning criticism of the diversity bake sale, couched in discourses of identity and inclusion, were mediated by a language of advocacy inherited from the institutionalization of minority difference. Such incorporation created a political landscape wherein MSU and BRC seemingly made opposing arguments, and yet both serve neoliberalism's purpose of diverting discourses of structural inequality toward a politics of recognition. It is this desire for recognition that forced a dismissal of particular historical formations, in favor of establishing a multiracial, multicultural identity. Asian Americanist Kandice Chuh reminds us that, "…national identity attempts to assimilate difference by requiring those who claim it to forget the past (difference) in order to preserve and celebrate the present (identity)."[198] Yet for these organizers, the longing for mixed race recognition was not necessarily understood as enacted by a political ruse initiated by the State, but rather believed to be drawing upon the legacies of earlier liberation movements, or more precisely student movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Such beliefs reflect a larger ideological phenomenon whereby neoliberal governance has successfully folded discourses earlier student movements into national interests in individualism, free markets, and abstract equality.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with a reconceptualization of the political poster, "Happiness is a Warm Club," from the 1968-1969 SFSU College Strike as a heuristic device,

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[198] Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 33.

contextualizing the ways in which the academy has come to manage minority difference within the post-Civil Rights era in general, and mixed race student organizing in particular. While we might imagine the regulation of racial difference to be met with force (i.e. a baton), we must also consider the ways in which institutions have adapted to achieve similar results through the incorporation of difference (i.e. a smile). Ferguson reminds us, "as a distinct archival economy, the American academy would help inform the archival agendas of state and capital—how best to institute new peoples, new knowledges, and cultures and the same time discipline and exclude those subjects according to a new order."[199] From admissions policy to student organizing, concepts like diversity and political neutrality have come to permeate the university's approach to campus life. It is this point that structures the previous sections of this chapter. As MSU organizers at both UCB and UCLA articulated a model of diversity that prioritizes the personal over the political, such understandings are historically situated and inherited from a vocabulary instituted through significant post-civil rights era reforms like the *Bakke* decision (1978). Addressing issues of racial inclusion and exclusions, consequently, are reformulated to emphasize representation and recognition of identity rather than larger critiques of structural inequality. As universities see a growth in a self-identifying multiracial population, along with the presence of mixed race organizations, the academy is not only prepared to incorporate these "new peoples," but also rely upon their very constitution. Such beliefs reflect a larger ideological phenomenon whereby neoliberal governance as successfully folded discourses of earlier student movements into national interests in individualism, free markets, and abstract equality. Critiquing

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[199] Ferguson, *Reorder of Things,* 12.

such phenomenon hopes to continue to raise critical questions regarding how to

achieve institutional diversity in a time when new forms of racism have emerged in

the context of a growing mixed race population.

Chapter 3: Academic Disciplined: Mediations on Critical Mixed Race Studies

On November 5, 2010 I attended the inaugural Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) Conference at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. The event is considered the first time a significant number of scholars, activists, and artists gathered in one location to question, discuss, and debate the pedagogical priorities of the field of mixed race studies.[200] While scholarship from a variety of academic disciplines had examined contemporary multiracial issues over the previous two decades, this noteworthy event hoped to accomplish two primary goals: first, to help legitimate mixed race studies as a *distinct* field of inquiry; and second, to identify and discuss the most recent theoretical approaches constituting the critical turn in mixed race studies. Both objectives were consolidated into the conference theme, "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," and served as a collective rumination on what theories and practices would define the field's disciplinary concerns moving forward.

The conference drew over 400 people from across the US as well as Canada, South Africa, Korea, and the United Kingdom.[201] The unexpectedly high attendance suggested a growing interest in CMRS, as attendees engaged in numerous formal and informal discussions concerning the field's past, present, and future. Since this meeting, some CMRS scholars have sought to further institutionalize the field within the academy. For instance, the conference is now a biennial event, which is

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[200] African American Studies scholar, Rainier Spencer, acknowledges an earlier conference focusing on issues of mixed race, organized in September of 1998 at Roosevelt University by Heather Dalmage, called *Colorlines in the 21st Century: Multiracialism in a Racially Divided* World. While it featured some of the "early trailblazers of the field," Spencer still cites the 2010 CMRS conference as the first mixed race studies conference due to its much larger scale.
[201] Ibid., 30.

supplemented by an official peer-reviewed journal, a recently instituted association, and a growing number of critical mixed race studies courses taught in various departments.[202]

I return to this inaugural event at the end of this chapter in order discuss the "positive affectivities" that shape the fields' analytical priorities. But here I emphasize that the primary purpose of the first conference—and subsequent efforts toward the institutionalization of the field—sought to formalize a discussion and debate about the disciplinary framework of CMRS, or what Donald Pease calls the "field imaginary." Pease uses this term to describe a "field's fundamental syntax—its tacit assumptions, convictions, primal words, and the charged relations binding them together."[203] The field imaginary is what shapes the practitioner's scholarly identity within a particular area of study, making certain pedagogical investments self-evident. Under this premise, Pease asserts that the priorities of a field are situated within the unconscious psyche of practitioners, and thus the most effective critiques of any particular field can only come from *outside* the area of study.

Robyn Wiegman amends this claim by suggesting that self-reflexive criticism from *within* the field is both generative for and constitutive of the field imaginary. Wiegman explains, "it is precisely because we are inside ideology subjected to its work, that we can know anything about it," and this consequently "enables practitioners to engage, revise, and extend a field's critical and political significance

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[202] The latest planned CMRS conference is not in keeping with this biennial pattern. Since 2010 the conference has been held on every even numbered year, although the fourth conference will take place in February of 2017. This is most likely attributed to, at least in part, the change in locations. While the previous three events were hosted by Drexel University, the 2017 conference is being held at the University of Southern California.

[203] Donald E. Pease, *New Americanists: Revisionary Interventions Into the Americanst Canon*, Durham; Duke University Press, 1994, 11.

by compulsively debating it."[204] Here, both Pease's concept and Wiegman's amendment to it help to offer a conceptual tool with which examine the ongoing questions about the so-called critical turn in mixed race studies and its relationship to critical practice and the politics of the university more generally. While this project's previous two chapters explored how the category of mixed race has impacted the administrative and social spheres of campus life, specifically at UCB and UCLA, this chapter steps away from these two particular campuses in order to consider the category of mixed race within the academic sphere more generally. As a consequence, I take an admittedly less grounded approach to my discussion of mixed race in order to meditate on the ideas, assumptions, and affects that circulate CMRS.

Thus, this chapter takes as its primary objects of analysis what might be considered the foundational scholarship of "critical mixed race studies" as well as materials from the field's inaugural conference in order to trace the recent efforts to institutionalize CMRS as a distinct field of inquiry. By conducting an intellectual history of CMRS's first years, I interrogate how the field approaches its critique of racism, and other forms of systemic oppression, and the potential of CMRS to engage in this type of intellectual work as an autonomous field in the way of other identity-based areas of study (e.g Black Studies, Asian American studies, Latina/o Studies, Queer studies, etc.). Put simply, is CMRS to remain a fixture amongst other identity-based studies, fated to dissolve as a legitimate form of critical practice, or perhaps through this dialectic, what other possibilities might emerge for this developing field? To that end, I ask more broadly, how might we understand field formation in an era

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[204] Wiegman, *Object Lesson*, 15-16.

where the neoliberal university has taken discursive hold on minority difference, diversity, and representation?

Despite some of the ways in which mixed race is associated with the university's institutionalization of liberal uses of racial politics, many scholars of CMRS imagine the field as inspired, even constituted by the re-radicalizing of identity knowledges. In other words, CMRS frames itself as a product of and contributor to other identity-based fields that work to address the university's "strategic valorization of the marginal."[205] Given the collapse between the intellectual discourses of political struggle that characterize many identity-based fields (i.e. knowledge) and the neoliberal university that house them (i.e. power), CMRS joins other fields, proposing its own theoretical model with which to reckon with this convergence. By engaging in an intellectual history of those scholars most committed to the institutionalization of CMRS as a distinct field, I interrogate how the field's priorities are more reflective of the convergence of knowledge and power than a challenge to it.

In this chapter I first consider the affective undercurrents that motivate the persistent desire for the recognition of the mixed race subject among those most optimistic about institutionalizing CMRS, despite its challenges to engage in a thorough critique of racism, especially in the current moment. I also introduce the skepticism that attempts to challenge the ongoing development of CMRS. This discussion contextualizes my examination of the academic debates concerning the institutionalization of CMRS as a distinct field of study. I outline how these debates

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[205] Nick Mitchell, "Critical Ethnic Studies (Intellectual)," *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal* 1 (Spring 2015), 91.

are divided between scholars who are optimistic about the fields' disciplinary distinctiveness from other identity studies and those much more skeptical. I suggest the difference between these two approaches is largely constituted by the varying degrees of confidences these scholars have for an individual reckoning with the category of mixed race to jumpstart a mass critique of power relations. I next contextualize this debate by assessing what it means for identity knowledges more generally to engage in an intellectual critique of domination and develop strategies to disrupt its formations, particularly in the context of the neoliberal university. Put differently, I discuss the move to reconceptualize—i.e. make critical—identity programs within an institution that uses these programs, in part, to symbolize liberals commitments to diversity, access, and inclusion. I pay particular attention to how some fields, such as critical ethnic studies and queer studies, enact a non-idenitiarian framework in order to re-radicalizes their disciplinary critiques, and how CMRS imagines itself following in this tradition. I close this chapter by interrogating how, in an unwitting sleight of hand, CMRS optimists conflate this act of critique with the use of the mixed race as an analytical tool to conduct critical practice. In other words, CMRS scholars' emphasis on racial porousness and mutability, manifested through the mixed race subject, is the equivalent to a non-idenitarian approach to critical practice. Ultimately, I argue that as the contemporary university institutionalizes minority difference through the incorporations of terms like diversity and representation, this hinders CMRS efforts to at once center the category of mixed race and conduct the antiracist work it wishes to engage.

Feelings of the Field

What keeps the field from letting go of the mixed race subjectivity? I suggest this question gets at the affective register that motivates the field's most enthusiastic supporters. The affective ties to recognition continually pull the field into the present, sometimes underwriting the historical power that grants mixed race visibility in the first place. Returning to the site of the inaugural conference reveals the persistent and entrenched tension that CMRS optimists continue to face in the current historical moment—creating a distinct, antiracist disciplinary project while submitting to the affective allure of the politics of recognition, even if unintentionally so.

In a brief discussion regarding the origins of CMRS, Artist and historian Laura Kina, Latin American studies scholar Camilla Fojas, Asian Americanist Wei Ming Dariotis, and sociologist G. Reginald Daniel all note the symbolic importance of the Supreme Court case, *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) to the development of the field and the community.[206] Despite despite *Loving* banning antimiscegenation laws in the US, the authors readily acknowledge that the case, itself, was not as impactful to mixed race recognition as many of those invested in the politics of multiracilaity often claim. They note that even though *Loving* is characterized as a watershed moment for multiracialism, the case was most significant only in the southern states where antimiscegenation laws were still in affect, and did not have much of an impact on rates of intermarriage between Blacks and whites (a relatively small proportion of

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[206] G. Reginald Daniel, Laura Kina, Wei Ming Dariotis, and Camilla Fojas, "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* 1 (1) (2014), 6.

interracial marriages).[207] Nonetheless Daniel, et al. acknowledge the significance of the *Loving* case is "in its positive affectivity or emotional resonance as a historic landmark in the development of a sense of community, evident in the annual June 12th *Lovingday.org* celebrations across the United States."[208]

Indeed, "*positive* affectivity" provides a symbolic meaning to the organizing principles of mixed race generally, and CMRS specifically. However, I argue much of the theoretical issues with CMRS are underwritten by sentimental attachments, albeit meaningful, to the politics of recognition—*Loving* standing in for, at least in part, the historical significance of contemporary mixed race acknowledgement.[209] Undoubtedly, such celebratory affects are motivated by the negative pathologies perpetuated in past pseudoscientific research on mixed race. It appears that while CMRS wishes to acknowledge the unintended, negative consequences of contemporary mixed race studies, the critical turn still wishes to hold on to them. To illustrate this point, I return to the 2010 inaugural conference and locate the "positive affectivities" that largely characterized the critical turn in mixed race studies. I then highlight one panel's interruption of the positive emotional resonances, to warn the field of its potential theoretical shortcoming. In this way the conference exemplifies much the ongoing affective currents surrounding CMRS, and the on-going debates concerning the field.

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[207] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 19.
[208] Ibid., 19. Loving day is an annual event most prominently held in New York City. "Loving Day fights racial prejudice through education and builds multicultural community." For more information about *Lovingday.org,* see, http://www.lovingday.org
[209] For a critique on mixed race sentimentality see, Rainier Spencer, "Only the News they Want to Print," Mainstream Media and Critical Mixed Race Studies, *Critical Mixed Race Studies Journal* 1.1 (2014): 162-182.

Over the course of the two-day conference I witnessed attendees express a variety of attitudes about the growing legitimacy of CMRS, which ranged from *excitement* to *determination to skepticism*. In retrospect, I wonder how these underlying sentiments have come to determine the direction of CMRS; how have these attitudes shaped the broader investments of and challenges to the field? In other words, if we understand field formation as something not only thought, but also felt, what possibilities do these sentiments open up or foreclose for CMRS as a distinct area of study? The feelings that underlie the field formation ultimately contribute to the doing of CMRS.

Recalling the feelings of excitement, determination, and skepticism that permeated the conference climate, I have come to attach these sentiments to three respective moments that occurred during the event. These moments include: first, the conference's welcoming remarks whereby DePaul's Dean of Liberal Arts and Humanities, Charles Suchar, reframed Barack Obama as the first *biracial* President, resulting in enthusiastic applause from many conference attendees; second, Andrew Jolivètte's keynote address that raised a series of pedagogical questions underwriting CMRS, reflecting many attendees determination to outline future directions of the field; and lastly, how these positive affectivites were interrupted by a strong sense of skepticism, articulated through a popular conference panel titled, "Back from Beyond Black: Alternative Paradigms of Critical Mixed-Race Theory." This panel offered a polemical stance on mixed race studies, pushing back upon many of its past and present paradigms. These three events stood in for the primary attitudes experienced

at the conference, and are especially meaningful as they transpired during what is

regarded as the initial step toward the institutionalization of CMRS.

The first moment from the inaugural event took place during the conferences

welcoming remarks, whereby DePaul's Dean of Liberal Arts and Humanities, Charles

Suchar, greeted conference attendees to the university. Mindful of the conference's

subject matter, he was quick to make associations between the category of mixed race

and the event's hosting city. Suchar stated, "welcome to Chicago—to the home of our

first mixed race president, Barack Obama." His comment was immediately met with

enthusiastic applause from the audience. The emphasis on Obama's biracial lineage

excited attendees; especially given most references to the head-of-state framed

Obama as "America's first black president." Yet at this event, audience members

celebrated the remark for resituating the historical significance of Obama's

presidency by prioritizing his racial mixedness over his Blackness. Here, as is often

the case in other multiracial contexts, the expression of enthusiasm amongst

conference attendees was determined by mixed race recognition.

In this moment I wondered if foregrounding Obama's mixed race background

would receive a similar ovation in a different scholarly space. After all, the

audience's reaction to Suchar's comment underscored that which differentiated the

CMRS conference from other academic spaces. It seemed highly unlikely, for

example, that his statement would garner the same positive response at a Black

studies conference. In this context, referencing Obama as the first mixed race

president could be perceived as a disavowal of the history of US racial formations as

well as the president's lived experience. From "birther" conspiracies that questioned

his U.S. citizenship to variety of political criticisms carrying an undercurrent of Black stereotypes, identifying Obama as anything other than the first Black president would likely receive less than an approving ovation. However I suggest for many CMRS conference attendees, it was this potential disapproval in other venues that nurtured the excitement within this particularly space. The ovation represented a declaration of support for not simply the President's mixed race heritage, but also for the recognition of what was believed to be an alternative framework to think and write about race. To reimagine Obama as America's first mixed race president was to re-engage racial discourse in ways other identity-based studies did not—specifically by stressing the flexibility of race through prioritizing the experiences of mixed race people. Ultimately, the combination of Suchar's remark and the subsequent applause properly characterized the excitement around the growing legitimacy of CMRS as an academic field, separate from other race-based knowledges.

The second moment took place later that evening as Andrew Jolivètte delivered the conference's keynote address. In a paper titled, "Critical Mixed Race Studies: New Directions in the Politics of Race and Representation," Jolivètte commented on the conference's "emerging paradigms" theme by reflecting on what constituted the critical turn in mixed race studies and how this shift differentiated from earlier iterations of the field. His talk would represent a model for many scholars determined to outline what a distinct CMRS pedagogy might look like in both theory and practice. Before offering his own version of what a "critical mixed race studies pedagogy" demanded, he posed several questions throughout his talk for the audience to consider: "What does critical mixed race studies mean?" "What is our

call to action?" "How do we make coalitions with other oppressed peoples?" And, "what can we do in theory and in practice, in the classroom and in the communities we come from to elevate the dialogue toward the highest common denominators, the highest common needs for a morally just society?"[210]

Jolivètte's lecture served as a representative moment for the widespread tenacity that largely defined the inaugural event. As many attendees advocated for CMRS's institutional distinctiveness, there was an increased resolve in identifying the pedagogical intricacies that would constitute the field. Jolivètte argued that leaving pedagogical questions unanswered would continue to hinder CMRS from fully establishing itself from other identity studies. Reminding the audience that scholarly work on issues of mixed race had spanned back to the early 1990s, Jolivètte rhetorically asked, "We've been emerging for how long? When are we not going to be emerging but be our own field?"[211] Questions like this exemplified the collective mindset of many in attendance—a strong determination to both conceptualize and operationalize CMRS with more specificity. While a general framework for the study of multiracial issues had always prioritized the experiences of mixed race people to underscore the fluidity of race, developing a detailed approach to represent the field's new critical direction was paramount. The keynote address served as a significant moment as attendees gathered in large numbers for the first time to begin satisfying a collective determinedness to develop a future direction of CMRS that would stand

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[210] Andrew Jolivètte, "Critical Mixed Race Studies: New Directions in the Politics of Race and Representation," *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* 1 (1) (2014): 30, accessed December 12, 2014. http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2db5652b.

[211] Andrew Jolivètte, "Critical Mixed Race Studies: New Directions in the Politics of Race and Representation," Keynote address at Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference, November 2010, DePaul University, Chicago Illinois.

alongside other identity studies. Jolivètte's effort to transition CMRS from an emerging area of study to a well-established field came in the form of a proposal for developing a critical mixed race pedagogy, which included four basic components: 1) social justice; 2) self-determination; 3) cross-ethnic and transnational solidarity; and 4) radical love.[212] These components illustrate the larger efforts made by attendees to fulfill a resolve to specify CMRS's pedagogical investments.

However, not every conference participant's attitude about the field's future was merely governed by excitement or determination; through the function of critique came an undercurrent of skepticism concerning the future of CMRS. On the event's final day, a conference panel featured among the toughest critics of studies on mixed race—Rainier Spencer, Michelle Elam, and Jared Sexton. Drawing a standing room only crowd, the panelists held varying positions as to the their level of suspicion of mixed race studies and its critical turn, ranging from healthy skepticism to outright dismissal. Yet all presenters shared an equal apprehension about the field's relationship to scholarly studies of Blackness. The panel's title, "Back from Beyond Black: Alternative Paradigms of Critical Mixed-Race Theory," demonstrated this mutual concern, whereby presenters challenged much of the excitement surrounding CMRS's contributions to scholarly work on race.

The panelists collectively argued that the pedagogical shifts within mixed race studies needed to return "back from beyond black." For them, the calls to move "beyond" Blackness—that is to explore black/white mixed race issues—were characterized as an intellectual ambition politically antagonistic to studies committed to social justice, particularly those invested in radical Black politics. If CMRS

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[212] Ibid.,

represented a theoretical turn that bypassed the role of anti-black racism within its scholarly analysis, it would continue to confront suspicion as a mode of serious critical inquiry on race and racism. The panel's title was in reaction to primarily two broad claims made by scholars working on issues of mixed race: 1) advocating for critical discussion of race to move beyond monoracial categories of *black and white* by considering questions of multiraciality; and 2) for those working within mixed race studies, to move beyond the experiences of individuals possessing *Black/white* heritage to other groups that claimed different racial "mixtures."[213] Whether scholars advocated complicating questions of race by moving past categories of *Black and white* or *Black/white*, the panel's title suggested the field reincorporate Blackness within the examination of mixed race issues. In this way, the panel represented a moment that challenged the excitement and determination surrounding the future institutionalization of CMRS by expressing varying degrees of skepticism concerning its place amongst other, more-established academic studies on race.

Ultimately, these three moments described above not only illustrate the prevailing sentiments expressed throughout the inaugural conference, but also, outline the affective registers that underlie the prevailing arguments concerning the development of CMRS. That is, the conference vignettes stand in for larger intellectual debates regarding the political and intellectual utility of CMRS in the context of the institutionalization of minority difference. Next, I outline the diverging arguments circulating CMRS, paying particular attention to the role the mixed race subject plays within these debates.

Foundations and Debates of Critical Mixed Race Studies

The so-called critical intervention in mixed race studies is significant because more than any other time, the last five years has represented a concerted effort by some scholars across a variety of disciplines to identify the field as a *distinct* area of study.[214] In order to achieve legitimacy among other forms of critical practice, CMRS practitioners have emphasized a point of departure from previous theoretical shortcomings, which largely characterized iterations of the field largely throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.[215] This foundational scholarship, which I outlined in this project's introduction, emphasized the rescue, celebration, and recognition of mixed race identity. This is perhaps best reviewed in Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe's comprehensive account on the development of mixed race studies, which highlights how the first wave of contemporary scholarship focused on these three themes.[216] In her second section of the text, "Mapping Contemporary Foundational Discourse: 'Mixed Race' Identities, Politics, and Celebration," Ifekwunigwe includes a series of essays that serve as examples of scholarship that: 1) attempt to *rescue* multiracial identity from pseudoscientific studies pathologizing racial hybridity; 2) *celebrate* mixed race identity and the right to choose one's own racial classification; and 3) argue for public *recognition* of mixed race identity on official government forms.[217] If these themes seem heavily reminiscent of the mixed race activism during the same

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[214] The home departments of those scholars most influential in institutionalizing critical mixed race studies include: Sociology, Asian Americans Studies, History, Art/Media/Design, Latin American/Latino Studies.

[215] For a more elaborate review of classical mixed race studies see the section "The Politics of Recognition: The Rise of Multiracialism and Classical Mixed Race Studies" of my introduction.

[216] Ifekwunigwe's *Mixed Race Studies: A Reader*, 139-195.

[217] Ibid.,139-195.

period, this is largely due to the fact that many scholars either actively participated in or were in support of the multiracial movement during the 1990s.[218]

It is not the priority of this chapter to engage in an evaluation of "classical" mixed race studies—i.e. a more celebratory approach to mixed race studies—but rather to recount the story about the critical interventions made into the field's earlier formations. After all, there already exists a number of historiographical discussions on the first wave of contemporary mixed race studies, which outline how the field's arguments represent an inadequate social critique of race and racism at best, and a perpetuation of racial hierarchies at worst.[219] What is significant about these recent criticisms, however, are the varying degrees of confidence scholars have for a *critical* mixed race studies to act as a corrective for earlier iterations of the field, and to do so as a *distinct* disciplinary formation.

As such, we might understand discussions surrounding mixed race studies as being characterized by two intellectual positions: 1) scholars who frame CMRS as a distinct antiracist field formation that offers an effective reparative approach to the first wave of contemporary mixed race studies; and 2) scholars who not only frame mixed race studies as historically ineffective in addressing the complexities of structural racism—but rather perpetuate much its logics—but also are highly skeptical of the reparative approaches to the field. Put simply, the former believes in *amending*

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[218] Psychologist and influential mixed race scholar, Maria Root is perhaps the best and first examples of the mixed race scholar/activist. Maria Root's "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage" was influential in outlining much of the identity politics that characterized the multiracial movement's push for recognition on the 2000 US census. Some of the rights-based claims in Roots' document included: "I have the right not to justify my existence in the world," "I have the right to identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify," and "to have loyalties and identification with more than one group of people." See, Maria Root, "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage," accessed March 2, 2016, drmariaroot.com/doc/BillOfRights.pdf.

[219] Much of these arguments levied against the first wave of mixed race studies help support many of my own critiques of multiracialism, which I discussed in the previous two chapters.

the first wave of contemporary mixed race studies, and the latter remains anywhere

from skeptical to pessimistic of the field's future altogether. One should understand,

however, these concurrent arguments are two opposing sides of a broad spectrum

rather than bifurcating frameworks neatly dividing scholars. Nonetheless, these two

intellectual positions concerning the development of a distinctive field of CMRS

exemplify the broader tensions concerning the political possibilities of mixed race

that exist both within and outside the academic sphere. I outline these two diverging

paradigmatic ideas about CMRS below.

CMRS as Distinct, Antiracist Field

Kina, Fojas, Dariotis, and Daniel are often considered within the field as the primary

founders of institutionalizing the critical turn in mixed race studies. These authors

have served as principle organizers of the CMRS conferences, journal, newly-

founded association, and official website. Through these various mediums, scholars

have conceptualized CMRS as a field formation that is, on the one hand, an area of

study *associated with* other identity studies' committed to antiracist projects, and on

the other hand, an approach to racial analysis that *uniquely* reckons with the

experiences of mixed race people. The CMRS website outlines the field's

pedagogical investments as follows:

> Critical Mixed Race Studies is a transracial, transdisciplinary, and
> transnational critical analysis of the institutionalization of social cultural and
> political orders based on dominant conceptions of race. CMRS emphasizes the
> mutability of race and the porosity of racial boundaries in order to critique
> processes of racialization and social stratification based on race. CMRS
> addresses local and global systemic injustices rooted in systems of
> racializations.[220]

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[220]Critical Mixed Race Studies, "Home," accessed April 26, 2015,
http://criticalmixedracestudies.org/wordpress/

Here, we might understand CMRS practitioners as pronouncing their hope to make the necessary theoretical adjustments to classical approaches to mixed race by more explicitly addressing issues of "systemic injustices," and *yet still place mixed race subjects at the center of analysis by stressing "the mutability and porosity of racial boundaries"* (my emphasis). That is, by underscoring the flexibility and permeability of the color line, mixed race subjects are made visible within an antiracist framework that also subverts social injustices for all racialized subjects.

In this way, alongside the on-going criticisms of early iterations of mixed race studies, and largely in response to them, the developers of CMRS push for a study of mixed race that does not necessarily abandon the first wave's efforts to center the mixed race subject, but rather attempts to adopt the criticisms levied against studies of multiracialism by those inside and outside the field. Fojas, Kina, Dariotis, and Daniel assert, "rather than being an abrupt shift or change in the field, this critical turn is an indication that scholars are defining the contours of the field while continuing consciously to attend to specific concerns spurred by earlier works."[221]

In this way, CMRS hopes to make critical adjustments by implementing other theoretical influences into their disciplinary project, such as critical race theory, racial formation theory, intersectionality, queer theory, and elements of post-colonial theory.[222] CMRS practitioners argue these frameworks can better explain the historical, political, and cultural processes that underlie the experiences of multiracial people, and thus provide the analytical tools necessary to engage the study of mixed race beyond just identity labels. In so doing, CMRS is said to position, according to

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[221] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 8.
[222] See, Daniel, Kina, Dariotis, Fojas, "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies,"

Daniel, "the concept of *mixed race* at the critical center of focus such that multiracial individuals become subjects of complex structural processes rather simply objects of analysis (author's emphasis)."[223] By incorporating these other theoretical models into the field's pedagogical framework, CMRS brings to bear a less celebratory narrative of mixed race identity by discussing the ways in which the field has been used to prop up conservative, color-blind arguments around race and racism. These scholars believe it that doing so brings the discipline into the fold with other distinct forms of critical practice. Ultimately, CMRS scholars are both determined to develop the field into a theoretically developed antiracist project, and resolute on naming this area of study as a distinct form of knowledge production that focuses its analysis on mixed race subjectivity.

Mixed Race Studies Skepticism

Scholars such as Jared Sexton, Michelle Elam, Ralina Joseph, and Minelle Mahtani, among many others, lean toward the opposite end of the spectrum (all to varying degrees) in regards to skepticism about CMRS becoming an effectively distinct field of antiracist discourse. These writers are most critical of how classical mixed race studies has functioned as an intellectual project advancing post-racial ideologies, and cautious of the field's critical turn to amend these latest issues.[224] That is, some critics remain uncertain whether CMRS can overcome some of the celebratory arguments

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[223] "Editor's Note," *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* 1 (1) (2014): 30, accessed December 12, 2014.
[224] See Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*; Michelle Elam, *Souls of Mixed Folks*, Ralina Joseph, *Transcending Blackness*; Minelle Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia*. Other examples include: Minkah Makalani, "A Biracial Identity or a New Race? The Historical Limitations and Political Implications of a Biracial Identity for People with One Black Parent and One White Parent," *Souls: A Critcal Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 3.2 (Fall 2001): 73-102; Lewis Gordon, "Critical Mixed Race?'" *Social Identities* 1.2 (1995): 381-95.

within mixed race studies; namely, that mixed race troubling discrete boundaries of race was a precursor to their disappearance or symbolic transcendence. Collectively, the aforementioned critics emphasize how the first wave of literature exemplified "the mis-education of mixed race" (Elam), as it unsuccessfully "deconstruct[ed] or complicate[d] currently existing racialized categories of race" (Joseph), and instead "prop[ed] up other forms of racial oppression" (Mahtani), particularly anti-black racism (Sexton).[225] In their respective projects, these scholars ultimately argue that mixed race scholarship has represented a celebratory approach to multiracialism that primarily advocates for the recognition of mixed race identity in ways that not only render historical and current critiques of racial oppression illegible, but also actively reinscribe cultural logics that prop up racial liberalism, heteronormativity, and neocolonialism. For example, Mahtani discusses that in the Canadian context, multiculturalist celebration of the mixed race figure engages in a strategic forgetting of the countries colonial past, and its present consequences. In this way, it is important to note that these author's projects do not exclusively focus on an evaluation of mixed race studies, but rather couch them in broader critiques of the ways in which multiracialism, particularly as a form of identity politics, has propagated white supremacy.

Among these scholars skeptical of mixed race studies' past contributions to antiracist critique, some still attempt to conceptualize an analytical approach that not only names the ways mixed race cooperates with both national and global oppressive regimes, but also modes of resistence. However, these discussions tend to be

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[225] Elam, *Souls of Black*, 27-56; Joseph, *Transcending Blackness*, 24; Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia*, 44; Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*, 1-2.

suggestive points of departure rather than fleshed out prescriptions of CMRS that

others can put into practice. For instance, Matani argues CMRS scholars must better

engage with and incorporate anticolonial scholarship, particularly in the Canadian

context, in order to avoid epistemological approaches remaining complicit with

white-settler colonialism. However, in her concluding chapter she concedes,

"although I briefly touched upon issues of anticolonialism…this book does not

develop a fuller anticolonial framework for the study of multiraciality."[226] In another

example, Joseph concludes her book, *Transcending Blackness*, by outlining the

intellectual priorities that motivate CMRS. She writes, "critical mixed-race studies is

an interdisciplinary *subfield* that reads mixed race specificity through larger issues of

racialization, gender, sexuality, and class…[as practitioners] consider power and

history in their analyses of multiraciality, eschewing binaries between good and bad"

(my emphasis).[227] Here, Joseph argues an intersectional analysis that identifies the

complexities and historical situatedness of mixed race might resolve the problems of

the field's first wave. Still it is important to note that Joseph's disciplinary definition

relegates CMRS to a subfield rather than a distinct field formation. Also, she offers

no further elaboration or application of her disciplinary definition, but instead

suggests that it provides "opportunities for future work." Again, disciplinary

prescriptions for practicing a politically progressive form of CMRS—particularly one

that places the mixed race subject at the center of analysis—are left to the research of

others.[228] I find it significant that these scholars are more explicit in their rejection of

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[226] Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia*, 250.
[227] Joseph, *Transcending Blackness*, 170.
[228] Another example of this is Elam's (2011) search for the possibility of a "politically progressive and theoretically sophisticated mixed race politics," arguing, "we might join caution about the popular and

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classical mixed race studies (unlike those more optimistic about CMRS), and

demonstrate varying degrees of uncertainty as to the effectiveness of a future

intellectual project that is a distinct field, which effectively redresses the problems in

the first wave of contemporary literature.

In fact, I would argue the while each of these writers' work attends to the

politics of mixed race, at the center of their projects lies an analysis of broader

oppressive relations such as neoliberalism, settler colonialism, and anti-black racism.

It is through these relations that multiracialism, including mixed race studies in its

past and current formations, has been critiqued. While we might consider the

operation of critique as *an act of doing* critical mixed race studies, some of these

writers explicitly disavow the legitimacy of CMRS, and instead identify themselves

as critical outsiders who emphasize mixed race studies' ongoing theoretical

missteps.[229] Others, while not disavowing CMRS entirely, appear cautious over the

possibility of the critical turn to represent a disciplinary formation that successfully

operates as a distinct field formation apart from other forms of critical practice

aligned with the politics of other identity knowledges. These skeptics encourage one

to question whether CMRS, particularly in an era of neoliberal multiculturalism, is

able to achieve the antiracist goals as an independent academic discipline.

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scholarly appeal of mixed race with the curiosity about what multiple racial identification *does* allow for intellectually, experientially, and artistically" (authors emphasis, 51). Yet, while Elam examines the ways in which some creative writers and artists have critically approached the cultural construction of mixed race in ways that offer a "poetics of social justice," her project admittedly veers away from how an academic field of mixed race might yield the same transformative results (xx).

[229] For instance, Jared Sexton is on record disavowing the legitimacy of Critical Mixed Race Studies as constituting an disciplinary project that can effectively address issues of racial inequality in an anti-black world, as mixed race studies and mixed race activism by extension is "axiomatically" anti-black. See, Jared Sexton, "What's Radical About 'Mixed Race?'" What's Radical About "Mixed Race?" New York: University, New York, 20 April 2015, Lecture, [38:14-38:30],accessed March 22, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSMQpRzcGpA

Ultimately, between these two intellectual modes of thought, on one hand, the biggest proponents of CMRS outline particular pedagogical changes that, for them, coalesce into a distinctive critical field of mixed race studies. This approach advocates for the recognition and representation of mixed race subjectivity, while also offering an improved account of multiracialism; one that is believed to not advance post-race discourse, but rather contribute to a critique of such claims. On the other hand, more skeptical writers choose instead to focus their projects almost exclusively on the critique of multiracialism, which includes its disciplinary formation, to primarily reveal its cooperation with white supremacy. Only then do these skeptics cautiously propose potential points of departure, if any.

I contend that the critical distinction between these two approaches can largely be attributed to the placement of the mixed race subject within the field imaginary of CMRS. Specifically, whereas the former paradigm places great confidence in the porous and mutable nature of mixed race subjectivity to jumpstart its antiracist critique, the latter paradigm centers on larger manifestations of state power—e.g. post-colonialism, neoliberalism, anti-black racism—to critique mixed race as identity. At the core of this difference, I argue, is a broader discussion of what it means to engage in *critical* studies of minoritized identities. Specifically, what constitutes a critical practice in the post-1990s multiculturalist era whereby the academic industrial complex continues to grow, and particularly when "identity" has become the subject of such thoroughgoing critique? I suggesting exploring this question helps situate a discussion of the effectiveness of CMRS relatively antiracist intellectual project.

What is Critical about Critical?

Identity-based studies continue to develop disciplinary interventions to counter the ways the contemporary US academy as taken a discursive hold on notions of diversity and representation. As a consequence, universities employ these fields, at least in part, as regulatory apparatuses to advance the neoliberal university in particular and state power more generally. In other words, identity knowledges inhabit the university to stand in for discourses of increasing inclusiveness, even amidst moments of decreasing enrollment of black and brown students and low rates of employment of faculty of color. As a brief example, one might look to a university's circular "diversity requirement," which mandates that students take at least one course within a race, gender, or sexuality-based field as a condition of graduation. Here identity knowledges not only represent the consequence of antiracist struggle from both activists and academics, but they also serve as a condition upon which the liberal multicultural university is, at least in part, able to proclaim its commitment to social inclusion. Mitchell articulates how such diversity requirements point to the paradoxical relationship between identity studies and the neoliberal university. He contends that fields like ethnic studies have "functioned both to bring the university to crisis *and* to supply the university with an instrument of crisis management."[230]

As such, identity-based knowledges have been consistently forced to reckon with the institutionalization of minority difference by identifying new epistemologies that reveal and oppose dominant modes of power both inside and outside of the US

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[230] Nick Mitchell, "Critical Ethnic Studies (Intellectual)," *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal* 1 (Spring 2015), 88.

academy. Be that Black feminism, intersectionality, critical race theory—all have

been among the most significant contributors of critical social theory within identity-

based fields. Here we might consider Kimberlé Crenshaw's discussion of those who

have consistently "complicated notions of power and identity implicated by both the

anti-instrumentalist and anti-essentialist positions."[231] In other words, scholars and

activists critiques over simplistic frameworks of both identity and power, which yield

to liberal individuals, forgetting the complex ways race, gender, power are co-

constitutive, flexible, and contextual. Thus, as fields name their respective critical

turns (e.g. *critical* race theory, *critical* ethnic studies, *critical* mixed race studies,

etc.), identity knowledges seek to challenge disciplinary normalization by questioning

the basic assumptions that underlie the field's object of study (e.g. "What is Queer

about Queer Studies").[232] This self-reflexive interrogation of identity-based fields has

often required scholars to question the political utility of the subjects for which their

disciplinary formations are named. Reddy reminds us, "intersectionality is a

rethinking and reworking of the meaning of 'standpoint,' in a historical milieu in

which the universality of the state…is created on the terrain of subjectivity itself."[233]

In the context of institutional recognition—and even celebration—of liberal

subjectivities within and outside of the academy, a significant pedagogical maneuver

in a field's critical turn has been characterized partly by decentering the subject.

For instance, Kanidce Chuh argues Asian American studies should be

practiced as a "subjectless discourse." For her, subjectlessness effectively "points to

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[231] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Introduction" in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, (The New Press, 1995), xxvi.

[232] See, "What is Queer About Queer Studies," *Social Text* 23.3-4 (2005). Other examples include.

[233] Chandan Reddy, *Freedom With Violence: Race Sexuality and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 32.

the constraints on the liberatory potential of the achievement of subjectivity, by reminding us that a 'subject' only becomes recognizable and can act as such by conforming to certain regulatory matrices."[234] Thus under this framework, Asian Americanist critique begins its analysis as subjectless, understanding that "Asian American" as a category of difference then becomes constituted by complex arrangement of power relations.

Similarly, David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz discuss how queer studies has reimagined its social critique as "subjectless" by precluding "any positing of a proper subject *of* or object *for* the field, insisting that queer as no fixed political referent."[235] Furthermore, the relatively recent formation of critical ethnic studies echoes the political vulnerabilities of an identity-centered analysis in the context of liberal multiculturalist institutions. In fact, the inaugural issue of *Critical Ethnic Studies* cites its first point of departure as broadening its focus beyond "identitarian frameworks." The field underscores a desire to "un-tether Ethnic Studies from…a politics of identity representation that is diluted and domesticated by nation building and capitalist imperatives."[236] These examples demonstrate critical studies' theoretical turn away from positivistic frameworks that collude with post-civil rights, multiculturalist identity politics. In other words, decentering the subject functions as an epistemological destabilization of the normalizing effects brought about by the institutional incorporation of social difference.

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[234] Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise*, 8

[235] ,David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, "What is Queer About Queer Studies," 3.

[236] John D. Márquez and Junaid Rana, "On Our Genesis and Future," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1.1 (April 2015), 1-8.

The CMRS movement, particularly amongst those most optimistic about its disciplinary distinctiveness, views the destabilization of the subject as central to their field imaginary. Other critical practices speak about subjectless discourses that depart from an "identitarian framework" built upon positivistic constructions by underscoring how such categories contain "*no fixed* political referent." I argue CMRS optimists interpret the mixed race subject as always already embodying this same critique. As "flexibility" "mutability" "particularity" "complexity" all serve as concepts that animate subjectless discourses, CMRS optimists understand the mixed race subject as already signifying such qualities. That is, underlying some CMRS scholars' disciplinary assumptions is a belief that an individual reckoning with the mixed race subject—constituted by notions of racial porousness and mutability—can effectively jumpstart its own interrogation critique of racism. As a consequence it is the hope of these CMRS practitioners that by first acknowledging the ways the mixed race subject becomes recognized through "conforming to certain regulatory matrices," they can then effectively strategize how to circumvent these regimes by "critically" placing the mixed race subject at the center of the field's analysis.

In this way, CMRS as a distinct form of critical practice can conflate the theoretical uses of mixed race subjectivity with the very act critique. This might be best illustrated through the comments made by Daniel, Kina, Dariotis, and Fojas in a co-authored article from the inaugural issue of *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* (*JCMRS*). In presenting a metacommentary on the "emerging paradigms" of CMRS, they assert, "critical multiraciality [functions] as a *template* for engaging in a transgressive *pedagogy* and *praxis*. This framework critiques racial essentialism and

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provides a basis for more inclusive collective subjectivities across all racial groups,

including multiracials, which facilitate building other issue-based coalitions"

(authors' emphasis).[237] For them, it is not mixed race identity that offers a solution for

achieving racial justice per se, but rather the theoretical concepts multiraciality is

believed to enable—i.e. complexity, non-fixity, permeability, particularity—that

offers a "transgressive *pedagogy* and *praxis*."

Yet, CMRS optimists are perhaps too confident in the mixed race subject to

achieve the type of antiracist critique they desire. As a consequence, I contend, that

the field miscalculates the degree to which the concepts undergirding mixed race

operate in service to the neoliberal university's institutionalization of minority

difference as well as the current racial order more generally, a claim that I elaborate

on more extensively in the next section. I am not arguing that there exists a

discernible difference in the commitment to social justice between CMRS's biggest

proponents and scholars in other fields—it would be unfair to assume the ethical

claims of the practitioners themselves—but rather I assert that there are some

identity-based studies more susceptible to the neoliberal universities normalizing

mechanisms than others, CMRS is one of them.

CMRS, Or Conundrums of Mixed Race Studies

CMRS largely imagines itself as a newly, distinctive form of critical practice

that seeks to first tend to how its object of analysis has contributed to the perpetuation

of white supremacy, and second to make the necessary theoretical adjustments to

advance the goals of social justice shared by other identity-based field formations.

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[237] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 24.

However, the primary conundrum for CMRS is that in attending to its first objective the field radically impedes upon its second. In Robyn Wiegman's *Object Lessons*, she underscores that scholars must reckon with the idea that the object relations constituting each discipline—e.g. gender, anti-normativity, internationalization, and white antiracism—unavoidably operate as disciplinary mechanisms often incommensurate with their goals for justice.[238] It is within a similar register that I consider the ways in which CMRS's analytical object—the mixed race subject—unsuccessfully performs the type of political work the field's lead practitioners wish upon it.

Wiegman's argument that whiteness studies ineffectively detaches itself from the flexibility of white supremacy offers a framework for analyzing CMRS as a distinctive area of critical practice.[239] What I find particularly compelling for a critique of CMRS is her primary contention against whiteness studies: "White disaffiliation from white supremacy in its segregation formation *is* the hegemonic configuration of white supremacy in the post-Civil Rights multiculturalist era" (author's emphasis).[240] To be clear, I am not aligning myself with Wiegman's critique of whiteness studies, but rather suggesting it offers a critical lens with which to call into question the criticality of CMRS, specifically among those most intent on institutionalizing the field as distinct disciplinary formation that centers the mixed race subject.

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[238] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 8.
[239] See, See, Wiegman, "The Political Conscious (Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity)," *Object Lessons,*" 137-196. Here
[240] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 29.

For instance, just as Wiegman associates three disconcerting claims with whiteness studies' disciplinary novelty in the early 1990s, I argue they suitably describes how CMRS optimists justify its formation in the early 21st century. Wiegman argues whiteness studies' novelty during this time was based on first, that white scholars believed they were morally obligated to confront their own white identity, second, that in doing so, this pursuit would constitute a distinctive field, and third, this area of study was doing antiracist work. In a similar register it could be said CMRS practitioners first articulate an obligation to critically confront mixed race identity; second, contend that this pursuit constitutes a distinctive field; and third, suggest, such work fundamentally represents antiracist work.[241] I am not the first to identify parallels between whiteness studies and issues of mixed race. Habiba Ibrahim briefly identifies parallels between whiteness studies and mulitracialism by outlining their temporal and logical relationship. She notes, "during the 1990s the simultaneous rise of whiteness studies and multiracial cultural politics implied that both discourses shared in part a strategy for addressing racialized inequities through an extended scrutiny of the contingencies of whiteness."[242] Ibrahim's observations identify the mutual attempt by whiteness studies and multiracialism to address racial difference by calling into question the very category of whiteness.[243] Ultimately, Wiegman's discussion of the investments and problems of whiteness studies offers a guide to

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[241] Ibid., 157.

[242] Ibid.,122.

[243] Other scholars have identified either the parallels between or CMRS and whiteness studies, or explained how the latter could contribute to the former. For instance, Mahtani draws upon whiteness studies as an analytical frame for interrogating the ways her mixed race women interviewees grappled with the acceptance and rejection of white identity in different spatial contexts. In so doing, she takes note of whiteness studies' efforts to historicize processes of white racialization in order to help illustrate how, for some of her respondents, whiteness became a particularized racial category that possessed multiple meanings "rather than an unyielding and desired site of privilege." See Mahtani, *Mixed Race Amnesia*, 141.

trace and critique the intellectual history of CMRS, which I summarize as follows: the

practitioners spearheading the institutionalization CMRS mistakenly underestimate

how mixed race disaffiliation from white supremacy in its racially purist formation *is*

the hegemonic configuration of white supremacy in the multiculturalist era.[244]

I illustrate this point by identifying three separate but interrelated strategies

that characterizes the field imaginary of CMRS: (1) CMRS *refuses to identify* with

the power the field's disciplinary object wields in the post-civil rights era; (2) the

field centers its antiracist work on the *de-essentializing and particularizing* of racial

difference; and (3) CMRS relies upon *human agency* to help refuse the processes of

racialization for their respective objects of study. Through tracing the intellectual

history of CMRS, albeit an abbreviated one, I discuss these three pedagogical

strategies of CMRS, underscoring the conundrums the field faces when centering the

mixed race subject as a primary means of working against racial hierarchy.

Refusal of Identification

CMRS optimists posit a rejection and rerouting of identification in hopes of

developing a distinct identity-based field contesting white supremacy. More

specifically, CMRS disaffiliates with the conservative approaches to mixed race

identity politics and studies, which have been charged with perpetuating racial

hierarchy, particularly anti-Black racism. For example, Daniel, et al. announce

"periodicals such as [*JCMRS*] will be a remedy of sorts to [a] lack of criticality by

serving as a scholarly response and counterbalance to the dangerously biased, and

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[244] I am not arguing that white supremacy has always been reliant on purity. In practice racial
boundaries have always been crossed. However, we are seeing the ways in which the reconfiguration
of racial boundaries is becoming central to the narrative of race relations in the United States post-civil
rights. Say more about this.

perhaps naïve, reporting, discussions, and representations found in mainstream press as well as other popular media."[245] For these practitioners, CMRS disaffiliates its object of study from the post-race, conservative discourses that have privileged the category of mixed race under white supremacy. In its refusal, CMRS attempts to redirect this politically conservative attachment toward an antiracist project. By the field's refusal to identify with the post-race discourses surrounding the mixed race subject, I do not mean to say the field denies the ways mixed race is deployed for conservative strategic purposes. In fact, those most optimistic about the ability of CMRS to critique power relations acknowledge the politically hazardous ways mixed race has been deployed in order to perpetuate color-blind ideologies. I outline these acknowledgements and their significance later in this chapter. But here it is important to mention that by CMRS practitioners recognizing the variety of ways racism manifests itself, they suggest centering the mixed race subject does not have to maintain race's hierarchical structure, but rather is capable of deconstructing it. However, within this attempt one must then recognize the paradoxical enactment of privilege and power that takes place within the field's disavowal of the cultural and political meaning of mixed race.

For instance, Molly McKibbon concedes the corporal privileges that may come along with inhabiting a racially ambiguous body, but asserts that this is not what a contemporary, progressive approach to mixed race supports. Mickibbon goes on to acknowledge that while colorism has remained a contemporary problem in the US resulting in the continued privileging of lighter skin over dark, this fact is quickly bypassed to emphasize how a "contemporary" mixed race identity resists such

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[245] Daniel, et al. "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed race Studies,"7.

privileges. She asserts, "multiracial identity is not necessarily tied to the *claiming* of white privilege and the betrayal of blackness as it was in the past (my emphasis)." Thus, whereas mixed race identity historically might have been a strategic act of casting off blackness in order to enjoy the advantages of whiteness (e.g. through racial passing), McKibbon suggests in the present US social context, asserting a mixed race identity is not always an effort to claim white privilege. However, McKibbon misses how her concession of the ongoing existence of colorism renders this point inconsequential. More precisely, if we understand white privilege as an array of structural advantages granted to particular subject positions over others due to sociohistorical relations of power—manifested in the form of colorism for instance—then whether such privileges are "claimed" or not is less important. Put simply, *a refusal to identify* with the privileges mixed race identity affords does not negate the structural realities that bestow them. And while it is certainly not the goal of CMRS to deny the existence of such privileges, practitioners attempt to work against this fact to conceptualize a critical mixed race studies that can serve as a distinct identity-based field addressing racial oppression, as well as other systemic injustices.[246]

In this context, we see how the field attempts to refuse the material privileges associated with mixed race corporeality, hoping to re-center the multiracial subject in a much more *"critically conscious"* framework. That is to say, the practice of critique begins with an individual's refusal to identify with the history that endows mixed race with power and privilege in the post-civil rights, multiculturalist era. However, one

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[246] "Homepage," *Critical Mixed Race Studies*, accessed November 21, 2015, http://criticalmixedracestudies.org

might be suspicious of the current architecture of CMRS as it also aspires to subdue the privileges of its object of study through an "act of political will."[247]

Like McKibbon, Daniel, et al., in their discussion of developing a critical paradigm for the study of mixed race, do not ignore the unequal corporeal realities of racialized bodies, but instead hope a *critical* mixed race identity might serve as a method for bringing its hierarchical order to an end. As an example, in laying out the various paradigms shaping CMRS, Daniel, et al. remind readers, "an interrogation of monoracial norms is not, therefore, dismissive of the fact that phenotypical preferences may disproportionately benefit multiracial-identified individuals even though they are a minority of the population."[248] Despite such recognition of the privileges that are associated with some mixed race bodies, the authors go on to argue, "the contemporary multiracial identity formations, unlike previous ones, are not synonymous with a desire to secure a social location closer to that of whites in the racial hierarchy. Rather, they contest the mutually exclusive nature of racial boundaries and also challenge the hierarchical valuation of racial (and cultural) differences."[249] Here, while the authors initially acknowledge that the bodies of "multiracial-identified" subjects might "disproportionately benefit" from white supremacy, the authors still claim a contemporary mixed race identity—and academic project by extension—can resist this preferential location to contest *both* "racial boundaries" and "hierarchical valuation." Put differently, practitioners argue that

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[247] In his essay "White Racial Projects," renowned sociologist Howard Winant questions white studies: "is whiteness so flimsy that it can be repudiated by a mere act of political will—or even by widespread and repeated acts aimed at rejecting white privilege? I think not." Here, Winant is doubtful of white studies scholars' ability to "repudiate" the privileges of whiteness no matter how proactive their efforts to do so.
[248] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 14.
[249] Ibid., 14.

despite some privileges that may be granted to some mixed race subjects, this can be consciously disavowed in favor of emphasizing how mixed race deconstructs racial differences, which in turn constitutes and shapes the hierarchical structure of race. However, in doing so, as a consequence CMRS practitioners must then overemphasize the political impact of de-essentializing and particularizing racial discourses, as well as the strategic role of human agency, within their critical practice. In other words, similar to mixed race studies' earlier iterations, by CMRS highlighting notions of racial flexibility and choice in identity, even when couched in antiracist discourse, still may not engage in the type of radical politics its practitioners wish.

De-essentializing and Particularizing of Racial Discourses

For the proponents of CMRS, the ability to call into question the notion of racial fixity among essentialized subjects lies at the heart of making the field's object of study visible and necessary for dismantling white supremacy. This is supposedly accomplished through a social constructivist framework that seeks to de-essentialize and particularize processes of racialization in order to trouble normative boundaries of race. Deconstructing these boundaries ostensibly opens up opportunities for the development of cross-racial alliances, which collectively work to subvert racial inequality. Put simply, for both CMRS and whiteness studies, it is the concept of a "de-essentialized subjectivity on which the mobility of antiracist identification depends."[250]

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[250] Wiegman, *Object Lessons*, 172.

Daniel et al. illustrate this point by suggesting that "the pursuit of a post-racist

social order in which racial distinction would no longer determine, or at least have

considerably less significance in determining, individuals' social location in terms of

wealth, power, privilege, and prestige, would be a necessary component of, if not

prerequisite to, a genuinely postracial society *where racial porosity provides the*

foundation upon which to simultaneously construct identities grounded in the greater

humanity (my emphasis)."[251] In other words, these CMRS framers envision the

mixed race subject as a signifier for the disruption of racial boundaries, whereby such

categorical distinctions no longer exist to position groups of people within a

hierarchical social order. However, the notion that "racial porosity"—specifically as a

de-essentializing perquisite to constructing "identities grounded in their greater

humanity"—can effectively contest racial inequality underestimates how white

supremacy does not require strict adherence to racial essentialism. In turn, a

disciplinary analysis that prioritizes de-essentialism does not necessarily engage in

the type of antiracist work CMRS practitioners desire.

Yet and still, CMRS describes its disciplinary project as one that "emphasizes

the mutability of race and the porosity of racial boundaries" in order to adequately

attend to "local and global systemic injustices."[252] Presenting on a panel titled

"What's Radical About Mixed Race?" hosted by New York University's Asian

Pacific American Institute, Jared Sexton disavowed the possibility of CMRS existing

as distinct disciplinary formation. To summarize his response to the seminar's

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[251] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 24.
[252] Homepage: "Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS), *Critical Mixed Race Studies*, accessed January 1, 2016, http://criticalmixedracestudies.org.

question, "What's Radical About Mixed Race" in a word—nothing. Directly

critiquing the field's disciplinary definition, he stated:

> [CMRS] analysis is immediately hamstrung by the assumption that 'emphasizing the mutability of race and the porosity of racial boundaries' ensures the critique of local and global injustices rooted in systems of racialization…It assumes more importantly that what is crucial about a racial order is its relative mutability or porosity rather than the violence of its hierarchical structure…In fact regimes of racialization have long worked with and through mutability and porosity, through figures of mixture as much as figures of purity.[253]

Here, Sexton emphasizes that throughout history the flexibility and permeability of

race has been deployed as a strategic mechanism to uphold racial inequality. He cites

several scholars that have discussed how the maintenance of racial oppression has

functioned not only in spite of, but also in cooperation with the historical flexibility of

the color line.[254] For example, Sexton points to the work of historian, Daniel

Sharfstein, who shows that in certain historical cases whites were quite comfortable

welcoming into their communities some African Americans who demonstrated a

commitment to racial slavery; this ultimately serves as a reminder that "the history of

the color line is one in which people have lived quite comfortably with

contradiction."[255] Through Sharfstein's example, Sexton observes how "commitment

to slavery," rather than simply "lineage or physical appearance," was one of the

salient conditions upon which some African Americans accessed whiteness. In this

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[253] Jared Sexton, "What's Radical About 'Mixed Race?'" What's Radical About "Mixed Race?" New York University, New York. 20 April 2015. Lecture.

[254] Here Sexton names the following as examples of works discussing how racial regimes have worked through the "porosity and mutability of racial boundaries." See, Hortense Spillars, "Notes on an Alternative Model," (2011); Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Culture in Theory, Culture and Race* (1995), Teresa C. Zackodnik, *Mulatta the Politics of Race* (2004); and Daniel J. Sharfstien (2012). *The Invisible Line: A Secret History of Race in America.*

[255] See, Daniel J. Sharfstein, *The Invisible Line: Three American Families and the Secret Journey from Black to White*, New York: Penguin Press, 2011, 415.

way, the fixity of racial boundaries is not always a necessary precondition for local

and global injustices to occur, but rather an engagement with its very "porosity."[256]

The de-essentializing of racial boundaries in service to white supremacy

continues to be evidenced in the post-civil rights era. Sexton indicates how an

ongoing commitment to the "structural homologies" of anti-black racism post-1960s,

such as "disciplinary welfare, racial profiling, and mass imprisonment," has

broadened what it means to be considered white, or more aptly what it means gain

access to whiteness. And yet, this fact is not lost on the framers of CMRS, as they do

acknowledge that one must be aware of how anti-essentialism has been historically,

and even presently, integral to systemic racial oppression. Daniel et al. explicitly

warn, "any study of mixed race and multiraciality…requires being attentive to

unequal power relations and the ensuing exploitation that the implied conviviality of

hybridity, mixed race, and multiraciality can easily obscure."[257] The authors readily

acknowledge how such concepts have been taken advantage of under a so-called

"new" racial order in the post-civil rights period, whereby a process of "selective

integration" justifies colorblind ideologies that undergird policies attacking

affirmative action and voting rights.[258]

Nonetheless, CMRS practitioners remain steadfast in identifying de-

essentialism as a central analytic to their antiracist project. For them centering the

mixed race subject still carries potential for subverting racial hierarchies in the

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[256] See also Nyong'o, Tavia. *Amalgamtion Waltz* (2009).
[257] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 22.
[258] Ibid.,23. Here the others readily acknowledge that color-blind policies and attacks on voter rights are a result of the multi-culturalist era. However, they remain vigilant in taking advantage of the flexibility in the color line in the current historical moment. That is the "informal dynamics" of racism have replaced explicit white domination, and these authors see this as an opportunity to take advantage of this loosening of the old racial order.

present context. Thus, while Daniel et al claim that, on the one hand, mixed race can be a particularly cooptable category of difference for the maintenance of white supremacy post-1960s, they argue "on the other hand, the new racial order that has emerged in the post-civil rights era still holds out the possibility of conceptualizing mixed race, as well as multiraciality and hybridity by extension, based on egalitarian (i.e. 'critical') premises."[259] Consequently, framers identify "critical multiraciality…[as] a *template* for engaging in a transgressive *pedogogy* and *praxis*."[260] However, this commitment to proceed with a critique of essentialism turns the fields' analytic focus to the particular—a maneuver that risks, once again, prioritizing discourses of the personal and individual.

Take for example McKibbon's insistence that while *group identities* are valuable for upholding "civil rights protections," *individual identities* carry the possibility to subvert racism by troubling the very racial classification upon which its hierarchy supposedly depends. She contends:

> If a challenge is being mounted against how race has been and is still used in American society—especially with regard to dichotomous race concepts and the notions of purity and exclusion that accompany monoracialism—then individualizing (multi)racial identities in ways that resist conventions of group identity may offer a way to question race practices. It is not just multiraciality itself but also how heterogeneous experiences and unique identities are expressed that contributes to political resistance. So while group identities are necessary to combat white supremacy (and thus are still essential tools in US culture), individual identities are necessary to challenge race as a method of classification (and thus begin to change how people in the unites States see and treat people).[261]

McKibbon is representative of CMRS framers' broader attempts to develop a distinct disciplinary model of antiracism that seeks to resolve perceived tensions between the

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[259] Ibid., 24.
[260] Ibid.,24.
[261] McKibbin, "The Current State of Multiracial Discourse," 186.

recognition of *individual* multiracial identities and protecting the civil rights for racial *groups*. The field partly structuring its antiracist project on notions of the particular, and individual, CMRS undervalues just how significantly (neo)liberal configurations of race and racism enlist these same concepts to perpetuate white supremacy, especially in the post-civil rights multiculturalist era. My previous two chapters illustrated just this, explaining the ways in which the category of mixed race has functioned *in practice* under neoliberal governance to justify race-based admission policies and apolitical student organizing.

This disciplinary turn to the particular, and its potential consequences, is largely enabled by an assumed ambiguity attached to its object. That is, without a shared history of racialization the field turns to the particular in order to mobilize its antiracist project around individualized subjectivities, united primarily by a conscious effort to trouble normative categories of racial embodiment through a critique of essentialism. Wiegman's analysis of whiteness studies' pedagogical move to the particular helps contextualize the obstacles that face CMRS's efforts to make a similar shift. In her evaluation of whiteness studies, she writes, "for the field's elaborate investment in transporting the analytic gaze to the particular, we witness a confounding reiteration of the epistemological privilege that underwrites white racial formation, where the prerogative of individualized subjectivity is grasped by a critical subject now convinced of its ability to negotiate the meaning and effects of its own social identity."[262] In the case of CMRS, while practitioners readily admit the convivial ways mixed race functions as a mechanism of white supremacy, prioritizing

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[262] Wiegman, *Object Lesson*, 186.

de-essentialized, particular subjectivities to form cross-racial collectivities, for them, grants the ability to determine the very expediency of mixed race.

Human Agency

As CMRS looks to center the mixed race subject in order to de-essentialize and particularize racial boundaries, CMRS optimists suggest this social constructivist framework consequently enables people to serve as active agents capable of resisting both the current racial order as well as the conservative attachments that have previously clung to the field. Put simply, flexibility in the racial order, offers flexibility in choosing what mixed race means—both personally and politically—in the post-civil rights, multiculturalist era. In this way, CMRS optimists attempt to develop a "conscious and critical agency" around its object of study; one that seeks to counter white supremacy rather than prop it up.[263] Thus, some scholars of CMRS imagine a mixed race subject that possesses the capacity to *choose* a form of political identification that simultaneously troubles both racial boundaries and its hierarchical structure. For example, Daniel, et al. contend, "considering that social boundaries, hierarchies, and identities associated with social categories of difference are continually constructed and maintained in everyday life, it also follows that under certain conditions, individuals acting as singular agents or as collective subjectivities resist pressures to conform to these social forces."[264] Here, the writers emphasize that if "social boundaries, hierarchies, and identities" are merely ideological constructions,

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[263] Ibid.,143.
[264] Daniel, et al.,"Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 8.

then mixed race identities can *choose* (under certain conditions) to resist them.[265] However, I argue this emphasis on human agency is yet another paradigmatic example of how CMRS privileges consciousness over embodiment, structuring its antiracist critique around the flexibility of racial boundaries.

For some CMRS practitioners, by understanding racial embodiment as socially constructed representations that are tied to historical formations of difference, calling into question these formations—vis-à-vis the mixed race subject—opens up possibilities for imagining other ways of being, and subsequently new modes for racial advocacy. During his keynote address at the inaugural CMRS conference, Andrew Jolivétte proclaims, "no matter the color of our skin or the configuration of our mixture, we must be who our parents and families made. We must be who parents and families believe us to be, and we too must be what society has made us out to be. *But these are mere racial representations. They are not the end of the story. We, as a mixed race community, still have agency. We have the power to name ourselves and our role in social justice movements*" (my emphasis). For Jolivétte, at the center of CMRS practitioners' antiracist critique is the ability to name oneself outside of a normative racialized framework; a maneuver that enables the mixed race subject to "name ourselves and our role in social justice movements" *in spite* of the social contexts that constitute their corporal existence—i.e. "the color of our skin." Thus, while Jolivétte admits that in many ways mixed race subjects are bounded by "what society as made us out to be," he relegates this fact to "mere racial representations." This is not to say that he dismisses the importance of the material meaning of the

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[265] The authors suggest the civil rights movements specifically brought about these "certain conditions." As identity politics and recognition took center stage, this has facilitated the necessary conditions to bring about mixed race identity politics.

racialized body, but rather Jolivétte suggests by thinking through its socially constructed formation, mixed race individuals possess the agency to resignify one's corporeal existence, and in so doing, is capable of developing an effectual form of political expediency to subvert racial hierarchies.

However, how does choosing to identify with an alternative racialized framework that more "accurately" captures personal affiliation subvert racial hierarchies in practice? After all, scholars of CMRS must first reckon with how arguing that mixed race agents have the capacity to consciously choose an alternative mode of racial existence paradoxically masks structural and cultural privileges, which allow these calls for political resignification even possible. Consider when Daniel, et al. argue "those who display *critical* multiracial identities resist pressures to conform to the existing racial order, with its inequitable power relations" (author's emphasis).[266] Here, CMRS should consider that it is because of these very inequitable power relations—which privilege the ambiguous in favor of over-determinded black body, for example—that regulate who can resist such pressure in the first place. Therefore who has access to a "critical multiracial identity" and who does not becomes unevenly distributed not only amongst "mixed race" individuals, but also between racialized groups more generally.

In this way, possessing the agency to consciously resignify the meaning of one's racial embodiment does little to challenge to the hierarchical structure of race so much as reveal its operation. Even as CMRS practitioners might consider the role of agency as vital to the "more progressive and active subject positioning" for both the mixed race individual and social justice movements, Mahtani reminds us, "this

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[266] Daniel, et al., "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies," 8.

kind of approach is mired in neoliberal optimism and does nothing to challenge ongoing patterns of systemic and institutionalized racism for *all* racialized people— not just those who possess the privilege to identify as mixed race." Thus, while an emphasis on mixed race agency might offer a beneficial framework for understanding (and perhaps even empowering) racial identity formation for *individuals*, stressing the role of mixed race agency as a pedagogical basis for the critique of racial hierarchies faces significant challenges.

The critical turn in mixed race studies fully embraces a social constructivist framework to approach human agency in a way that challenges *both* normative racial boundaries *and* the conservative, colorblind appropriation of the category of mixed race. Yet, the desire to accomplish both simultaneously presupposes that practitioners are capable of out-theorizing the nexus of power that grants mixed race visibility in the first place. That is, CMRS optimists rely on human agency to reconstruct traditional racial boundaries in a way that recognizes its politically progressive mixed race subjects, but also wishes to consciously circumvent the privileges that accompany racial ambiguity in the post-civil rights, multiculuralist era. Ultimately this disciplinary desire to stress the role of human agency, I suggest, attempts to reroute its political identifications away from white supremacy by consciously choosing to reconceptualize processes of racialization, although in doing so, unwittingly disavows the corporeal privileges attached to the field's object of study.

In Wiegman's critique of whiteness studies she argues, "these moves that seek to privilege the conscious intentions, practices, and political attachments of the subject over the body evince a desire for mastery not over bodies per se but over the

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social as the discursive setting in which the white body comes to have material meaning."[267] I contend that Wiegman's analysis in the context of CMRS is quite relevant: much of the scholarship conceptualizing CMRS as a disciplinarily distinct antiracist project makes a similar attempt to prioritize racial consciousness over material existence in hopes to control the sociocultural meaning of mixed race in the present moment, and subsequently, empower the category's ability to trouble the existing racial order. However, I argue it is paradoxically this current racial order—whereby racial ambiguity contributes to the rerouting of race and racism to the private sphere—that enables the most enthusiastic scholars of CMRS to assert that political will can suppress the material meaning of mixed race in the 21st century.

Conclusion

Ultimately, CMRS optimists' disciplinary emphasis on the refusal of identification, de-essentializing and particularizing of racial discourses, and human agency represents, in part, a larger economy of the contemporary university's institutionalization of minority difference. As the field's biggest proponents acknowledge that CMRS "has evolved as an interdisciplinary field that derives from the work of ethnic studies scholars," these same practitioners perhaps underestimate how centering the mixed race subject leaves the field susceptible, more than any other race-based field, to the challenges that characterize the union between knowledge and power. In considering the role of the ethnic studies intellectual, Mitchell poses the following question: What would it mean to understand critique itself as at once a

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[267] Wiegman, *Object Lessons,* 181.

scene of political compromise and an *object of desire…*?[268] In the context of the

intellectuals most optimistic about CMRS becoming a distinct field, I argue critique

represents an object of desire that *is* political compromise, par excellence. This is not

to suggest that CMRS is the only identity knowledge fraught with the challenges of

working in favor of the normalizing effects of the liberal, multiculturalist university.

However, the three strategies that organize the field imaginary of CMRS are perhaps

rendered easiest "into a form of institutional capital."[269] In other words, the disavowal

of white supremacy, emphasis on de-essentialization, and importance of human

agency serve as major cultural investments for the university in the current historical

moment. As the public universities look to increase operational efficiency in the age

of austerity, perhaps one might understand the institutionalization CMRS as a symbol

of cultural efficiency.

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[268] Mitchell, "Critical Ethnic Studies (Intellectual), 92.
[269] Nick Mitchell expounds on Robyn Wiegman's argument concerning the demise of whiteness studies. He argues that while Wiegman suggests whiteness studies suffered because the commodification of whiteness failed to secure the field's institutionalization in the same way that other identity knowledge were able, this is only part of the story. Mitchell takes this argument further, stating that whiteness studies' "segregationist effects"—a vast majority of white scholars decentering the whiteness—possessed low investment for university committed to diversity and inclusion. In this way, Mitchell asserts, "The commodification that made whiteness an identity knowledge could not be translated directly into a form of institutional capital." Mitchell, "The Object of *Object* Lessons: Thoughts and Questions," *Feminist Formations* 25.3 (Winter 2013), 185.

Conclusion

On March 16, 2016 the Office of the Dean of Students at Cornell University,

presented the student club, Mixed at Cornell (MAC), with the James A. Perkins Prize

for Interracial and Intercultural Peace and Harmony.[270] The annual award was created

to recognize "the Cornell student, faculty, staff member, or program making the most

significant contribution to furthering the ideal of university community while

respecting the values of racial diversity."[271]

Certainly, on the one hand MAC's acknowledgment by Cornell offers yet

another example of the institutionalization of mixed race. Calling itself the "most

ethnically diverse group on campus," MAC's mission is to foster a community of

support for multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural individuals where students can

feel safe to "share their experiences" and bring awareness to the "marginalization of

identity."[272] Again, as a community tied to the celebration of representational

diversity and personal identity, MAC articulates institutionally digestible demands

that coincide with the values of the cotemporary university (albeit a private institution

in this case). Reminiscent to the "institutional personality" of UCB, which I discussed

in chapter 1, Cornell's Office of the Dean Students conceptualizes campus inclusion

through the strategic deployment of concepts such as "respect," "personal

accountability," and "individuality," among some others. The three preceding

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[270] Cornell Trustee Emeritus Thomas W. Jones '69, in 1994, named the annual award in honor of President Emeritus James A. Perkins. The award was originally named the James A. Perkins award for Interracial Understanding and Harmony, but according to Dean of Students, Kent Hubbell, later changed to more reflect the more reflect the larger goals of the university.

[271] "Perkins Prize: The James A. Perkins Prize for Interracial & Intercultural Peace and Harmony," *Cornell Office of the Dean of Students*, accessed March 18, 2016, http://dos.cornell.edu/office-of-dean-of-students/awards-funding/perkins-prize

[272] Nancy Doodlittle, "Multiethnic student group Mixed Recieves 2016 Perkins Prize," *Cornell Chronicle*, March 16, 2016, accessed March 18, 2016, http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2016/03/multiethnic-student-group-mixed-receives-2016-perkins-prize

chapters have outlined how these ideas coincide with many of the underlying

principles that grant mixed race coherence in the post-civil rights multiculturalist era;

and consequently how mixed race functions as a category often used to justify—

sometimes purposefully and other times inadvertently—a politics motivated by liberal

individualism.

On the other hand, MAC offers some Cornell students a meaningful space

with which to share their experiences and gain a sense of community on campus. For

instance, a year prior the student group winning the Perkins Prize, MAC published a

print and digital book, *The Cornell Hapa Book: The Faces of MiXed at Cornell 2014-*

2015, which featured a series of photographs of mixed race and non-mixed race

students. The individuals featured in the photo project were then asked to answer the

question, "what does mixed race mean to you," which was then printed below their

respective portrait. The book, inspired by Kip Fulbeck's "The Hapa Project," was

designed to both illustrate the commonalities as well as the differences amongst those

identifying with multiracial, multiethnic, or multicultural identities. In one example, a

female, self-identified African American and German student wrote, "Being mixed,

to me, is a confusing, complicated, and sometimes frustrating experience. Ultimately,

however, it is the most beautiful and meaningful aspect of my life. Although I have

struggled a lot with my identity growing up, being of mixed heritages has taught me

now to love myself fully and as whole despite being viewed in fragmented ways by

other people or in certain situations."[273] The student's comment reveals that for her,

despite its challenges, mixed race identity serves as a "beautiful and meaningful"

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[273] Marlana Zink, "The Cornell Hapa Book 2014-2015, accessed March 22, 2016,
https://www.facebook.com/CornellMiXed/photos/a.708784849232039.1073741836.467650716678788
/708785275898663/?type=3&theater

category, which ultimately helps her to construct her sense of self. Other students featured in MAC's portraiture book shared similar sentiments.

Herein lies the dualistic nature of mixed race: At once a useful category of difference that perpetuates notions of private personhood, racial neutrality, and abstract equality, while also serving as a meaningful category that potentially fosters a sense of belonging and community for a growing number of individuals. Between these two perspectives, the former distinctly invokes the political, while the latter explicitly appeals to the personal. However, we might identify how these elements converge when considering the formative second-wave feminist slogan, "the personal is political," and conversely, multiracialism's reformulation of it, "the political is private."[274] I argue the collapse of the political and personal spheres in the context of mixed race has rendered the category insufficient for engaging in a critique of race and racism in the current historical moment. Put differently, often the *private* demands for mixed race recognition obstruct the *political* possibilities for advancing a critique of racial inequality, and offering analytical modes of resistance.

However, this is not to say that the category itself is unable to grant personal fulfillment for many young people within these academic institutions. Nor does it suggest that those students involved with mixed race affinity groups cannot enjoy the positive affectivities that these organizations offer, while still remaining involved with campus politics in other capacities. In fact, a student who may choose to do so is quite telling. Perhaps given the current historical moment, the category of mixed race

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[274] For a detailed discussion of the relationship between feminist analytics and the rise of multiracialism, see Ibrahim, *Troubling the Family*, 6-20.

finds it is best suited for personal affinities, rather than a critical framework for systemic critiques of racism under neoliberal governance.

Here, I am specifically thinking about the "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage," written by preeminent mixed race studies scholar and activist Maria Root. The often cited and critiqued document is a list of claims made on behalf of mixed race people, which all begin with "I have the right…" followed by statements such as: "to identify myself differently than how my parents identify me; to identify myself differently in different situations; to create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial or multiethnic; to freely choose whom I befriend and love."[275] Undoubtedly, Root naming these statements as a "bill of rights" invokes the political. That is, a series of public rights-based claims for private personhood. Nonetheless, considering Root's training as a psychologist, we might imagine how these "rights" can serve as validation of a mixed race experience that helps an individual move around in the world.

I suggest, it is in this way the mixed race can serve *both* as an object facing structural critique for working as a category of difference in service to notions of liberal individualism *and* as a meaningful category that provides a sense of community to self-identified mixed race people. In other words, one can acknowledge the personal value in validating mixed race, while also recognizing that given the historical moment, a politics of mixed race as a bases for social justice just does not yield the result that's many want them to. As my previous three chapters have demonstrated, this particular project is much more invested in the latter discussion.

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[275] Maria Root, "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage,"

Thus, "*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" has examined contemporary

mixed race identity in the context of university politics primarily although not

exclusively at UC Berkeley and UC Los Angeles. Observing how mixed race identity

has functioned as a category of cultural concern in the multiculturalist era, this project

has interrogated the ways in which discourses of mixed race have traveled through

the administrative, social, and academic spheres of the US academy. In so doing

"*Multi*raciality Enters the *Uni*versity" has identified the neoliberal university and

multiracialism as two converging sites, as both are underwritten by concepts of

privatization and abstract equality. Through a close reading of policy and media

debates, interviews with mixed race studies organizers, and an intellectual history of

emerging critical mixed race studies literature, I illustrated how multraciality and the

neoliberal university represent two analytical sites that become co-constitutive once

contemporary multiraciality entered into the university. On one hand,

multiracialism's emphasis on private personhood—through proclamations of racial

self-definition—offered, in part, universities like UCB and UCLA further justification

for color-blind policies at worst, and liberal, politically neutral ideas of diversity at

best. On the other hand, the neoliberal university's institutionalization of minority

difference post-civil rights, along with increasing privatization, offered mixed race

students, and some scholars, a cultural logic that prioritizes representation and

recognition of identity over more complex critiques of structural inequality.

Chapter 1 opened with a critical reading of UC Berkeley's campus aesthetic

by contrasting the marketing campaign, which was incorporated into the campus

landscape, to raised private funds. The illustrated how the campus looked at the

debates circulating California's Racial Privacy Initiative (Proposition 54) and Ward Connerly's campaign to institute a "Multiracial" category on the UC admission applications (RE-52). I attended to the ways mixed race identity in particular, and the notion of racial mixture in general, were deployed within the context of these policy debates to further entrench the idea that race as a private right rather than public concern in the multiculturalist moment.

Chapter 2 focused on student organizers of the Mixed Student Union (MSU) at UC Berkeley and UCLA. Through my interviews with organizers of mixed race students groups, I explored how the institutionalization of minority difference in the post-civil rights era partly structured the organizational demands and personal ideas about race for some organizers of the Mixed Student Union. I showed the ways these students were often frustrated by a political grammar that prevented their organization from articulating a politics of mixed race that moved beyond demands for multiracial recognition, representation, and racial neutrality. In this way, I hoped to reveal how the student body that inhabits the university is deeply impacted by the institutionalization of minority difference, shaping the ways in which they collectivize and articulate rights-based claims.

Engaging in an intellectual history of the developing critical mixed race studies (CMRS), Chapter 3 interrogated how the field conceptualizes itself as an antiracist project through the centering of the mixed race subject within its analytical critique. However despite its efforts, I argued that the field's emphasis on the porosity and mutability of mixed race ineffectively captures how white supremacy in the post-civil rights, multiculturalist era relies upon such frameworks to perpetuate structural

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racism. In this way, mixed race becomes an ideal disciplinary formation for the management of difference within the neoliberal university.

The institutionalization of minority difference continues to impact the work of activist and scholars. As the US academy continues its economic and cultural restructuring it consistently engages with different epistemological and ontological formations, which helps advance what is becoming an increasingly capitalist enterprise. While generally scholars have looked to at single-raced communities, I engaged in a sustained critique of how mixed race as has been a category of institutional concern, particularly, although not exclusively, in the 21st century. I argued that the category of mixed race is representative of and constituted by the neoliberal university's institutionalization of minority difference. As austerity continues to impact the US academy, it is important to continue to stay attuned to the ways such policies transfer into the claims of supposed "new" identity formations.

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