
BY
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DISSERTATION
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ABSTRACT

My dissertation investigated how incidents of racism were managed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the affect on students and administrators. I examined four ethnographic episodes on campus: 1) the racial theme party, Tacos and Tequila, 2) the retirement of Chief Illiniwek, 3) the “Next Dance,” an annual mock-Chief Illiniwek performance held on University Property by a registered student organization and 4) the vandalism of public art work by Hock E Aye VI Edgar Heap Of Birds (Cheyenne-Arapaho). I found that university administrators managed racism as racial-risk—that is the legal and financial liability that emerges from university governance dictated by the logics of corporate neoliberalism that influence U.S. law and culture. These observable racial-risk management strategies serve to control populations of student dissenters on campus by institutionalizing dissent in order to commodify it for profit.
For my sister Stephanie Ramos
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Women responding to racism means women responding to anger; the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal, and co-optation...Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy and change.

This dissertation is an ethnography of institutional racism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I). Institutional racism is discrimination that perpetrates systems of disparate impact (i.e. oppression and privilege) through social and political policies and practices. My research frames racial theme parties and similar incidents as much more than bias between individuals. Since the onset of social networking sites and technology, racial theme parties and acts of racial intolerance have grown in visibility on college campuses across the country. Although as you will find in reading this dissertation, these events are not new phenomena—in fact they’re not phenomena at all. Their visibility gives us a different view from which to understand and examine racism on U.S. college campuses. These incidents afford us a chance to review not only how far we have come, in the U.S., in institutionalizing racial equity on college campuses across the country but also the work we have left to do. Racism is a powerful and historically entrenched form of discrimination that accumulates interest. Analyzing how racism operates at the U of I allows us to assess how power operates through the institution. I show how racism operates in higher ed policy and management that contributes to and follows from racism in our cultural, governmental, and social institutions.

My dissertation research examines racism at the U of I in order to understand how neoliberal economic practices dominate the operational logics of the University. I do so through
an examination of how acts of racial intolerance, including racial theme parties, disrupt campus climate, generate protests, and require management. More specifically, I examine how in these moments of crisis, the words or actions of a university administrator require thoughtful analysis. Administrators are particularly cautious about how their actions might risk loss of funding or respect for the University. As they proceed in their decision-making they take in data from multiple sources, drawing maximally on their risk-management skills (by this I mean an assessment of material and other dangers that emerge in these moments of rupture in campus climate—when underlying racial hostilities are exposed). To put it plainly, in a system of university governance that is influenced by and modeled after corporate governance, risk equals loss, specifically financial loss. I have found that despite attempts to respond to racism in ways that are anti-racist administrators’ calculations of risk instead often advance racial ideologies (i.e., ahistorical and colorblind analyses of the significance of race) congruent with forms of neoliberal-multiculturalism (Melamed 2006) and white supremacy (Delgado and Stefanic 2001).

My research situates both student and administrative responses to racial-theme parties within the context of neoliberal-multiculturalism (Melamed 2006) as it is practiced within public institutions of higher education. My research focuses on four such acts of racial intolerance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I). Specifically, I contextualize four macro-ethnographic episodes for the local, (macro because they were events that were commonly known and received campus and local media attention). These four projects are 1) the racial theme party, Tacos and Tequila, 2) the retirement of Chief Illiniwek, 3) the “Next Dance,” an annual mock-Chief Illiniwek performance held on University Property by a registered student organization, and 4) the vandalism of public art work by Hock E Aye VI Edgar Heap Of Birds (Cheyenne-Arapaho).
In each of these four cases, I outline how University Administrators utilized a distinct racial risk management plan or strategy. Modeling the managerial politics formed in response to the protests of the 1960s (Yúdice 2003), campus and University Administrators find ways to manage racial risk—again that is their assessment of the material or other dangers that emerge in moments of racial violence. One of the ways this happens is by deflecting the situation away from discourses/conversations of race and racism. For example, instead of acknowledging the presence of anti-Native racism in a series of acts of vandalism against “Beyond the Chief” alcohol is proposed as the possible primary force behind the actions. These observable racial-risk management strategies serve to control populations of student—dissenters on campus. One of the ways this is done is by institutionalizing dissent—that is appropriating the calls by student protestors for racial justice in order to serve the University’s own purpose. On one level this is primarily done through programming out of diversity offices that in some ways serve to consolidate and further homogenize diverse cultural and political spaces that emerged from decades of protest—most notably the 1992 protests in which students demanded more resources and deeper institutionalization of cultural centers and resources for students of color. On another level, institutionalizing anti-racism or racial justice means the appropriation of diversity and multiculturalism to serve the interests of the Predominantly White University, in preparing students to be managers in the neoliberal economy of the twenty-first century.

Racial risk-management strategies are ways in which a university administrator can shift, spin, or frame a racist incident as racially insignificant, or significant in other ways that are coincidental rather than fundamental. The strategies I discuss in this dissertation include: Keeping Racism Hidden, Displacing Racism, Shifting Racial Risk, Denying Racism, Acknowledging the Intractability of Racism, and to a lesser extent, Insulting Racism, and
Shaming Racists. Which racial risk-management strategy is used and when is it used really depends on the situation. Racial Risk Management strategies vary depending on the type of racism involved in an incident and the reaction to racism—usually there is more than one type of racism at work in any given incident. Different actions and reactions produce different types of racial-risk to the University. I will discuss these management strategies, in depth, at the end of this chapter.

My dissertation centers four ethnographic episodes in which administrators managed racial risk. These four key events occurred between 2006-2011. Although my research focuses on the U of I, the counter-narratives articulated by students here are shared with students in similar institutional settings across the country. For example, in the Spring of 2009 at the University of California San Diego some students held a party called “Compton Cookout” where participants were encouraged to perform stereotypes of the African American community in Compton L.A. (e.g. gang-bangers and rappers). Two years after the Tacos and Tequila theme party at the University of Illinois (U of I), a “Compton” party was also held at the Triangle fraternity at the U of I showing that the University’s strategies to manage racial-risk did just that—managed risk. These strategies did not reduce or eliminate racism in this particular form. Later that year, students at Northwestern University attended Halloween parties in black-face, sparking outrage on campus. Anthropologist John Hartigan collected reports of over 30 similar incidents that took place in 2007 (2010 Note 1). Several of these parties were Mexican-origin themed—meaning that like Tacos and Tequila, many themed parties at other universities were dubbed “South of the Border,” such as the party at UCLA in 2007 called “Tijuana Sunrise” or the one held at Santa Clara University (Hartigan 2010:13), where women also dressed up as pregnant. Situating this national context is important in understanding the pervasiveness of
racial theme college parties across the United States. Although I examine the specificity of four incidents at the U of I, these events are part of meta-narratives of privilege and oppression.

In the next section I will briefly narrate each of the four ethnographic episodes that speak to the everydayness of racism and experiences at the University and the oftentimes angry campus responses to them. I will refer to these events in almost every other chapter of this dissertation.

**Tacos and Tequila**

On October 6th of 2006 pictures labeled “Tacos and Tequila” circulated the U of I campus via the internet on email list-serves and social networking sites. (Facebook was only two years old then, and privacy settings were not as heavily considered as they are now.) In the pictures, sorority members of Delta Delta Delta (Tri-Delts) and fraternity members Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) wore “wife beater” t-shirts. Some young women wore Mexican flags as skirts while young men tooted gardening tools to add “character” to their costumes. The party’s theme encouraged party-goers to dress up in stereotypical garments that they believed typified Mexican-Americans, Chicanas/os, and migrant farm-workers or gardeners. By wearing the flag in disrespectful ways, some of the party outfits mocked acts of ethnic pride often exhibited by Latinos and other ethnic minorities, particularly college students in the United States. But the costumes that most outraged students and allies on campus were those in which members of the Delta Delta Delta (a.k.a. Tri-Delt) sorority sported pseudo-pregnant bellies. Some women had actually stuffed pillows underneath their “wife beater” shirts insinuating that pregnancy was a defining aspect of Mexican womanhood.

As news about Tacos and Tequila spread throughout campus, and as more people became aware of this event, students began organizing. Yet twenty-five days after the Tacos and Tequila event the University Administration had not publicly addressed the issue. Students were
frustrated not only by the racial theme parties of the predominantly white sororities and fraternities on campus, but also with the University. Students organized actions—a rally and protest with demands for change. The night before the rally and protest, I was working on a press-release for the rally and march, as well as creating posters with two other graduate students. On October 31st over 300 students and their allies marched from the rally on the main quad, to the Delta Delta Delta & Zeta Beta Tau houses and chanted “Hey Hey, Ho Ho, this racism has got to go.” Protesters held signs stating “my culture is not a costume” and “amend the student code.”

Tacos and Tequila aggravated longstanding racial tensions on a campus that desperately holds onto imperialist nostalgia (Rosaldo 1993) through the legacy of a racially hostile mascot, Chief Illiniwek. What one needs to understand is that racism is complex, takes many forms, and is constantly changing but always maintains white power and privilege. In order to understand what racism means to a particular person or group of people, we must know the historical factors that make up the local, in this case Urbana-Champaign. Urbana and Champaign are segregated, twin college-town cities. There are clear class and racial distinctions within the neighborhoods and campus town reflects the predominantly white student population. In many ways, for undergraduate students especially those who mostly live in the campus-town area, there is little interaction with the greater Champaign-Urbana community. That is, there is little interaction with the poorer African-American and Latino communities that surround campus.

At the end of the protest, student leaders were invited to “sit at the table” by Vice Chancellor Rene Romano. The Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege (S.T.O.P.) coalition emerged in response to “Tacos and Tequila” and some members were in conversation with the Vice Chancellor. Protestors wanted the university to hold the participants of Tacos and
Tequila accountable for their actions. They wanted the university to send a message that racist behavior, even in jest, was not acceptable and would not be tolerated. Administrators let the Board of Fraternity and Board of Sorority Affairs decide the consequences for Delta Delta Delta and Zeta Beta Tau. The sanctions included a ban on recruitment for the coming Spring semester, and social probation for events where alcohol would be present until the fall of 2008 (O’Kelly, 2006:4).

University administrators responded to protestors’ demands by assuring students that they were working to make diversity programming integral to the student experience at the U of I. Protesters were angry, not only about offensive portrayals of people of color, but also about the University’s refusal to take the fraternity and sorority students’ representations of Latinos, African Americans, and American Indians as intentional and serious.

**The Retirement of Chief Illiniwek**

For at least four decades the University’s mascot, Chief Illiniwek, and the name Fighting Illini, were considered racially hostile and sparked heated controversy on campus and in the local community. From the initial protests by activists like Charlene Teters beginning in 1989, intense debate emerged on whether or not the mascot, and its representation of Native Peoples, is racist. Several individuals and groups made arguments against the mascot primarily on the basis of issues of racist representation and racial hostility towards native students. It clearly offended some, but whether or not the offense qualified as racist was unclear and/or flat-out denied by others. Arguably what was even less clear was what in fact, counts as racist and who gets to decide.

Like Charlene Teters, those who critiqued the Chief considered the controversy to be
racial. For them, the Chief was wrong. It was a misrepresentation of Native Americans, a
 caricature of indigenous people. Racial representations based on Anglo views of American
 Indians as stoic, savage warriors, with mystical ties to nature are not based in the reality of war
 against indigenous ways of life. Many who spoke out against the Chief initially brought their
 arguments to the Board of Trustees (BOT), the U-C Senate, and other high-level administrators,
 like the Chancellor, as the final arbiters of this racial debate. In this way, many activists put the
 onus of action on the Board of Trustees and the UC Senate, (that is, the faculty senate that in
 theory is supposed to share governance over the University with the Administration), to remove
 a racially harmful mascot. They also made the controversy very public, and it became a virulent
 conversation in local public and campus opinion. As an undergrad I witnessed the BOT place
 the issue of the Chief’s retirement on their meeting agendas and then remove it. In the weeks
 leading up to those meetings the campus was stressed with town-hall meetings. Students on
 multiple sides of the issue prepared presentations for the BOT meetings and to each other. It was
 intense.

 Beginning in 1989 the U-C Senate, or the Faculty Senate, attempted to frame the Chief as a
civil rights issue. Several failed attempts to get the BOT to acknowledge that the mascot was
 inherently activists sent activists to seek redress from national organizations. In fact, throughout
 the late 1980s and 1990s, the BOT reaffirmed Chief Illiniwek as the official symbol of the
 University. All this happened at a time when students were very politically active in calling
 attention to issues of racism on campus. An administrator I spoke with told me that in 1990 a
 group of students shut down KAMS, a very old but popular bar on campus, because the
 establishment had written a racial slur over their building. As a response, students went in and
 ordered water all night. (I review this evidence in greater detail in the chapter Displacing
Racism.

In 1994, Joseph P. Gone, a Native American graduate student at the University, filed a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education against the Board of Trustees, President, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and the student who performs the dance at half-time as the Chief. He did so after a group of Native American students joined together to form the group “Native American Students, Faculty, and Staff for Progress” in order to inform the BOT and administrators of the harm perpetrated by Chief Illiniwek. However, Chief Illiniwek was too deeply engrained in the institutional and community culture to persuade the University to move against the Chief. After these failed attempts, Gone filed the complaint with the DOE. Pro-Chief Alumni, aware of the complaint, lobbied members of the Department of Education, and the DOE ruled that the University’s mascot “does not create a campus climate that violates the civil rights of Native American Students.” Thirty years after the Civil Rights Act, which followed from over two centuries of legalized theft, segregation, and decimation, racist imagery was not considered a violation of civil rights.

Although the BOT and DOE were not explicitly asked to decide what constitutes racism, their decision on the Chief controversy in essence did just that. Simultaneously, the BOT decided whether or not the Chief was racist, whether or not the needs of Native Americans mattered to the University Administration, and whether or not the claims of racism by underrepresented minority students mattered. The decision on the Chief shaped all subsequent discourse on race and racism at the U of I—that is, it gave the campus a rubric from which to discuss racism that left out anything that could implicate the Chief as racist. It left the campus with a very black/white paradigm that privileged a perpetrator’s rather than a victim’s perspective for understanding racism. That is power.
Pro-indigenous/Anti-Chief arguments were presented to the Board of Trustees several times prior to 2005 but those meetings did not result in a change in university policy. In 1990, the BOT voted to make Chief Illiniwek the official symbol of the campus. Of course, the Chief was already the symbol of the campus, but this act was one that reaffirmed the Board’s commitment to the Chief. And in the subsequent years, the Board of Trustees re-affirmed its commitment to the Mascot and Alumni with deep pockets, despite evidence of the ways it marginalized Native American students. (See http://www.senate.illinois.edu/eq9704_a.asp)

But in 2005 something happened that, again, would change the discourse of the significance of race and racism on campus. Finally an entity external to the University took a definitive stance on the significance of racism in college athletics and further immersed the University’s discourse in the logics of racial-risk management. These racial-risk management strategies are informed by the principals of neoliberal multiculturalism (Urcioli 2009), in which race and racism are emptied of its historical significance and only contextualized in a neoliberal economy, which values profit over people.

In 2005, the university management strategies on the mascot changed and became further entrenched in neoliberalism as the BOT managed financial liability alongside their deep love for a racially controversial mascot. In 2005 the National College Athletic Association (NCAA) made racially hostile mascots part of their official anti-discrimination policy. How racial-risk management practices shifted after the University lost their final appeals to the NCAA ruling is complex and creative. It involves multiple actors within and outside of the University and reveals how efforts toward anti-racism often further entrenched it.9

*The Next Dance*

It was not long after the Chief’s retirement that pro-Chief students began to think of ways
to bring back the Chief in one form or another. In the fall of 2007, Students for Chief Illiniwek (SFCI), a registered student organization at the U of I, organized a “Next Dance” event in which the student who formerly danced as the Chief would perform his traditional dance at Assembly Hall after a football game. They held the mock-Chief Illiniwek performance at Assembly Hall. As a registered student organization on campus SFCI can rent university-owned property for events at a reduced rate. Regardless of the NCAA policy that banned Native American Imagery in association with athletic events, (2005), SFCI holds their events on University property, in the very same campus sports arena in which the Chief used to perform. Many students, faculty, and community members contested SFCI’s use of University property, especially in the same hall that he was banned from during athletic events. They argued that this was not keeping with the NCAA retirement agreement that bans Native American imagery in association with athletic events on campus. Further, many argued that SFCI was in violation of their pledge for non-discrimination required for all registered student organizations.

The official press release regarding the Chief’s retirement cited a passage from the NCAA ruling stating, “Continued removal from the list is conditioned upon the University’s future non-use of ‘Chief Illiniwek’ and the related Native American imagery in connection with University Athletics.” Although this ruling should have removed any formal or informal association between University of Illinois Athletics and representations of Native Americans, instead, the University legal teams determined that any unofficial costume imagery would not put the University in jeopardy of legal or other violations of the NCAA ruling. (University Legal Services falls under the office of University Administration.)

Since the official retirement, Students for Chief Illiniwek (SFCI) continues to hold an annual Chief Illiniwek event in Assembly Hall—where the basketball team plays. Regardless of
the NCAA ruling, or the University’s initial concession, SFCI continues to use Native American imagery in the same ways that were condemned by the NCAA. Every year students, usually led by campus leaders and by M.E.C.h.A de UIUC (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), organize a rally and protest the event at Assembly Hall. In this way, the Chief controversy is kept alive on both sides of a polarized debate. Further, this event contributes to a climate that remains hostile and abusive to Native American students and all students of color on campus.

In the fall of 2010, Student For Chief Illiniwek (SFCI), backed by community members and alumni, held their event just a few hours after the Homecoming Football game ended. How and why this happened was considered a major scandal by some. The controversy around the Next Dance emerged as administrators were forced to manage their private frustrations with the public interests of the University, as well as considerations of the NCAA ruling, intentionally placed in tension with students constitutional rights to free-expression—even if it was considered racist. The controversy surrounding the “Next Dance” underscores the risk and vulnerability some administrators take on in attempts to manage racial-risk at the University.

**Vandalizing “Beyond the Chief”**

Early in the spring semester of 2009, the American Indian Studies Program and the Native American House at the U of I hosted a public art installation by American Indian Artist Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds titled “Beyond the Chief.” The 12-panel installation was set up on Nevada Street, outside each of the cultural centers and some of the ethnic studies units on campus. It is important to note that this public artwork appeared in a one-block area of Nevada Street, between Mathew Avenue and Goodwin Avenue. Nevada Street not only houses the American Indian Studies program, but it also houses each of the four cultural centers (African
American Cultural Program, Asian American Cultural Center, La Casa Cultural Latina, and the Native American House) in addition to the Departments of African American Studies, Asian American Studies, and American Indian Studies.) Each of the panels has “Fighting Illini” printed in reverse, and states “Today Your Host Is,” followed by the name of a tribe indigenous to Illinois. The signs displayed in front of some of the cultural centers were worded in different languages. (For example, in front of La Casa Cultural Latina the text read “Hoy su anfetrionas.”)

That section of Nevada Street in Urbana is near the Anthropology Department. I saw the artwork prior to the official opening talk and immediately wanted to know more. On the American Indian Studies website the artist has a statement about the project. I attended the opening program and most of the Beyond the Chief programs that followed. He said,

Of course these words ["Beyond the Chief"] speak to extending discussion beyond the campus "chief" and its insensitive history (while still hinting at the problem); yet, the title also is derived from my own Cheyenne tribe where there is a council of 44 chiefs - and from which came four principal chiefs. The first man named Heap of Birds was one of these principal chiefs.

Most non-native people think about the chief position as if he were president or executive. In fact, chiefs often sat as a council representing bands and many families; they also differed from war chiefs or headsmen of warrior societies (one of which I belong to).

In Cheyenne tradition a chief had no personal property. All that he and his family owned was offered to tribal members on request (this is sometimes a demand even today) once the chief took the position. Chiefs were selected because of their generosity. Many men did not wish to become chief because of this point. Chiefs were chosen by chiefs, but could decline.

A chief is far beyond one person and should reflect an honor and allegiance -- as well as truth, tradition, listening, openness, and good way -- to a whole people.

As we install these 12 sign panels, we walk forward on the University of Illinois campus to honor these ideals and intertribal brothers and sisters from a circular position of respect.
In addition to this statement, Edgar Heap of Birds said that the words “Fighting Illini” were backwards to signal our past and suggest we should look back to the indigenous ancestry of the Americas. “Beyond the Chief” was a public art installation meant to engage the campus not only as a reflection of the history of Chief Illiniwek, but also to challenge the existing beliefs about what a “Chief” has traditionally meant for Native Americans and what it means presently to respect and honor a chief. As part of this process, the Native American House and American Indian Studies program brought in two current “Chiefs” or leaders of indigenous nations to discuss their roles as Chief. I attended their presentation—the audience was not packed in the same way Assembly Hall typically is. At the project opening, Edgar Heap of Birds said it was meant to engage the public in many ways that counter the dominant discourse of what a “Chief” is and who it represents. It was meant to cause reflection on our history, the history of the United States and Illinois in particular.

The exhibit was vandalized just a few months after Edgar Heap of Birds’ talk. Similar to Tacos and Tequila there was not an immediate public response from the University condemning these acts. In April, American Indian Studies held an open dialogue in response to the ongoing acts of vandalism. Students organized and stood outside the Native-American House and the Asian-American Cultural Center gathering signatures on a petition. Students delivered the petition to administrators in the Swanlund Administration Building during the march to Assembly Hall to protest the Next Dance. At that time, Edgar Heap of Birds revisited the campus as part of the response to the vandalism. He stated clearly that none of his previous artwork, however controversial, had ever been vandalized. In fact, the Federal Department of Justice contacted American Indian Studies at the U of I to discuss what they considered to be a string of hate crimes. The University administration responded that they were hesitant to define the string
of vandalisms as hate crimes—although they eventually did categorize them as acts of intolerance. They denied racism as a factor. Denying racism is not a racial-risk management strategy with its own chapter but it is necessary to understanding racism at the U of I within the confines of a black/white paradigm. Administrators hid racism which is a feat onto itself. The vandalisms were criminal actions.

Now that I have given you an overview of these episodes, I want to tell you why I chose them. I focus on these four episodes for two reasons. First, students protested or similarly critiqued these incidents as racist. Second in each of these instances, university administrators made public attempts to manage the situation. These points are important in thinking through the campus and national context of these acts of racism and racial intolerance. As such, I consider these four episodes to be what I call oppressive projects—that is, events that link institutional structure with an oppressive practice of representation to a group of people in ways that contribute to traditional hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sex. I expand upon Omi and Winant’s understanding of “racial projects” to discuss how these projects are oppressive in many ways in addition to being racist. They were also classist, sexist, and predicated on other cultural practices that attempted to police boundaries of belonging along the lines of domination and oppression (See chapter Racial Gate Keeping). In these four episodes, student protestors argued that these experiences contributed to the racial hostility they feel on campus everyday.

Since these are episodes in which students of color protested the use of the Chief, and university administrators managed these incidents and protesters, I enforce the argument Gloria Ladson-Billings made in the late 1990s, and my ethnographic evidence shows, that racism and U.S. history structure the experiences of people of color through a common system from which to launch a critique (Ladson-Billings 1998). This was clear in the diversity of protestors against
racial-theme parties at the U of I that included “Tacos and Tequila,” “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros,” and “C.E.O.s and Corporate Hoes,” to name a few. In this instance, the institution of higher education, broadly speaking, affords underrepresented students with common experiences of institutionalized discrimination (see Eleana Kim, Adopted Territory, on counter publics). Students on the Champaign-Urbana campus came to articulate a collective grievance against the university because of their similar experiences with racism and oppression within the U of I system. In my observant participation from 2008-2010, and in my experiences on campus before and after, in multiple spaces at the U of I, I found that many more students expressed similar grievances about the racial reality on campus than is actually verbalized or otherwise communicated. (See the Daily Illini, the Independent Student Newspaper of the U of I, and the Ethnography of the University Archives.)

In the next section I go over how I define racial risk.

**What is Racial Risk?**

Dr. Smith, an administrator at the U of I took me through the process of how administrators decide when to act or not, against racism on campus. He told me about a 1989 Frontline News Segment titled “Racism 101” that documented racism as it was experienced at the University of Michigan and Dartmouth College. The documentary exposed how racism still pumped through the veins of the university experience. In Dr. Smith’s words, “the intensity of Latina/o, African American, Native American, and Asian American students being attacked and verbally assaulted caused the university to put together a carefully worded hate speech document, to reduce racism on campus.” He told me that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) took the university to court for limiting free speech and won. But the decisive blow was the precedent that this ruling set less than 30 years after the Civil Rights Act. The ruling
mandated a snail-like pace of desegregation in public schools because universities could not take direct action in curbing individual acts of racism on campus. Mr. Bright said, “In a case like that, the institution worries about regulating behavior and then having someone sue and then having to pay them damages for a successful lawsuit” (iq). This is an example of racial risk. There is material value to the University in the “business as usual” operation of the university. That is, the university does not risk financial or other loss if it maintains the racial status quo that allows for the marginalization and oppression of students of color at predominantly white institutions. Racial-risk is a threat to that material value of the University.

Managing racial risk in today’s U.S. University entails foremost the complicated navigation of liability—that is the University’s responsibility by law. In this case, liability is much more than just what the University is legally obligated to do or not do, it is also an analysis of the risk of liability. That is what the university may or may not be liable for given what decisions it makes in a particular situation. The University’s “business as usual” management practices are not innocent management strategies. They are informed by legal and other policies that are not neutral but meant to maintain business as usual at the university—even if that is not the intent of individual administrators. Their job is to manage and govern the university. The management techniques I mentioned earlier and will outline at the end of this chapter, are meant to effectively manage, and by that I mean minimize, racial risk. These management strategies can include Hiding Racism, Displacing Racism, Shifting Racial Risk, Racial Gate-Keeping, and Acknowledging the Intractability of Race. Administrators use these techniques in an attempt to dodge a racial bullet.

Each of these ethnographic episodes I outlined earlier, “Tacos and Tequila,” the retirement of Chief Illiniwek, The Next Dance, and the Vandalism of “Beyond the Chief,” is
significant because some students, specifically student protestors many of whom were students of color, named each of these actions as racist. Their actions forced a reaction from the University administration. For individual administrators the processes through which they came to make decisions is a complex negotiation of racial risk to both the University (i.e., the threat of legal action) and themselves on a personal level. The potential civil rights/social justice benefits, as the weakest factor in decision-making. As they balance these often competing and sometimes overlapping interests, they use different management strategies.

For example, the racial risk associated with identifying an action or incident as racist has the potential to make the University liable for infringing on civil and/or other constitutional rights and as a result, may lead to legal action. For the University, racial risk is about legal liability and finances—that is the risk that the University will face lawsuits or the threat of entering into a legal suit is costly and may result in further financial damages or changes in institutional policy. For high-level university administrators, risk equals loss. For protestors, the racial risk is very different. For them, the racial risk is not about finances, but rather allowing racially hierarchies to remain. The racial risk for protestors and students who experience oppression is that the world will never change without their individual and collective investment in challenging the institution’s racial policies and practices. The University will continue to be an institution that leaves the White power, class, and gender structure in order.

For the University these risks may be ethical as well as legal and/or financial. Dr. Susan Street, a mid-level administrator discussed her understanding of both the racial risks to the University and the personal risks to herself if she did not sufficiently navigate racial risk. She told me:
“I’m an administrator, right. If I get sued personally, I’m ok, the University will cover me as long as I’m, you know, doing everything I have to do, [but] I can’t just run out and get the University into legal trouble. They’re not going to cover me. And then I’m going to be held personally liable.” Thus, the University will only cover Susan’s management if she follows the rules. Susan can’t just run around saying or doing whatever she wants because she is a University administrator. Susan went on to say,

So we consult, and our, you know our legal office. They got about twelve lawyers that work for the University. They work for all three institutions. I’m not sure any other institution would have acted any different. Anyway what the legal precedents tell us is that if I make a statement about African-Americans in general, that’s kind of covered by free speech, but if I make a statement to an individual and it could be seen as threatening, then that’s a different story.

In this analysis of her personal versus institutional risk, lawyers, (not judges), decide what constitutes free speech. Then they dictate to administrators what can and cannot be said. This is based on their analysis of legal precedent. The University pays a legal team to calculate the liability associated with institutionalizing racial fairness. In this case, racial-fairness is secondary to the threat of financial loss. What is more interesting is that according to Street’s understanding of advice from the University legal council, verbal statements that may depreciate African-Americans as a group are not as risky as those that target one person. What is convoluted in this legal logic is that a (mis)representation or stereotyping of African-Americans is determined by a team of lawyers, to be constitutional, and therefore an acceptable form of racism—even if stereotypes contribute to racial-inequity towards all of the individuals in that group. The lesson is that the law cannot deliver racial justice—it was not designed to do so. Students protested Tacos and Tequila: Charlene Teters and many students who followed in her footsteps, protested Chief Illiniwek because stereotypes contribute to the maintenance of racial inequity.
Racial stereotypes contribute to racial-profiling that is used to mitigate interpersonal interactions. For example, Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County in Arizona used this group-based framing to stop and arrest brown people who looked “Mexican” because for him, all brown people were undocumented. He has since been removed from his position as Sheriff. However, it is important to note that it took a great deal of national scrutiny on Arizona to bring such high-levels of scrutiny on Arpaio. University administrators, comparatively, do not make such grandiose assertions but their effect on communities is felt just the same. For Latinos, although Champaign-Urbana is miles away from the U.S.-Mexico Border, the racism produced by the creation of that artificial but very real boundary is shared throughout the United States and contributes to a hostile campus climate in the rural Midwest. Tacos and Tequila costumes stereotyped all Mexicans as hyper-fertile farm-workers only fit for menial labor, and consumers of alcohol. The point in making this connection between the U.S.-Mexico border and the University is that racism is not isolated in individuals or institutions, but, as mentioned in the introduction, is a shared part of our national common sense.

What I describe as racial risk takes on other forms, many of which I am sure have not yet been identified. For example, there are ethical implications if students successfully name a university practice as racist. To label something racist, in this moment in time, would presumably be to name something as unethical. Following that logic, there may be legal and financial accountability for unethical practices that disparately affect certain student populations. In order to avoid instances in which the University can be legally liable for racism, administrators manage racism as risk in part by promising, but not mandating, programming that students desire and buy into as a solution to combating racism. Some students believe that once
other students learn that racial injustice still exists, they will take steps towards racial justice. Power does not operate solely on what is right or just—it never has.

During the 2006 protest of Tacos and Tequilla and other racial theme parties outside a fraternity house, a young fraternity man walked up to a group of protestors and said “What’s the big deal, we’ve been doing this [hosting racial theme parties] for years.” There has also been various forms of diversity programming. Herein lies the dilemma—in fact I believe it is the central dilemma to many Ethnography of the University Initiative research projects done by marginalized students on diversity and the university—why do attempts to institutionalize anti-racist/sexist/classist diversity initiatives fail? My Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI) research project comes from an attempt to understand why anti-racist student organizing and activism fail to institutionalize anti-racism programming and policies. Why do protests that call for institutionalizing anti-racism fail to yield the results student organizers seek?

Institutionalizing racial fairness is no easy task. Student movements over the past several decades demanded radical changes in the “business as usual” of U.S. Colleges and Universities. However, institutionalized racism remains integral to maintaining “business as usual” on college and university campuses. It was bolstered by all of the formal and informal policies, networks, and interactions that were informed by the racial mind-sets of previous generations. Racial inequity is present in everything from admissions policies (institutional) to how and what we define as knowledge (historical structures that frame our current reality). When de-jure segregation (i.e., segregation mandated by law) ended, colleges and universities admitted some African American and Latino students. But did that mean schools immediately prepared to adjust the culture, climate, and fabric of the university in the ways it had done so for Anglo students over the years? No. It did not. Everyday in campuses across the nation we see the unfinished
business in mandating racial fairness. The struggles to transform the university continue. As they do, administrators manage these attempts to change the university. My research investigates administrative management.

**Theoretical Framework**

Throughout my dissertation I weave together the multiple theories that influence my ethnographic analysis of the University. In this section I introduce the concepts of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and counter-storytelling to frame my analysis of the University. I then explain what I mean by neoliberalism and apply it to the context of the University. I then ground the University in critical theories and histories relevant to understanding neoliberalism’s influence on the University. I do so in order to demonstrate that neoliberal governance maintains nuanced forms of racism. I outline how the University’s racial-risk management strategies stem from the influence of neoliberal corporate governance that has a necessary and implicit racial order that maintains white supremacy. I also apply neoliberal governance to the CRT idea of interest-convergence. Finally, I show how the University does this in each of the key ethnographic episodes I outlined in the introduction. I attempt to describe the effect shifting racial risk has on campus.

**Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

According to several Critical Race Theorists, CRT centers the racial experience in the United States by examining how the law marginalizes racial experience. “To risk losing sight of racial experience and conditions is to risk losing sight of the shift of racial formation, of the way in which race is duly reconstituted and revitalized” (Haney-Lopez, 1997:117). For these reasons, it is crucial to understand how the law maintains racism in the United States. Critical Race
Theory (CRT) is an analytical framework that does just that. CRT helps me answer the question of why institutionalizing anti-racism fails. In the introduction to their book, Critical Race Theory, an introduction, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, answer the question of “What is Critical Race Theory?” They state:

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principals of constitutional law.

Although CRT began as a movement in the law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline. Today, many in the field of education consider themselves critical race theorists who use CRT’s ideas to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing. Political scientists ponder voting strategies coined by critical race theorists. Ethnic studies courses often include a unit on critical ace theory, and American studies departments teach material on critical white studies developed by CRT writers. Unlike some academic disciplines, critical race theory contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better (2001:2,3).

Defined as such, there are several key tenants of Critical Race Theory that must preface this reading. CRT challenges legal and other theories or practices based on colorblindness. Colorblindness is not the definition of racial justice. In my dissertation, I reject the notion that any analysis of the University can be colorblind or objective. I center the narrative of experiential knowledge lived in the continuous intersections of race, gender, class, and sex, oppression and privilege. To put it plainly, colorblindness is a facade designed to hide racially meaningful experiences—it attempts to neutralize any critical discussion of race and racism. A CRT analysis centers the simultaneity of multiple forms of discrimination and posits several central tenants that guide its practice and application in scholarship. It posits that the U.S. Law is not neutral and
that it never has been. Consequently, everything that is informed by the law has racial bias against people of color and for the privilege of white men. I make this point throughout my dissertation.

CRT centers experiential knowledge. In other words, what people empirically observe or experience. When 300 students chanted “our culture is not our costume” as they converged onto the steps of the campus administrative building, they were telling administrators that their reality is different from the dominant ideology on campus. Campus protests are unwritten acts of what critical race theorists call counter-storytelling (Matsuda, 1991; Yosso, 2005; Parker, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Crenshaw et al. 1995; McMorris, 1999). Counter story-telling, that is using experiential knowledge to disrupt dominant ideology, is a central component of critical race theory. In the case of “Tacos and Tequila” administrators did not fully acknowledge that issues of race/racism were present. Instead, using racial management/risk, they displaced racism (see chapter Displacing Racism). It is precisely because racism constantly goes unnamed that Critical Race Theory is so very central to this analysis. Protesting is counter-storytelling meant to bring race and the racial experience to the forefront.

Since much of this analysis centers on the racial experience of Latinas/os at the U of I, I also take up an explicitly LatCrit framework—A Latino/Latina CRT framework takes CRT away from the trapping of a black/white race paradigm and centers the experiences of Latinas/os in the analysis of race and racism. I take up the argument made by Yosso and Solórzano (2001) that “A LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures processes and discourses that effect people of color generally and Latinas/os specifically…” (479). Critical Race Ethnographer Garret Duncan explains that one of the goals of CRT is to promote a different
kind of ethic by exposing dominant ideologies for their oppressiveness in light of different experiences (Duncan 2005). It is only from the vantage point of a counter-story that we can begin to understand how schools are failing some students while privileging others.

A Note on Whiteness

I also want to be clear that I consider whiteness to be a problem only when it colludes, as it often does, with racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression or when it goes unacknowledged (i.e., is presented as the “norm”). White allies/activists protested “Tacos and Tequila” as well. I do not want to easily assign politics to a particular skin color or group affiliation. That is not the way protests played out on campus. Anyone who takes a walk around the U of I campus may see that students of all colors and political affiliations wear Chief paraphernalia. I struggled to name these social practices as politics. In this ethnography I seek to add to the development of projects that are open to the “political import it may serve for potentially inclusive orchestrations” (Rodriguez 2009). That is, I want to de-couple particular actions from whiteness when it is possible, and leave open the possibility to imagine inclusive decolonizing politics. I don’t want to label “colorblind” actions as “white.” Or readily label anti-racist actions as “black” or “brown.”

In downstate Illinois, whiteness has its own historical context and institutional life. It means many different things and takes many forms and permutations. Part of this research includes unraveling the complexities and permutations that go into personal and political working definitions of racism. Ethnographic research on whiteness and schools suggests that students in a predominantly white school examine their identity and ethnicity less, and were more likely to claim that they were culture-less (Perry 2002). In more multi-racial school
settings, white students are less likely to claim to be culture-less. Haney-Lopez calls this the transparency phenomena: “the tendency of whites not to think about Whiteness, or about norms, behaviors, experiences, or perspectives that are white-specific” (1996: 22).\textsuperscript{15} However, Whiteness, what it means to be white, is always structured in relation to people of color (Haney-Lopez 1996). Ian Haney-Lopez in his research on the legal construction of whiteness in the U.S. (1996) found that there are other (material) markers and constructions of whiteness beyond the white body especially as it relates to the maintenance of white power.

My understandings of racism and whiteness are also informed by my experiences as an undergraduate and graduate student at the U of I, and by the many people I have interacted with at Illinois. (I was on the U of I campus for 10 years.) There were political science majors hoping to be future lawyers, engineers, farmers, and historians. The conversations I often overheard were of wasting away their parents’ money, or drinking it away. Attending classes was secondary to other experiences here. I remember my first year being shocked by students’ audacity. On the day of a midterm exam in one of my large, general education lecture classes, I showed up after a night of studying a little nervous. As I waited to get into the auditorium, I was lined up behind a group of white men wearing green sporting beer cups in their back pockets. They were boasting about drinking that entire morning and taking this test “blasted.” These students had no respect and no sense of their privilege or place in the world. The cavalier attitude was incredible to me because so many of my fellow high-school students tried very hard to get into college. Since my time as an undergraduate, my understanding of whiteness has become more complex, moving from seeing racial advantage to a theoretical analysis of power and systematic privilege in legal, educational, and other social institutions.
Ian Haney-Lopez asserts that “To move from society’s present injustices to any future of racial equality will require the disassembly of whiteness” (1996: 31). In part, this is a goal of my ethnography—to investigate the many ways whiteness permeates the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. What are the material and other markers of whiteness at Illinois? How is whiteness a part of the institutional fabric—from the dominant campus climate to administrative decision making? Part of this ethnography attempts to trace that. Another part of the ethnography will show how student activists negotiate how racism is a product of the institutional fostering of white supremacy, and how they might utilize multiple forms of resistance to struggle for change. Much of this research traces that historical struggle against racism (and seeks to transform the U of I system). It ethnographically contextualizes the complex ways students resist or subscribe to the forces of white supremacy. In this regard, politically and as an act of survival, we must attempt to dislodge some notions of whiteness from white supremacy. Our fates are intertwined.

Talking about whiteness and racism that is managed and racism that is hidden and displaced requires a language for how institutional, individual, and group identities are reconstituted through the logics of racial risk management. While taking cues from research through a queer of color feminist lens (Cacho; Rodriguez 2009), I found myself looking for a word, like heteronormative, that describes not only color-blindness, (yet does not get caught up in the trappings of abelism—the physical ability to do something), but also communicates a racial-politics that maintains the status quo. In the chapter Racial Gate Keeping, I develop the idea of an anti-racist racist—namely individuals and institutions, like the U.S. Law, that claim to be anti-racist (usually by claiming to be race-neutral), yet participate in actions that maintain and often re-inscribe racial hierarchies. I do not want to designate these practices as white, for strategic political reasons, and because that’s not the reality. To designate certain cultural
practices as white, like valuing education, is not only untrue, but also circulate as a cultural truth that has serious political implications (see culture of poverty critiques).

Instead, I see these practices as attempts at racial-normativity— accepting race as a minimal or peripheral factor in a person’s individual life chances, or in how one’s life is structured (at macro and micro levels). For example, many students I spoke with over the years acknowledged race as present in Chief Illiniwek’s representation but believed it to be of minimal significance. In this instance, the politics of racial-normativity are those politics that maintain racial, class, gender, religious, and sex hierarchies but seek an equitable distribution of people from diverse populations throughout all levels of society. These politics cannot be easily designated onto bodies. Racial-Normativity is a way to talk about ideologies that advance whiteness, outside of white bodies and false racial dichotomies (e.g. x is black, and its opposite is white).

Like heteronormativity, racial normativity is not neutral but rather masks bias through claims at normativity. Whiteness does not completely get to the point of privilege because it only marks color and because it does not easily include the participation of people of color and it sometimes masks it in a way because it is rejected as “white” and to be a “real” or “good” person of color you reject anything that could be labeled as white. There were some white activists who also engaged in these collective acts of counter-storytelling. Thus, in the same way that Richard T. Rodriguez asks “How might masculinity exist in light of a feminist and queer critique?” (2009:52), I want us as scholars and activists to think about the ways race and whiteness may exist in light of a Critical Race Theory, and a queer of color feminist critique.

As such, this dissertation frames a critique of colorblind ideology as a means to achieve racial fairness. Colorblindness does not equal racial fairness or equity—in fact it does just the
opposite by ignoring how past inequities serve to accumulate wealth and privilege or poverty and oppression. In a class on American Indian Education, Dr. Christopher Span taught me a simple equation that speaks directly to this point.

\[ 200 + 107 - 45 \neq 0. \]

That is, on one side of the spectrum, over 200 years of slavery for African-Americans with no accumulation of material wealth, (As well as some Indigenous peoples), and on the other side, 200 years of financial gain for whites profiting off of forced labor, profiting off the backs of people of color, plus one hundred and seven years of legalized segregation, until the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Since then however, there has been 45 years of \textit{de facto} segregation for the majority of the population. The City of Chicago is an excellent example—so are the cities of Urbana and Champaign. This does not equate to an equitable playing field on which African-Americans have equitable access to opportunity and quality of life as compared to Anglos. Of course, this equation varies slightly with regards to American Indians, Latinos, and Asian Americans, but the gist remains the same. Colorblindness is not justice. It does not ensure that Civil Rights are protected.

I use critical race theory as one aspect of the theoretical framework for this mixed-method ethnography. As I stated earlier, the law is not neutral, and thus, the racial-risk management practices of the University are in turn, not neutral because they are guided by an interest in mitigating legal liability. I want to be clear. If the law is not neutral, University policies that are informed by the law cannot be neutral. Yet many administrators of institutions, like colleges and universities, hide behind the law’s veil of neutrality as they manage operations. Racial-risk management strategies are the result of decision-making processes based on legal, statistical, policy, and other ethnographic data. This data, like the law, is filtered through
neoliberal corporate ideology that is now so common sensical that it is the cultural fiber of the University and to a larger degree in the broader landscape of corporatized “America.”

The Neoliberal University

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is a school of higher education. Schools, like churches, prisons, banks, and militaries, are institutions that serve a critical role in structuring society around a set of shared principals and values for the nation-state. An obvious example of this was the use of the Pledge of Allegiance in the classroom; however there are more subtle examples like the curriculum and selection of reading materials. Currently, the state of Arizona is battling over what subjects and materials can be taught in schools at all levels. They banned Ethnic Studies and several books in Ethnic Studies precisely because they know that the curriculum matters in communicating important histories and understandings of justice and injustice. The policies and procedures that shape the operations of the University, like any school, are rooted in a history of legal, cultural, and religious social engineering around race, class, and gender.

Today, universities are increasingly run like corporations—maintaining a profit is the most important consideration in strategic decision-making. At previous points in our history, corporations and their administrators were accountable to governments and people—through taxes, legislation, and services. The current form and operation of corporations have limited restrictions on how they operate and manage resources and people in order to make a profit. Corporations lobby our elected officials and make generous campaign contributions in their efforts to influence the law. As Newfield notes, “Through a series of small but unswerving steps, the courts freed the corporation from both public purpose and direct legislative will” (Newfield:
The cumulative effect of legal doctrine over the past hundred and fifty years has shifted the definition and accountability of corporations to what is minimal accountability or loyalty to people or nation (Newfield: 67).

In this neoliberal moment, corporate practices shift costs and risks to the most vulnerable populations (Mathew, 2005; Duggan, 2006). Corporate policies no longer reflect societal values that protect the worker through healthcare coverage, job security, and compensation, including personal costs incurred in order to work. The Right To Work anti-union campaign is an excellent example. (Another example is a teacher who pays for classroom supplies but is not reimbursed.) Instead, the policies of corporations reflect a desire to maximize profit with little concern for the cost to society. Corporate practices attempt to convince workers that the more they work, the more they will earn. However, no matter how much overtime or “extra” you work (intellectual or otherwise) it will never, or hardly ever be enough to survive let alone leave your current class position. Here is the rub: “Even as it continued to rely on the state for favorable environmental legislation, tax law, educated workers, and the like, the corporation consolidated its relative autonomy from employees and the public” (Newfield: 68). In other words, corporations continue to benefit from society and the government through an educated and skilled workforce, but reject all accountability and responsibility. The same is true for schools that charge tuition. As tuition costs continue to rise, colleges and universities become more elite. Those students who take out loans believe that a college-degree will pay off in the end. Yet in this economy with fewer jobs and less security, loan repayments only increase the burden on individuals. The Citizens United legal decision was just the final step in a long sequence of legal decisions that made corporations free of accountability to the government, land, or most importantly, people.
We see corporate influence in the nation’s public universities increase hand-in-hand with the increase of administrators who “nurture market tendencies within the university” (Ferguson 2008:160). Companies are driving research and influencing university governance at times in collusion with university administration. An example Ferguson and other scholars of higher education use is the increase in funds that are devoted to research that are diverted from instruction. Why does that matter to this dissertation? Corporate values of profit, and corporate ideologies of individualism, and freedom from liability and do not lie in the democratic realm of social responsibility and public good. They lie in the realm of private interests and individual benefit. As such, multinational corporations are subject to little to no state regulation. They consistently display a lack of social responsibility. These universities are founded on ideas of democracy and social responsibility, yet are contradicted by corporate theft and greed. Giroux states “power is uncoupled from matters of ethics and social responsibility, and market freedoms replace long-standing social contracts that once provided a safety net for the poor, the elderly, workers, and the middle class” (195). Social services decrease and there is less accountability to the public. In pursuit of economic profit, the people already the most vulnerable in society are at greatest risk.

In this dissertation I show how University governance is influenced by corporate values in the contemporary era as defined by increased administrative management and control of the University. As Roderick A. Ferguson points out “While the American Academy has always been influenced by market forces, the administrative transformation of the university, and the infiltration of administrative regimes into virtually all sectors of university life—both large and small, both structural and corporeal— is propelled by unprecedented social and economic processes” (2008:160). The market has always had some influence over the academy but the
contemporary university administrators occupy increased authority over decision-making than in the past. I argue that racial risk management is concerned principally with Neoliberal Multiculturalism, in which diversity’s benefits are defined by its corporate values (specifically the values of individualism, privatization, and immunity from liability). An example of neoliberal multiculturalism is how administrators managed Tacos and Tequila. Administrators framed the incident as a learning experience for students preparing for the “real world.” (I discuss this in further depth in a later chapter.) Examples of these ideologies appear in the management of racist actions and the reasons given by the administration to the campus community for learning about “diversity” and tolerance. As a result, these management strategies contribute to racial gate-keeping, and the development of a logic (or culture) of anti-racist racism—simultaneously identifying as anti-racist while participating in actions that contribute to racial inequity. Henry T. Trueba a scholar of anthropology and education, stated, “Universities are the main instrument that democratic societies use to generate and transmit new knowledge, and to inculcate democratic values and respect for ethnic and racial differences” (1993:110)

What if students learn that everything is about profit and consumption? What students learn at the University matters. What we learn about race and racism matters.

In this way, an ethnography of university administrators reveals not only the ways in which racism is coded and managed as risk to the University, but it also reveals evidence of the racist logic underlying neoliberal governance. In addition, this dissertation also endeavors to show how Neoliberal Governance at the University, and Neoliberal Governance broadly speaking, is not racially neutral but in fact, like the law, is entrenched in a racial structure of white privilege.
These factors shape the collective experiences of students in U.S. Colleges and Universities across the nation.

**Women of Color/ Third World Feminism**

My research situates both student and administrative responses to four events within the context of neoliberal-multiculturalism, as it is practiced in public institutions of higher education (see Collier and Ong 2005). My analysis exists in the tension between critical race theory, queer theory, and women of color/third world women’s feminism that emerged from ethnic studies, women’s studies, and anthropology. Women of color feminism is “a reading practice—a movement that ‘makes sense of’ the links between segregation, criminalization, and the privileging of white domestic space…” (Hong 2006:xi) Gender and sex normativity also matter here, even if they are not overtly central to my dissertation. “Tacos and Tequila” was not just a grievance against racism, but of the racialized intersection of sex and class as well. Lynn and Parker (2006) state that sociological studies (and I would argue anthropological as well) should “deeply contextualize race and racism by historicizing race within the context of unequal social relations” (282). In the “Tacos and Tequila” costumes I described earlier, the representation of Mexican-origin women as hyper-fertile is not only a racial project (Omi and Winant 1994) but a project of intersectional oppressions where racism, sexism, and classism converged onto the image of a “pregnant Latina.” In these instances, some women were symbolically policing the boundaries of belonging; they were policing racial and hetero-normativity.

As an ideology, neoliberalism values individualism, privatization, free market economies, and immunity from legal or monetary liability. I advance the position that racism is implicitly underlying the logic of neoliberalism that animates the everyday management of the University (Harvey 2005; Melamed 2006.) There is a particular form to the racist logic that underlies
Neoliberalism that I describe in each of the chapters. In so many of my radical feminist readings, scholars have pointed to the academy as an institution that advances Neoliberalism (see Lisa Duggan, Chandra Mohanty, etc). I deploy ethnographic evidence of Neoliberalism’s affect on the student and administrative experience for students of all racial identifications. Throughout this process I kept asking, how does Neoliberal governance affect what students learn about race and racism? More specifically, I wanted to know how is it that Neoliberal University governance legitimizes a particular racial logic? In other words, what does Neoliberal multiculturalism look like in the day-to-day practices and experiences of higher education? Where is it at play? How can we discern it? Discerning it is the first step in rejecting, protesting, and transforming how power operates at the University.

It is from these theoretical frameworks of critical race theory, latcrit, and women of color/third world feminism, that my anthropological analysis of administrative management of racial-risk emerges. In the past two decades, scholarship from anthropology to Latina/Latino Studies chimed in on the shifting politics of the academy, as an analysis peripheral to their primary research agenda.

In 1993 Renato Rosaldo called for anthropologists to invest the expertise of the discipline into the problems plaguing higher education. By that time, Neoliberalism had sunk its teeth into the foundations of higher ed. As George Yúdice (2003) points out, diversity in higher education is meant to do two things. First diversity meant to provide “diverse knowledge presumably useful to capitalist enterprises” and second to provide “linkages between U.S. minorities and peoples throughout the world” (87). My ethnographic evidence shows how this is done by university administrators. I combine the theoretical articulations of the importance of higher education with an ethnographic analysis of how diversity works as “institutional capital” (80) at
the University of Illinois. Nowhere is this more clear than in the moments when racism is managed on campus, as was the case in “Tacos and Tequila” and the other incidents I outlined.

**Dissertation Road Map and Racial Risk Management Strategies**

In chapter two I elaborate on my methodology as an activist ethnographer. I draw on other anthropologists and activist scholars for an explanation of my mixed methods approach to research and analysis. I then explain my data collection process as well as some of the tension that surround conducting an ethnography of an institution.

My dissertation then proceeds into the chapters on racial risk management. The first chapter, Racial Gate Keeping, centers my analysis on Tacos and Tequila and why this research is important. I focus on the harm and impact of racial stereotypes on campus and beyond. Then, proceed with my chapter, Hiding racism, which discusses the retirement of Chief Illiniwek, and how that created a rubric of how to talk about racism, and solutions, on the U of I campus. My next chapter, Shifting Liability, Shifting Burden, shows how university administrators keenly shift racial risk away from the institution and consequently shift the burden of addressing racism to students, faculty, and staff. My last chapter Managing Racism, centers the tangled web mid-level administrators manage personally and politically, at the U of I. I conclude with a short chapter on possible steps and solutions.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS: ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE

An activist ethnography of an institution that brings non-dominant ideologies and people of color and women to the center, must begin from their stories and experiences. This project begins with the counter-stories of students, faculty, and community members who spoke their personal truths about their University experiences to powerful leaders—that is administrators at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—when they chanted “Our Culture is not a Costume.” Counter-stories are a CRT development of what Edward Said called “antithetical knowledge” and what CRT Scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw defines as “counter-accounts of social reality by subversive and subaltern elements of the reigning order” (Crenshaw et al 1995:xiii).

My methods emerge from eight years of research with the Ethnography of the University Initiative, a “grass-tops” initiative, namely one that (unlike “grass roots”) that centers student knowledge of the University. Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI) approaches students as stakeholders in the university with distinct and expert knowledge of the University. As stated on the EUI homepage:

EUI approaches universities and colleges--their institutions, organizations, maps, and histories--as composite networks of diverse verbal, visual, and statistical narratives. The ethnography of the university encourages qualitative research in small-scale, local increments: as they accumulate, such inquiries reveal large-scale structures and their zeitgeist.16

Although not intended in the design of EUI, the pedagogy and research framework of EUI fosters research aligned with some of the core principals and methods of CRT. CRT, as I explained in the introduction, is one of the foundational theories I use here to engage ethnographic work. This perspective makes sense in this work because I analyze
underrepresented scholars’, in this case undergraduates and graduate students, research on race and racism. CRT appreciates that racism is not only pervasive in U.S. culture but also the most pressing problem facing historically marginalized people (DuBois 1903; Roediger 2001). Also, I adopt this approach in part because of second generation EUI faculty whose courses I took, used CRT to inform their pedagogy and curriculum.

In this way, EUI is ethnographically engaging students in elements of CRT paradigm through inquiry-based counter-storytelling. EUI has been an interdisciplinary project from its inception. The idea for EUI emerged from interdisciplinary faculty conversations and collaborations. In practice EUI courses are offered through many disciplines most of which do not privilege ethnography as a research method or do not traditionally use the qualitative social science methods. The methods open up traditional disciplines to self-examination, which may serve to further decolonize racial hierarchies and unexamined privileges in the academy. One of the central tenants of CRT is to “[encourage] a greater interdisciplinary understanding of the underpinnings of race and racism” (McMorris, 1998-1999). At the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (U of I), EUI courses are taught in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences specifically the departments of African American Studies, Asian American Studies, English, Gender and Women’s Studies, History, Latina/Latino Studies, Sociology, the College of Health Sciences, and the College of Communication. Additionally EUI courses are taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois State University, and Syracuse University.17

During the initial EUI research process- specifically in formulating a question from a problem, many students, African American and Latina/o students specifically, engage in the activity of “counter storytelling” (Matsuda, 1993; Yosso, 2005; Parker, 2006; Ladson-Billings,
Counter-storytelling, as defined by many Critical Race Theorists, is a method of speaking truth to power and pointing out the ruptures in U.S. ideologies of race-neutrality, equity, the law, and in this case educational policies and practices. EUI project encourage students to think about their experience at the U of I not as unique but as institutional.\(^{18}\)

The EUI project fosters the type of qualitative research necessary for understanding racism and discrimination on campus that can be useful in constructing informed policies and programs. In order to understand racial theme parties, we must understand the culture and history of the campus that allows for these racial expressions to go unchecked. Although racial theme parties have more recently become a visible national phenomenon (as students post pictures to public online social networking sites), exploring the particulars of U of I gives insight into first, what environments foster these events. EUI students researched these events. EUI provides such insight. Undergraduate researchers look at campus culture ethnographically and oftentimes critically reflect on their experiences at U of I. In this regard, these students are engaging in acts of counter-storytelling that speak against the understandings of the dominant student population also reveal the effects on racialized minorities.

Both the founders and coordinators of EUI recognize that research on the University can offer a unique opportunity. EUI gave me that opportunity.

I was a first-generation EUI undergraduate researcher in 2003. I have taken an EUI course or conducted EUI research every year since 2003. Prior to completing my dissertation research I participated in several research activities. During my senior year of college (2003-2004), a team of EUI undergraduate researchers was commissioned to conduct an EUI project on the Brown vs. Board of Education Commemoration at U of I. The Ethnography of the Brown Commemoration
(EBC) was my first extensive research experience and the beginning of my critical engagement with research and the academy. I learned through experience that ethnographic research was more than observation; rather, in the case of EBC, it was about engaging ongoing campus and community projects and conversations on racism, education, and access. Since then I have been committed to the methodologies of anthropology, while simultaneously seeking out an interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks for contextualizing my interests in the anthropology of higher education. I have taken several EUI courses focusing on the history, educational policy, and anthropology of higher education. As a result of my EUI research, I matriculated into graduate school, joined the EBC writing team, and co-authored the University report on race and campus climate, “Ethnography of the Brown v Board Jubilee Commemoration." My interests in applied and activist research stem from the EBC project. My eight years of EUI experience has uniquely positioned me with institutional knowledge of the University.

Many anthropologists see their work as a process of knowing the everyday experiences of a cultural community, and this community illuminates something about how the world works (Ong and Colier 2005). These everyday practices of cultural communities speak to historical and contemporary relations of power. Arguably, the everyday speaks to questions of the lived experiences of race, gender, class, and sex privilege. These everyday practices are informed by cultural norms and practices, which are common-sensical to institutions, such as higher education.

I consider this research project an anthropology of education. More specifically this anthropology of racism in education is a study of the culture and everyday practices of k-16 schools that create, deconstruct, or reify oppressive projects. In order to understand the everyday experiences of underrepresented students at the U of I, I needed to think about the data necessary
for an ethnographic examination of what Omi and Winant call “racial formation” (1994), more specifically in the context of higher education. Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation asserts that “Racial formation is part of a ‘process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized’ in the evolution of hegemony which explains how society is organized and ruled,” (1994:55,56). I understand this project as an ethnography of racial formation (Omi & Winant 1994) within an institution of higher education. Therefore, I consider the people, policies, and ideologies that compose it, elements of oppressive projects. It is an ethnographic account of how racial projects (Omi & Winant 1994) are created, contested, and destroyed at the U of I.

**Methods of the study: Conducting Ethnography of an Institution**

Ethnography is messy and multidirectional—thus reflecting life in many ways. Unlike traditional ethnographies, this is the ethnography of an institution—the people, policies, and ideologies that compose it. In ethnographic work today, particularly on a college campus there are multiple data sets that inform an analysis of the University experience. For example, today students write about their experiences and share them on the internet, in classes, and in a host of other settings. My research project combines ethnographic data with other data sources—interviews, participation, observation, observant-participation, newspaper articles, Facebook posts, internet and other texts. Sites like facebook and other internet venues are not only sites where racist outburst and ruptures happen, but also house sophisticated analysis of racism on campus. This ethnographic work supports and is supported by the work of a great number of students, faculty, and staff on this campus. Beyond the compilation of ethnographic data within these larger structures that make up oppression and resistance at the University, this project gathers together the analyses from various sources in order to bring together a more
comprehensive, exhaustive even, analyses of quotidian racism on campus. I think this is responsible ethnography—one situated in content and analysis outside of an individual, omnipotent ethnographer. As a graduate student ethnographer and an ethnographer in community with other researchers, I know that my committee and readers will keep me accountable.

Schools are one of many institutions that structure society around a set of values. My dissertation is an ethnography of a school, in which I pay special attention to how the school communicates societal values.

From the moment I began conceptualizing this project and attempting to articulate it to others I realized that almost everyone has an opinion on racism at the U of I. Well, everyone had more than an opinion. For many of the people I spoke with, the majority of whom identified as from a marginalized or oppressed population, they had stories and analyses of their stories, and theories of how their stories were indicative of larger processes. Some analyses were from events from years ago, and some from the day before. Once colleagues and co-workers found out that I was researching racism at the university, they would stop in my office or pull me aside at a meeting or event and share a story or counter-story with me. So often the act of storytelling would be similar; it would start with something in the person’s everyday routine, then move to an experience as an underrepresented administrator, student, or faculty member on campus. They would tell me their story with great intensity, and I would listen with enthusiasm—after all, what is easier for a researcher than people who seek you out to tell you their experience? The narratives and their telling told me much about the person and how they experienced the world because racism is not a fixed logic or set of processes. But the narrative always had a racial “kicker,” usually an unpleasant and unexpected turn of events. And at the moment the person told me the kicker, they would pause for a split second, and look at me, eyes wide with intensity,
scoff, shake their head, or some combination of these expressions, and anticipate my reaction. They would wait for my reaction -- usually a shake of the head or a look of shock at the audacity or inhumanity of the situation. Afterward they would go on to relate their story to larger campus and national issues. They would recommend that I investigate the situation further and suggest people to interview and records to analyze.

Why had these particular stories stuck with them? Even though co-worker and colleagues on campus experience micro-aggressions on a regular basis, some events definitely stood out more than others. Racial micro aggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et. al 2007:271).

Often at work or around campus I would be approached by co-workers who just could not understand or rationalize a particular institutional or cultural practice that seemed contradictory to some part of the university’s mission. Other times, co-workers and colleagues would tell me theories of how university policy worked and who it served. For example, in the spring semester of 2011 the University changed its racial identity categories to match those of the U.S. Census. Latina/o/ Hispanic was removed from the racial categories and placed within the context of ethnicity. This policy change was congruent with the 2010 Census Racial Categories. When this occurred, a co-worker brought the change to my attention. She mentioned the change and felt that it was not only a disservice to Latina/o students at the University but also to society as a whole. She explained that Latina/o students who would not identify as black, would then check the white box, even though this didn’t match them either. (Notice here that not only does she feel it is easier to reject blackness than whiteness, but this was her experience with students.) She then told me that she suspected this was the reason a student, who was a Bronze-Tablet candidate
(i.e. she ranked in the top 3% of her class), did not receive an invitation to our office’s scholarly awards event, even though she had in the past. Basically, because this student, who identified racially and ethnically as Latina/o up until that semester, now marked the “white” category, she was no-longer invited to participate in specific office events. Despite what this suggests it was not the case that all of our Latino/a students who now marked “white” on their records, were suddenly dropped from programs that serve underrepresented student at the University.

I share this story because it is an example of the typical response I would receive once I told someone that I was researching racism at the University. Their stories influence my ethnography and some may be included in here, like the story I just shared, without participants’ names or titles.

**Ethnography & Power**

My dissertation approaches ethnographies as empirical stories of power formations that always have political significance and implications.. Unfortunately, despite anthropologists’ best intentions, many anthropological projects have furthered injustices done to the communities they study. Since the reflexive turn (i.e., the moment in which anthropologists began to deeply reflect on power and authority in the discipline) of the 1980’s, anthropologists have been increasingly thoughtful about their complicity in the maintenance of race, class, gender, and power hierarchies in general. Stemming from the critiques of scholars of color and women in the discipline, anthropology has changed both its subjects and methods. The scholarship of woman of color feminism asserts that the political cannot be separated from the personal because people live the oppression that others consider political debates (Moraga 2000). The reflexive turn
called for re-thinking how knowledge production in anthropology is always already a political project. Holmes and Marcus (2005) assert, “In a sense, all anthropology since has been most effectively an intimate critique of diffused Western knowledge practices in the name of specific communities of subjects misrepresented by, excluded from, seduced by, or victimized by such practices” (1101).

This is the point from which the political projects of contemporary anthropological inquiries depart, as does this dissertation. Into the millennium, anthropologists continue to engage in research projects designed to understand the human experience. Given the historical moment of increased corporatization, anthropologists are considering different ways to investigate traditional anthropological problems (Ong and Collier 2005). As contemporary anthropologists assert, it is imperative to re-function ethnography—that is, dismantle it as a tool of oppression and refashion it as a tool for liberation. My dissertation methods stem from a need to promote activist scholarship. As I mentioned in my description of Critical Race Theory, this dissertation emerges from an understanding that all knowledge comes from a biased perspective. As such, the best way to control for bias in my research is to make it clear that my research comes from the perspective of an activist-scholar.

In order to re-function activism and activist scholarship, I explore the potential uses of the “para-ethnographic dimension” as described by Douglas R. Holmes and George E. Marcus (2005). They define the para-ethnographic dimension as “the de facto and self-conscious critical faculty that operates in any expert domain as a way of dealing with contradictions, exception, facts that are fugitive, and that suggest a social realm not in alignment with the representations generated by the application of the reigning statistical mode of analysis” (237). In an attempt to define it more directly, I think about this para-ethnographic dimension as a filter for a
experience-based knowledge local. Administrators, for example, can be considered para-
ethnographers who process multiple forms of data on the everyday life of the University for 
multiple stakeholders and in turn make policy decisions based on their accumulated experience 
as well as their values—their cultural lenses. Everyday practices of cultural communities speak 
to historical and contemporary relations of power. Arguably, the everyday speaks to questions of 
the lived experiences of race, gender, class, and sex privilege. However, the vantage point of the 
everyday may offer insights into how communities navigate the historical and structural 
constraints in which they live. What does the para-ethnographic dimension offer activist scholars 
attempting to understand and deconstruct cultures of oppression? Examining the para-
ethnographic may help reach an understanding of the innovative strategies that communities use 
for survival or for domination. I assert that para-ethnographic examinations open up different 
avenues of inquiry and potential activist interventions. This dissertation is an evaluation of the 
expert decision making of administrators who serve as ethnographic experts. There is the 
potential to show how administrative decisions are messy and value-laden even while by 
administrators themselves consider these policy decisions as neutral. It is an initial exploration 
into re-functioning activist scholarship contemporaneously with the shift in the capitalist world 
order. In imagining an activist methodology in how to approach para-ethnographic analysis, I 
explore methods and foundational principles of Women of Color Feminism and Critical Race 
Theory. As anthropologists necessarily rethink the global (Ong and Collier 2005) they are also 
re-functioning the methods of anthropology and its subjects (Holmes and Marcus 2005). The 
methods of my research emerge from both an anthropologist struggling to confront the politics of 
ethnographic production and a critically oriented anthropologist navigating an explicitly political 
project.
**Ethnographic Production:**

The communities we choose to study, the questions we ask, and our fieldwork and write up methods all have political meanings and potential ramifications. Kaushik Sunder Rajan describes this moment in his book *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* as “…a historical shift toward increasingly corporate regimes of governance. This is not a shift that automatically implies a reduced role for the state… but one that does pose questions about the change in the states’ role” (2007:80). Many scholars note this change in which corporations assert greater control in governments worldwide. Scholars note how this shift increasingly privatizes formerly social services. Scholars and activists globally study the implications of these shifting processes.

Contemporary ethnographies are situated in the historical moment. It is at this moment, when scholars are re-functioning ethnography that activists need to rethink activist practices and activist scholars need to re-think activist scholarship. Activism is a practice that seeks to bring about some sort of political or cultural change that would not be possible through the traditional electoral system or other key social and national institutions. This definition of the practice of activism makes sense in the previous historical moment defined by strategic essentialist practices of identity politics. Although this definition of activism is certainly accurate it is also limiting to scholars and post-Civil Rights activists who are trying to re-imagine and re-function activist practices. The activism of the Civil Rights Movement is not causing rupture in the same way it may have at that time. We are in a different historical moment. Mobilizing the intersections of experiences that inform identity is the challenge facing both activists and scholars today. People increasingly articulate their identities in terms of shifting essentialisms. In her ethnography of
multi-racial youth in Southern California, “We Don’t Belong to Simple Race Groups, But We Do. Race Doesn’t Matter, But It Does,” Mica Pollock showed that activist politics increasingly reflect the multiplicity of experiences and power formations that inform identity (2004:214-216).

Activist scholars must reflect on anthropological methods and ethics in order to re-function what activist scholarship is. So, what does activist ethnography look like? Women of color feminism—as a theory, an activist methodology, and a practice—articulates the necessity of “insistence on difference, coalitional politics, and a careful examination of the intersecting processes of race, gender, sexuality, and class, which make singular identifications impossible,” and as such, it “displaces a U.S. nationalist subject formation based on homogeneity, equivalence, and identification” (Hong 2006: xvi). My dissertation methodology attempts to explore the para-ethnographic while simultaneously conducting research with explicitly activist agendas for guidance. Works like Catching Hell in the City of Angels, by anthropologist João Helion Costa Vargas, have an explicitly activist orientation. Vargas uses a women of color feminist lens to conduct research that transcends voyeurism of research for the sake of research. As woman of color feminist Grace Hong (2006) points out “women of color is an epistemological formation, one that tenuously recovers that which is always fragile and threatening to collapse into incoherence or inaccessibility” (2006:xxx). João Helion Costa Vargas takes direction from women of color feminism and uses it as a methodology to understand how oppression and resistance operate. Vargas describes his motives that inform his methods:

My principle concerns in this work are to locate, describe, and understand critically explanations, strategies, and social movements that have the potential for challenging current ideologies and policies. The ultimate aim of this ethnography, therefore, is to identify and assess political visions that point to projects of social organizations whose premises and practices make it possible to
survive genocide, achieve justice and freedom, and decolonize ourselves in the process (2006:21).

Vargas’s project studies practices of decolonization. He enters the field with this conscious political engagement. Given the historical moment of “corporate regimes of governance” (Rajan 2007) a combined methodological approach seems necessary. Although my project calls for an activist approach that includes the para-ethnographic as well as activist scholarship such as Vargas’, it does not mean to suggest that it is only para-ethnographic examinations that have political value or critical engagement. Ong and Collier (2005) similarly assert that this methodological approach “does not suggest an absence of a critical stance” (17). How do activist anthropologist, like myself, use both methodological orientations? The next section will explore the ethical problems in re-functioning activist fieldwork practices in the current historical moment.

This dissertation is an attempt at a re-functioned activist scholarship. Activist scholarship in this moment examines the intersecting process that influence and reflect everyday practices. Ethnographers focus their research on people’s everyday. Many concentrate their focus on the effects of forces of capitalism in the third-world including the third world in the first world. Another form of activist scholarship may emerge through examinations of the “para-ethnographic” subjects who are “involved in aggressive knowledge practice in the service of wide-ranging theoretical and ideological agendas” (Holmes and Marcus 2005: 1108). Although my scholarship is not on third world subjects, it examines how stratifications between the third world and first world are maintained by focusing on the administrators who maintain these hierarchies.
Ethnographic Activism: Studying up through Para-ethnography

If an element of activist scholarship is about decolonization and radical transformation it follows that we most understand the colonial policies and formations within the institution. The substance of contemporary ethnographies reflects a broad range of topics divergent in thematic interests, locations, and communities though simultaneously linked by the global agendas of capitalism.

Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier, in their introduction to *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics of Anthropological Problems* describe sites where the effects of “global” changes and transformations of globalization are not just studied, but sites where they are articulated (2005). Institutions of higher education, like the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, are sites where these transformations are articulated—assembly. According to Ong and Collier, an assembly “is a product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic” (2005:12). The university is such an irreducible assembly; however, governance of the University is, in moments, reducible to a singular logic: racial risk management. The multiple logics of an institution are filtered through the management of bureaucrats, i.e., university administrators. Universities are spaces in which global phenomena, specifically knowledge production with global insight, input, and significance, are created by powerful experts who draw upon ethnographic knowledge to make decisions that have global significance. These administrators are para-ethnographic subjects who are informed by ethnographic data—that is the empirical observations and anecdotal conversations with multiple stakeholders in the university (e.g., students, faculty, other administrators, alumni, business people, etc. These informers may be students, faculty, other administrators, etc.) In order to show how these works are a re-functioning of activist scholarship, this section will rely on the conceptual work on para-
ethnography of Holmes and Marcus (2005). The para-ethnographer expert is not an anthropologist but an elite and expert “involved in complex ‘sensemaking’” (2005:1108) of how the world works (in a similar way to an ethnographer). The para-ethnographic is both a subjectivity and a lens. In that way it is also part of a methodology for studying the articulation of the university by expert administrators who are also ethnographers.

The para-ethnographic expert is a decision-maker who pulls together multiple forms of data that might be contradictory or disconnected, and in turn who makes a decision that has global significance. The para-ethnographer, who has the status of an elite-expert, shapes ideological understandings of others in their community of expertise. I argue that high-level administrators have the status of an elite-expert whose decision-making has wide-ranging significance. Marcus and Holmes’s conceptualization of the para-ethnographic directly contradicts notions of individualism in asserting that the ethnographic process is never autonomous. In this way it is part of a Critical Race Theory methodology. Ethnography is collective. Although Holmes and Marcus use the para-ethnographic to describe an expert bureaucrat who is also the subject of anthropological inquiry, I see the term as applicable to the researcher, in this case me, and the intellectual committee guiding the research project. I also think it is applicable, in moments, to activists and student leaders. In the same way, activist scholars necessarily navigate the competing para-ethnographic of graduate school. Is the process of ethnographic production, as described in the first section, armchair para-ethnography?

An elucidation of the para-ethnographic can be a political project meant to understand the inner workings of expert elites as highly-influential players in constructing the global depending on the methodological approach to fieldwork and write up: like an ethnography of administrative management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Para-ethnographic experts are
“…involved in an aggressive knowledge practice in the service of wide-ranging theoretical and ideological agendas” (Holmes and Marcus 2005:1108). It is the ethnographer who can ascertain through an ethnography of an expert elite who also knowingly or not, considers ethnographic information to inform their expert decisions. That is an administrator is also an unintentional ethnographer who compiles the same ethnographic materials and research that an expert elite would—the process of knowledge production. Further, and more importantly for the politics inherent in every anthropological project, from there the informed ethnographer may capture the messiness of the “theoretical and ideological agendas” of the participants and their global significance. In this sense, this dissertation attempts to capture the messiness of the theoretical and ideological agendas advanced by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

An excerpt from Holmes and Marcus on their exploration of the para-ethnographic in the Federal Reserve community highlights the manifold para-ethnographic dimensions of institutions. Holmes is describing the para-ethnographic process that results in powerful knowledge production through which Mr. Bram comes to write the “Beige Book” also known as the Summary of Commentary on Current Economic Conditions by Federal Reserve District. This report on the U.S. economy is extremely influential globally (Holmes and Marcus 2005:243). His knowledge practices, however, also expose a deeper dimension of the workings of the native point of view and its engagement with the contemporary. His informants, his interlocutors, and his contacts are themselves engaged in a direct para-ethnography that is so deeply embedded in their consciousness and aligned to their practices as to be virtually invisible even though they are intentionally culling information to inform their decisions. Once these knowledge practices are opened to scrutiny, they reveal how the contemporary is socially reproduced through the cumulative action of multiple and manifold para-ethnographies. Acutely drawn anecdotal
material is the fabric for a para-ethnographic analysis. Mr. Bram’s contacts summon para-ethnographies as they act within and upon the contemporary and by so doing give it-the contemporary- social form and cultural context (Holmes and Marcus 2005:245).

From this section we can see how the informed expert para-ethnographic subject, Mr. Bram, is informed through a cumulative ethnographic process of other para-ethnographic subjects. Uncovering the ethnographic of the para-ethnographic informants reveals the practices and choices being made by the bureaucratic subjects and thus their value systems- in this regard how racial meanings are valued. The ethnographic study of the para-ethnographic would illuminate the illicitness of the administrators as expert decision-makers. I show that the same cumulative, manifold, para-ethnographic process is at work at institutions like the University of Illinois and discuss this in the next section.

Constructing a methodology for the University is like examining corporations and bureaucrats’ para-ethnographic production; it requires re-figuring approaches to anthropological data collection and fieldwork ethics. Kaushik Sunder Rajan states, “The ethnographic challenge here is to be able to narrate my multiple (usually corporate) subjects’ perspectives with respect and understanding without abandoning the right, or the ability, to be critical” (2007:240). It is this challenge I wish to explore more fully. Throughout this dissertation I describe administrators as para-ethnographers and examine the types of ethnographic data they consider in their decision making. In many of my interviews with administrators they are processing their ethnographic evidence with me as part of the interview. Although this is at times a collaborative process, that does not mean I resign my ethnographic authority to them and my ability to be critical of their decision making along with it. One of the ways to do this is through maintaining a public relationship with administrators—something I explore more fully in the conclusions. A public
relationship is a relationship in which we are accountable to each other in relation to our shared values.

**Imagining Activist Research in Education**

As an activist, I approach para-ethnographic knowledge productions with questions of their complicity in the reproduction of hegemony and oppression of people of color in the United States and globally. I ask, is the University Administrator (i.e., para-ethnographer) “involved in an aggressive knowledge practice in the service of wide-ranging theoretical and ideological agendas” (Holmes and Marcus 2005: 1108)? I argue that they are but not always intentionally. I show through my analysis of racial risk-management that administrators must consider the liability of any action, before they act. Racial risk-management strategies communicate a hierarchy of competing institutional values. In this era, legality and liability are strongly informed by corporate, not civic, interests.

Imagining other methodological approaches including the para-ethnographic into activist research projects is an imperative undertaking given the contemporary moment. Universities may be seen as “global assemblages” (Ong and Collier 2005). As I mentioned earlier, “An Assemblage is the product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic” (Collier & Ong 2005:12). Corporate regimes of governance are also finding their way into U.S. institutions of higher education. Public universities, for example, increasingly rely on the private support of multinational corporations to fund their research and development (Tierney 2006). Current organizational and decision making practices of the university reveal “…corporations themselves are taking on agential responsibility for dispensing services that, in the liberal ideology of the welfare state, were ‘state’ services. On the other hand, the state itself is seen
adopting corporate strategies or forms of governance...” (Rajan 2007: 80). Universities are global assemblages in that they are compilations of differing forms and functions of knowledge production through which racial meanings and responsibilities are articulated. These meanings are subject to the influences of University stakeholders. These stakeholders, especially the corporations which fund research at Illinois, also have para-ethnographers influencing the organizational practices of the University. The convergences of capitalism in the multiple domains of the University that construct the moral and ethical understandings of the salience of racial meanings have influence well beyond the University. The stakes are especially high.

What would the ethnography of higher education tell us about “individual and collective life, as they are reflected upon and valued, constituted, and reconstituted, through reflexive practices” (Ong and Collier 2005:7) when we look through the eyes of University administrators without relinquishing the activist-scholar’s obligation to critique what they see? Understanding the practices of University administrators is of fundamental importance to struggles of decolonization and radical transformation—for survival.

Holmes and Marcus (2005) suggest that approaching para-ethnographic is different from traditional anthropological informants. They contend, “What’s left is for them to be treated ‘like’ collaborators or partners in research, a fiction to be sustained more or less strongly around the key issue of the postulation of para-ethnography as the object of research” (248). This approach suggests a falsehood. We as anthropologists studying expert policy makers (administrators) use the same insincerity in our approach to commonalities between us, in order to gain access to the expert community that we may otherwise be denied. As an activist scholar, student, and employee of the University I was in a complex position of both privilege and vulnerability. As a student, I have the rights and protections of a consumer. As an employee, I am and was
vulnerable to censorship and push-back from the University. I did not think I could approach University Administrators assuming we share values and “the same curiosity and predicament about constituting the social in our affinities” (Holmes and Marcus 2005: 250). In fact, I found, as most anthropologist do, that people are more complex, even University Administrators. I needed to allow for the space and possibility to be wrong and for the emergence of the unexpected. For example, I am pro-indigenous scholar who believes the Chief is a pervasive form of anti-indigenous racism. As such I did not believe the University should make any money from Chief imagery. I said as much to an administrator in a meeting—I said the Chief was terribly mismanaged. After that meeting another administrator approached me and stated that if the University did not generate a minimal annual profit from the Chief trademark it would eventually be considered abandoned and open for public use. Essentially this administrator told me that this was a strategic decision by the University done to limit the proliferation of Chief paraphernalia by a third party. Prior to that moment I had not even been open to the idea that any upper-level administrator would attempt to limit Chief imagery for the best interest of the University. Her comment was unexpected. I cannot say that I was always open to the possibility of being wrong about the harm committed by administrators through the Chief but after that comment I understood administrative racial-risk management better—as something that was not only negative but also productive in moments. As Roderick A. Ferguson reminds us in *Administering Sexuality or, the Will to Institutionality* administrative power says yes as much as it says no. At that moment I realized that an administrator somewhere thought through the repercussions of a third-party owning the Chief trademark. It is a micro example of interest convergence. In my most optimistic analysis, I imagine that an administrator somewhere who cared about all students on campus, thought it was ill advised to have Chief paraphernalia
proliferate throughout the community. I imagine that this administrator sold the idea to other administrators by suggesting it would be unwise to allow a third-party control over a symbol so engrained in the University’s history. That this imagined administrator thought about the possible harm to the campus climate first, and the University’s sense of ownership over its imagery second, is more optimistic than realistic.

One of the foundational principles of Critical Race Theory is that racism is so pervasive that it is ingrained and made to appear invisible in U.S. culture. How then, in the spirit of paraethnography, do I approach university bureaucrats about the ways in which their organizational practices and decisions communicate harmful racial meanings while simultaneously trying to understand that production without moral judgment.

To postpone answering my question, I want to pose a statement by anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2005). Mahmood said, “By allowing theoretical inquiry some immunity from the requirement of strategic political action, we leave open the possibility that the task of thinking may proceed in directions not dictated by the logic and pace of immediate political events” (2005: 196). Mahmood, as part of her feminist project, shares her experience of working through the limits of activist scholarship in understanding how her subjects are constructed as “the other.” Mahmood in her conclusion to Politics of Piety argues that a productive tension lies between theory and political action. For activist-scholars-in-training, this means balancing adherence to the political orientation of our projects while simultaneously remaining open to seeing and understanding alternative ways of “making sense of” the world (Mahmood 2005). I struggle with this tension throughout my dissertation. I did my best to enter and participate in the cultural communities I studied with sincerity and humility but at times I felt angry and joined naively. At time this was difficult because I was already a member of many of the communities I
studied. It is only from a space of sincerity and humility that an activist’s ethnography of reflection can begin and maintain the ability to be critical of our para-ethnographic dimensions. Does this mean that anthropological projects are immune from taking a more direct political stance in the ethnography? No. Can our theoretical inquiry intervene and shape the politics and their stakes? Yes, and it does through the para-ethnographic dimension of faculty experts. It does so by forcing us to practice reflection and thought limiting our ability to pre-decide.

Anthropologist João Helion Costa Vargas asserts, “Participant observation is always determined by the anthropologist’s moral principles” (2006: 19). Understanding the para-ethnographic dimension of the global is necessary for deconstructing cultures of oppression (Moraga 2000). Activists’ projects oriented around decolonization and strategies of radical transformation do not necessitate insincere methodological practices. However, an explicit assertion of subversive political agendas to fieldwork participants as part of a methodological practice does not necessarily open up spaces to examine dimensions of white, male, elite, para-ethnographic subject.

Approaching examinations of the para-ethnographic as part of a subaltern political project would entail a more complex ethical approach to fieldwork methods. How can activist anthropologists re-function their fieldwork practices in anthropological projects that include elite para-ethnographic subjects (i.e., not subaltern para-ethnographic subjects) so that they are both ethical and activist? This is not the first time this question has been asked. This question has been asked by feminists of color in different context within and outside the discipline of anthropology. Audre Lorde in “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” of *Sister Outsider* states: “What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of
change are possible and allowable” (1984: 110-111). This continues to be a constant source of tension.

Some anthropologists and their intellectual producers (their academic committees, mentors, advisors, and publishers) consciously choose to interrogate communities and cultural spaces in an attempt to subvert or aid in the subversion of dominant power hierarchies. In part this is done by choosing research project that appeal to market interests. These ethnographic projects have specific and intentional goals beyond curiosity about the other.21 Their ethnographies speak to the everyday realities of people. This is what my research attempts to do. The anthropological goal to “do no harm” does not hold in instances where harm is being done and the anthropologist sits on the sidelines. As you will see in my chapter Racial Gate-Keeping, what students learn here, formally and informally, matters.

Data Collection and Institutional Review Board Oversight

This project reviews and considers what information administrators consider when making a decision on how to act, or not act, in response to an act of racism or discrimination on campus. Administrators, as I have been explaining, are also ethnographers who take stock of both multiple sources of data and their own participant observation in a community. This includes interaction with many students, including participants and protesters of racism on campus. As such, these groups are also important to this research.

Students protested Tacos and Tequila and organized one of the largest forums ever on campus “Racism, Power, and Privilege.” Students and faculty protested Chief Illiniwek decades before his retirement. It is from their responses to racism on campus, in each of these instances, that my analysis of administrative management emerges. Although I attempt to center the
narrative of protestors, at times this research does center the stories of administrators and participants of racist events. A great deal of my analysis is of administrators’ responses to student protests, which are entangled in white power—normative constructions of whiteness. Yet the protests were in response to white cultural productions that serve to maintain white privilege, such as Tacos and Tequila and Compton parties. In doing so this research at times may seem to center narratives of whiteness, but that is because whiteness is always constructed and contested simultaneously in relationship with people of color (see Haney-Lopez *White By Law*). Since these ideologies are simultaneously constructed and in tension, it only makes sense that they all be represented in this text in order to get a more complete ethnographic understanding of racial formation at the University of Illinois.

My research focuses on three groups—administrators, protesters, and participants of racial gate-keeping, racial risk-management, and racial theme parties. These subjects are considered together due to their roles in each of the ethnographic episodes I analyze. Students, faculty, staff, and community members value diversity (specifically racial diversity). They are diverse groups of people not always easily defined by their social/demographic coordinates of race, class, or gender for example. Protesters in particular attempt to shape administrative responses to racism by suggesting alternative responses. I’m curious about the information administrators use to inform their everyday decisions and their decisions about race, racism, and diversity on campus. Through this ethnography I hope to reveal some of the complicated processes by which members of the campus communities come to articulate racist and anti-racist sentiments and identities, and how these racial understandings are made institutionally meaningful, by University Administrators’ words, actions, or inactions.
I spent two years conducting participant observation on the U of I campus. I was a student on campus for ten years. I had in-depth interviews with over forty people and hundreds more informal conversations as part of my participant observation. This ethnography is a product of my graduate research and my experiences with the University prior to the official start of my dissertation research.

Explaining to the IRB that all of my lived experiences were part of my research was a challenge. Ironically and yet predictably the Institutional Review Board attempted to manage my research project as racial-risk. Most notably the Institutional Review Board was concerned that if all of my personal experiences could count as research, then there would be spaces that I would not have to declare publicly that I was a researcher, someone researching racism no less, at the U of I. For example, in 2010 I was elected to be a graduate representative of the Illinois Student Senate. This was not part of my research plan, but I accepted this election and as an activist, used the space to advance an anti-racist agenda. I also documented my experiences.

That same fall I submitted a renewal of my IRB approval because although I was beginning to analyze data and write, I wanted to keep my options open. I knew I had been elected into the student senate and thought I could use that space to research my experiences further (as a different kind of participant) than I had done so previously.

The Institutional Review Board was concerned that personal conversations I had with individuals would make their way into my dissertation. The following is an example. It just so happened that I was not only elected onto the Illinois Student Senate but that I was also, by a fluke, elected to be the graduate representative in the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) of the Faculty Senate. That meant that I was in both public and private meetings with members of the Faculty Senate, who set the agenda for the entire senate, and were the first-responders to any
concerns with shared-governance. It meant that the provosts, vice-provosts, Chancellors, and Vice-Chancellors, all came to the SEC meetings to give reports. In one such SEC meeting I was able to tell Interim Chancellor Robert Easter that the Chief had been horribly mismanaged; that it showed the University had no values; and that anti-Chief and Pro-Chief groups, as well as the rest of campus, were disgruntled. He sat at the table red-faced and did not say a word. Afterward, a powerful university administrator came up to me and congratulated me for my bravery. This was the same administrator who told me why the University still profits from the Chief logo—an anecdotal piece of evidence from an expert para-ethnographer. If the university did not maintain ownership of the logo, an alumni could buy it and profit from increased production. What this administrator did not recall is that I tried to interview her several times for my research. Several of the people I spoke with as part of this research suggested I meet with her to discuss how the University frames its management of the Chief. In another such SEC meeting a high-level administrator depreciated the value of the University of Illinois at Chicago in ways that I considered racist, classist, and sexist. He remains a high-level administrator on the U of I campus. It is precisely these conversations that the IRB feared. But it is precisely these conversations that the IRB has no right or authority to police. Ironically they might have had greater authority if they would have renewed my application. My experience with the tension of being a student/activist/researcher came up in different moments throughout my dissertation. I explore them more thoroughly in chapter seven, Selling Diversity.

Finally, one of the ways privileges that collude with white racial-normativity materialized in this research project was through the production of “evidence.” The common-sense everyday experiences of oppression and privilege, which are often-times but not always determined by skin-color, give meaning to a racially-normative common-sense framework to understand the
world. For some people of color and those with non-normative racial sensibilities, racist experiences in everyday life contribute to their common-sense. That has affected my scholarship. As a scholar, I have to constantly show that we live in a society in which white people are privileged and people of color experience oppression—for many who have read parts of this dissertation, including racially-normative white people and people of color, racial oppression and privilege was not part of the common-sense understanding of the world. When a person from a White or dominant ideology reads this research, every instance of racism or privilege is questioned and interrogated. That is not the case with people of color, who as I stated in the introduction to this dissertation, have a common framework of experiences that contribute to our common sense. Privilege and oppression are all around. They are everyday.
CHAPTER THREE

RACIAL GATE-KEEPING: POLICING BELONGING IN HIGHER ED

“A woman is a ritual”- Emma Limm

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I), like many college campuses across the country, racial-theme parties and acts of racial intolerance are acts of dominance that police notions of belonging at the University. Racial gate-keeping serves the same ends as racism, white-privilege. Racial gate-keeping is a racist practice that attempts to keep some people out. It is an expression of racism that defines the terms of success by white cultural standards. Namely, the standards used to uphold ideologies of whiteness, (i.e. to police belonging of who and what is not white). Racial gate-keeping is a practice or action that either directly or indirectly serves to deny a historically oppressed group of people access to life improving resources and services. It does so by maintaining borders, or more precisely, by maintaining artificial or unnatural boundaries (Anzaldua 1987).

Racial gate-keeping takes on different forms in different contexts and at different moments. In this chapter I review acts of racial gate-keeping at the U of I. I will show how both students and university administrators, in their complicity with episodes like Tacos and Tequila, contribute to racial gate-keeping. And by doing so, they participate in policing who and what is white. Racial gate-keeping is part of the strategy that maintains the legacy of the University, and a national legacy of white privilege and supremacy. The administrative response to such racialized events expresses a set of values to students that communicates who matters at the U of
I. Maintaining an artificial boundary between who matters and who does not, in a given context, advances the goal of neoliberal multiculturalism that sees diversity only through its marketable value. These borders are constructed through university and government policies that shape discourses and racial meanings on campus. Neoliberal policies push for dismantling boundaries to expand the reach of global capitalism, (Mohanty 2003) while neoliberal ideologies maintain unnatural racial boundaries that protect white privilege. Investigating the Tacos and Tequila controversy, the administrative response to it, and other related ethnographic episodes helps trace the racial effects of the practical application of neoliberal multiculturalism in the academy and on its students, who act as global consumers and reproducers of this racial logic.

In this chapter I attempt to explain why this research matters. I do so by first providing more context to Tacos and Tequila than I did in the introduction as well as some insight into fraternity and sorority exchange parties. The focus of this section is how Tacos and Tequila is an example of racial gate-keeping that maintains racial stereotypes. Second, I show how stereotypes can contribute to the dehumanization of groups of people, like Latinos, and that such stereotypes have real consequences on lives and bodies. Third, I explore the effects on students. I explain how a culture-less identity, and an “anti-racist-racist” identity (that is racial identity that claims to be anti-racist while simultaneously is racist) are neoliberal identity formations that are a product of and contribute to racial gate-keeping. Finally, I explain how racial-gate-keeping is a form of racial-risk management. But before I explain the development and use of racial gate-keeping as racial-risk management strategy, I must explain why this research is important beyond the frameworks mentioned in the introduction. Why does it matter for our lived experience and everyday lives? Tacos and Tequila was much more than one fraternity and
sorority having an inappropriate theme party. The stereotypical representations in Tacos and Tequila have real consequences because they dehumanize marginalized communities.

**Ritual Transgressions: Sorority Sisters**

Racial theme parties are ritual transgressions. I name them ritual transgressions because when we protested outside the Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) fraternity house, one of its members stated that they have these parties every year. They asked the protestors “So why are you so upset?” Protestors responded with their chants of “Our Culture is Not A Costume.” In fact, it is because of the circulation of the photos on Facebook that these events became well known on campus. It is also because these parties are part of the “exchange” ritual between fraternities and sororities. These are transgressions not only because they are racist but also because they are acts of racism that went public—something the University condemns in their analysis of the events. On October 31, 2006, in response to Tacos and Tequila, over 300 students and their allies protested racial theme parties, the University administration, and the Chief. Some members of the Latina/o and African American communities and their allies across campus sent emails through registered student organizations, list-serves, and the cultural programs (e.g. La Casa Cultural Latina and the African American Cultural Program). The “exchange” party between the two Greek houses was now a action in that it brought shame to the sorority and the University. The exchange party was called “Fiesta.” Tacos and Tequila was the informal name given to the party originally titled “Fiesta.” “Fiesta” was not only the formal name of the party but also, however coincidently, it is also the name of an annual pan-Latino celebration sponsored and organized by La Casa Cultural Latina on campus.
As part of this research, I learned more about how exchange parties are a key element of fraternity and sorority life. In 2008 a few years after Tacos and Tequila, I interviewed Ariel, a self-identified Latina who joined a predominantly white sorority long after the protests of the theme parties. Ariel comes from a predominantly Mexican neighborhood in Chicago and that’s the only thing she’s been exposed to her whole life. She says that she shares more commonalities with other people from the city, including Polish students, over some of her sorority sisters who identify as Latina but come from the suburbs of Chicago. One afternoon, while interviewing Ariel at Espresso Royal, a coffee shop on campus, Ariel told me that theme parties are supposed to be “fun and funny.” She smiled. Ariel enjoys them. They are meant to be humorous. Theme parties occur when a fraternity and a sorority get together for an “exchange” party. Exchange parties are one of the primary ways in which members of a sorority and fraternity interact across houses and meet new people within the Greek system. Exchange parties commonly have themes. Ariel explained that there is a hierarchy within the Greek System that is based on popularity, which is largely based on “looks” or attractiveness. Usually during rush—the process by which first year students choose and are chosen to enter into a Greek house—the “pretty women” receive bids into sororities that are known to have women with good looks. Over the course of our conversation, Ariel referred to a “top ten” among sororities. She said that there is not an official list of sororities with more status but women in sororities know where their sororities rank in relation to each other. When I asked Ariel more about this hierarchy she said, “hot guys get into good houses and hot girls get into good houses.” Again, this can lead to racial gate-keeping around notions of beauty defined by whiteness.

“Its about the image.”
Since 2000, my first year as an undergraduate at the U of I, I heard rumors about the Delta Delta Delta (a.k.a. Tri-delt) sorority being the most popular sorority on campus. I heard that it was highly selective and that the women were good looking. I asked her if the Tri-delts were a top sorority. She said, in an audacious tone, “yes they are, in spite of everything.” She elaborated that despite everything surrounding Tacos and Tequila, the tri-delts were still a sorority coveted by women and men alike. Ariel told me that their recruitment numbers suffered a little after Tacos and Tequila but they bounced right back. The following year their recruitment was high again. I also heard this from other Greek and Non-Greek students I spoke with. On campus, they would tell me, you know of the Tri-Delts.

In 2008 I was told by a member of another sorority that exchange parties are what make a sorority worth rushing. That’s because exchange parties are the primary way to meet fraternity men. Both the sorority and fraternity have to agree to the exchange. Exchange parties occur frequently as part of a sorority’s social calendar. Exchange parties usually have a theme. After Tacos and Tequila, the Tri-Delts had their social calendar taken away for two years. I would ask the woman I spoke with what this meant. One sorority woman I spoke with told me that, “a sorority’s social calendar is a big deal!” “If there isn’t a social calendar there is virtually no interaction with men, and then women don’t want to rush the sorority.”

On October 25th 2006 the Delta Delta Delta, issued an apology for Tacos and Tequila. For many, the apology was too little too late. The apology was not sent out to the entire campus as a mass mail but was sent to the multicultural fraternity and sorority councils, and it was printed in the school newspaper. How do you apologize to all Latinas and people of color everywhere? Apologies driven by shame or self concern are futile unless they are agitate the
apologizers to act to stop this type of harm from perpetration—which means transforming the root cause of the issue.

Weeks before the Halloween protest, pictures of the Tacos and Tequila party were disseminated across campus primarily through email. In the pictures, sorority and fraternity members wore “wife beater” t-shirts. Some young women wore Mexican flags as skirts while young men toted gardening tools to add “character” to their costumes. As one student told me about the pictures, “You had the desecration of the Mexican flag, it was ripped up and stuff. You had the romanticization of Catholicism in connection with Latinas/Latinos. You had the Virgin Mary posted on the America flag.” The theme of the party was to dress up as “Mexican” and these images in their costumes were the outcome.

Among students, the pregnant-Latina costume was talked about the most. Their actions reduced the depth of struggles of Mexicana/Chicana/Latina women in the United States against the stereotypes of self-created poverty through fertility. Bernardo, a student leader on campus said, “The concentration on her, the woman who dressed up as a pregnant Mexican, allowed other members of the TriDelt to scapegoat her and not acknowledge that this was a theme.” He went on to say, “it’s kind of like a linguistic trick, a slight of hand, I would say, for the conversation to revolve around her.” When he talked to members of the fraternity and sorority they told him,

yeah, and the girl that did it[the pregnant Latina costume], yeah she was so stupid and she was so dumb and people don’t like her and she’s just an idiot.’ And the concentration’s on her, right? [It] is what makes it not as bad. Still bad, but you know, that’s who you should really focus your blame on, not on the meta level issue of racism perhaps, but this girl, her stupidity, and her individualism and characteristics within that.

In this quote Bernardo suggests that members of the sorority shifted their focus on this one sorority sister because it absolves the entire sorority from blame for the party. Bernardo does not
accept her as a way to dismiss the intentionality of the entire sorority and fraternity. He does not think that the Pregnant Latina costume was the worst costume at the party. Further yet it seems that ranking costumes from bad to worst is not an important exercise. He believed that all of the costumes were offensive for different reasons. It is evidence like this that makes me question, years later, whether or not the tri-delts or other people on campus understood the historical context of these representations and why they are so problematic. Kristin, as sorority woman confirmed Bernardo’s sentiment. When she first heard about Tacos and Tequila she said,

   I was like, “what? Are you kidding me? Who does that?” I was appalled. I thought it was terrible. From what I heard it wasn't the whole, everybody dressed up like that. But I’d be pissed off as hell by those few idiots who decided to make a mockery of it and giving their house such a negative reputation.

Even though she was appalled by the theme party, she still pointed out the actions that reflected a few individuals instead of the entire sorority. Similar to Bernardo’s experience and/or interpretation, students were quick to blame the actions of an individual few, instead of thinking about how these events are a product of a racist society. As an aside, Kristin was clear that she would not rush the triDelts. “I know that when I went through rush the next year they were at the bottom of my list because I figured that if there is a sorority that thinks it’s acceptable to do that I don’t want any part of it.”

   This was not, the first time nor would it be the last time a racial theme party would occur on campus. In a neoliberal climate that values individualism over social or collective rights (Harvey 2005), is it any surprise that students can easily deny the pervasiveness of racism? Some students heard or experienced similar events or costumes at the U of I or at parties they attended at other schools across the nation. In 2006 college racial theme parties were documented as an ongoing trend. For example, on Halloween of 2004 I was riding the bus to/from campus and a white male passenger had his face painted black and wore a black and white jail outfit with a
curly-haired wig. They sell these costumes at our local costume shop—as they are sold in costume shops across the country. They sell “Mexican” costumes as well. A few students on the bus were muttering, and he looked uncomfortable.

Many of the students I spoke with during my research recounted their experiences with racial theme parties. Even after the Racism, Power, and Privilege forum and the institutional responses to step-up ‘diversity efforts’ these acts of racial gate-keeping were still a common practice. One of the students I spoke with, Harry, witnessed Blackface in the dorms in the fall of 2008. He said Harry witnessed an incident of blackface in the dorms. One of the students was in blackface and two were dressed as what Harry called, “Mexican Bambinos.” Harry described them as wearing sombreros and panchos. He was initially shocked, then he became angry. What he witnessed was the white man in black face, along with the two men dressed as Mexicans, chasing the white male who was acting out his escape from them. Horace, an administrator reminded me about the other theme parties that occurred after Tacos and Tequila. He said, “We had the Jamaican bobsledding team” in fall 2007 and the theme party “come as your own stereotype” party. These parties are acts of racial gate-keeping designed to police the boundaries of whiteness, of racial inclusion and acceptability.

In February of 2008, the academic year following the Tacos and Tequila party, the Triangle Fraternity hosted a party in their house in which each of the three floors had a different theme. The theme party on one floor was “Compton.” Pictures from this party made it to mid-level campus administrators. They also circulated on campus list-serves. These photos disturbed the campus just as much as Tacos and Tequila. In the photos, men pointed faux machine and hand-guns at the heads of female and male partygoers. The women and the men smiled and posed. In spring of 2006 there was a “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros” party hosted by a
campus fraternity. The growing and continuous evidence of these events marked a change in circulation of these images in a new wave of social networking technology. As a result of the cyber documentation and circulation of these racial-theme costume parties, new forms of campus resistance emerged. The circulation of photos on Facebook provoked a large crowd of resisters/protestors where there were not as many before. It also challenged some deeply held beliefs that forms of blatant racism were a thing of the past. In fact, my research shows that racial theme parties with overt acts of racism are a consistent and pervasive part of campus culture among the predominantly white sorority and fraternity system at the U of I, specifically the Inter-fraternity Council and Pan-Hellenic Council.

What’s wrong with racial stereotypes? They’re just jokes!

Regardless of the frequency of similar events, students on campus were most taken aback by the Delta Delta Delta women who had stuffed their shirts in order to appear pregnant. For Latinas on campus in particular, these representations degraded and marginalized the Latina/o community. Bernardo said, “You had the gardener, you had the pregnant mother and those are harped upon…and you talk to some of these people in the fraternities and they say oh man, if it just wasn’t for that pregnant mother, we would have been fine, NO THOUGH! There’s things that were worse than those.” He went on to recount other costumes and images evoked at the party. Bernardo went on to explain why Tacos and Tequila was not about one costume. He grappled with and explained why the party was about so much more,

You had “illegal immigrants” and that invokes all types of notions of what we think a citizen is—What is American!? What does a democracy mean for the non-citizen, for the immigrant, right? How does that critique our very notions of selfhood. Why we are in a public institution.
I mean people don’t understand that there are all these meta levels of some of these conceptions or the underground labor—we’re having a financial crisis, right—and we still have, ah, in certain places, recently, two Indonesians were found in a mansion as slaves to a wealthy well-to-do unassuming couple.

We don’t think about these issues. [So when someone would say to him] “Well, we don’t think this is a big deal”, and you have only that pathological production of knowledge there, than that’s your encounter with it. That’s what you know.

For Bernardo, “That pathological production” was Tacos and Tequila. This speaks to the heart of neoliberal multiculturalism that attempts to turn people into uncritical subjects that do not recognize how power and privilege operate. They do not recognize that power and privilege operate in relationship to whiteness. Neoliberal multiculturalism empties racism from its historical context. It does this work through neoliberal economic legal doctrine that frames the law as neutral. This is in direct contradiction to the work of CRT scholars.

Skeptics of racial realism may concede that the University of Illinois, a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), like many public research universities in the Mid-west, is a white space but may disagree that the institution actually fosters white supremacy. Kevin Brown (1993), Tara J. Yosso (2005), and other critical race studies scholars flesh out the links between culture and educational policies and practices. In this way, anthropology tells us that people cannot live without culture, which allows us to make sense of the world. Culture informs how we interpret the world. Kevin Brown (1993) states, “Culture necessarily influences the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of individuals in public schools” (881). One of the challenges is thus to transform dominant cultural sense-making.

Applying anthropological and other cultural studies research to research on race and racism, Brown (1993) explains that if our cultural sense-making is infused with racist stereotypes of African Americans, it will affect our personal and professional decision making as teachers, lawyers, presidents, CEOs, non-profit workers, or any other position we occupy. I attempt to
demonstrate how this is possible, in this section of my dissertation. The reason why I focus my research on higher education is because the college experience may profoundly affect how students understand, experience, and interpret the world. I believe in the potential to do and undo racial damage. Brown explains why it is an important battleground for racial equity, if not the most important battleground. In this next section, I draw from the work of Women of Color Feminists to explain how racial stereotypes, if unchecked, contribute to real, physical harm toward communities of color—something that people of color know through experience but white folks with privilege always question and deny.

**The Pregnant Latina Stereotype**

The representations of Latinas in Tacos and Tequila position Latinas/Chicanas as having less than full cultural citizenship (Rosaldo 1994) in college and more generally, the United States. Anna Nieto Gomez might refer to the representations in Tacos and Tequila as sexual racist oppression (1994) in which the intersections of race, gender, class, and sex produce and reinforce stereotypical representations of Latinas/Chicanas. In this section I explore the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality of not only the sorority women on campus, but also the portrayal of Latina sexuality as a costume for white women, (in the introduction I discuss and nuance whiteness and my use of the racial category, white). I do so to underline what stereotypes students learn informally on campus and how that affects the everyday life of Anglos and Latinos once they leave campus. Managing racial risk without a substantive investment in debunking racial stereotypes and promoting racial fairness for a multiracial democracy causes real harm to us as a people, for years to come.
In *Conquest* Andrea Smith wrote, “Sexual violence has served as a tool of colonialism and white supremacy” (2005:137). In the same way that some expressions of racism are understood as more or less severe, so too are some expressions of sexual violence. A common Anti-Chief/Pro-Indigenous slogan on campus is “Racial Stereotypes Dehumanize.” Stereotypes of women, in this instance, Latinas as hyper-fertile baby-machines, dehumanize Latinas in ways that make sexual violence seem less severe. In a national climate in which politicians and others play upon the fears of “take-over” of an “American” way of life by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, these stereotypes contribute to violence against Latina women. When a group of people is dehumanized, their lives are valued less. Crimes against their humanity or personhood do not receive the same outrage. In Elena R. Gutierrez’s book *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women’s Reproduction* (1974), Gutierrez refers to more than 180 cases of forced sterilization in Southern California of African American women and Latinas, specifically Mexican-Origins women due to racial stereotypes. These are just some of the many instances in which the sexual rights of Latina and African-American women are denied. Who has the right to determine what will or will not happen to your body? That right was systematically denied to Mexican-Origin women in Los Angeles because of racial stereotypes of Latinas as hyper-fertile conquistadors trying to out-pace the reproduction of “American” (read white) women. Gutierrez’s critical legal research shows how ideological and moralistic notions of the cultural causes of global ills (such as over-population), combined with notions of the cultural inferiority of Mexican-origin women impact medical practice. Gutierrez’s interviews with medical staff reveal how both individual and collective consensus on the imagined hyper-sexuality and over-fertility of third-world women, definitively influenced their decisions to coerce sterilization or do so without consent. Gutierrez states that, “a confluence of concerns about overpopulation, illegal
immigration, and dwindling social services generated a proliferation of discourses that targeted Mexican-origin women and their prolific childbearing practices as a social problem” (52). How we think about one another matters in ways that have severe consequences for people’s lives.

Tacos and Tequila was not only about targeting the sexuality of Mexican-origin women and fertility as a societal ill, but about the targeting of Mexican-origin peoples as a group, as a problem/threat to white society. The framing of Mexican women has lasting consequences. These are concerns shared by people in Champaign-Urbana. In 2011 the Champaign County sheriff unilaterally decided to opt-into “Secure Communities,” a deportation program that requires local law enforcement to run fingerprints of anyone suspected of being undocumented through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement database (ICE). ICE has a long-history of detaining and deporting citizens and non-citizens alike that has escalated under the “Secure Communities” program. Although the U.S.-Mexico Border is far away from Champaign County, Illinois, the politics of racial stereotypes matter here. Racial stereotyping of brown people as “undocumented” could and does lead to profiling and makes everyday life much more difficult. U.S. Citizens of Mexican heritage have been and will continue to be detained and deported because they are stereotyped as foreign (Arredondo 2004).

**Everyday Racial Theme Parties**

In the eyes of the Tacos and Tequila party-goers, as portrayed in their costume-representations, Mexican-origin peoples are second class citizens. At the same time, however, their stereotypical representations of Mexicans were inflected by classed, racialized, sexualized and gendered discourses evidenced by the fact that party goers dressed up as farm-workers and pregnant women. What does it mean that party-goers depicted Mexican women as “pregnant”?
Previous interventions by feminist-anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo and Sherry Ortner in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there is a supposition by these students that relies on sexual and racial biological determinism. It is not only that women are perceived as closer to nature and men to culture, but women of color specifically are being positioned as closer to nature than the white women who are mocking them thus asserting their “superior” racial and class position. Thus, women of color are considered less-than human, merely “costumes” for entertainment.

Over the course of my research, I went out to the local campus bars. On one such night I was on a bar-crawl—an event where students go from bar to bar on a strict time-line so as to get as many visits in as possible. Outside of one of the campus-town bars, I noticed that the four women in front of me were dressed up in costume. Two were dressed as “Native American” princesses. They had on short dresses of a brown tweedy look, and pony-tails in their hair, with fake brightly colored feathers, and “war paint” under their eyes. I was about to strike up a conversation with them, but the two women realized they forgot something and left. I approached the two other women and asked them a few questions. I asked them if they were at the bar for some sort of theme party. Both women said yes. One woman was wearing a Toga-like costume and said she was “Greek.” The other was dressed like the equator (she had written equator on a piece of tape and taped herself around her belly). They said they were attending an exchange party and the theme was “Around the World.”

I went inside where some acquaintances were waiting. Upstairs there was the private “exchange” party of the fraternity and sorority. Several men were wearing the “Mexican” sombrero costumes sold in costume stores everywhere. I went outside about 45 minutes later to wait for a friend to pick me up. As I waited, I noticed two other women standing outside - both in costume. I asked one of the women if she was going to the party. Her friend walked away to get
something. She said yes. I then asked her what the theme was. She said “Around the World.” Then I asked her what she was. She responded “I’m Africa”… “it was the best I could do” she said with a shrug, and then went back to texting. She was wearing a black shirt and a sarong with a navy blue, black, and yellow print.

Years after Tacos and Tequila what lessons have we chosen to learn as a campus? According to the vignettes demonstrated above, White women play a critical role in racial gatekeeping. As Ann Stoler points out in her research on gendered relations in colonial Asia, white women do not have the same systematic access to resources as men. This does not excuse their racism or racial practices, but it is important to get a nuanced analysis of their position in relation to white men and people of color. The same is true for circumstances at UIUC. In reading Ann Stoler’s work, I believe that the women participants in these racial theme parties are serving a similar purpose now as they did in colonial Asia- as gatekeepers of raced, gendered, and classed hierarchies. This section does not center the experiences of white women in my research as anthropologist Christine Gray does (Gray 2000) in Gender Matters: Rethinking Michelle Z. Rosaldo. White Women display an investment in whiteness through their participation in these parties. Instead of seeing the group participation as indicative of broader structures of racism and oppression, far too often administrators focus on the individual actions of these women in order to mislead an analysis of larger social structures that are in operation. For example, university administrators may do so if they want to evade liability and deep analysis of these actions. It is through a consideration of the intersectionality of identity and lived experience that theoretical insights and practical applications may emerge. Administrators focus on individual actions in isolation instead of how these racist practices are enabled by university policy or legal doctrine.
and thus teach students how to manage racial risk by focusing on individual actions instead of broader structures of commonality.

The University is a critical site for communicating values and modeling behavior such as racial risk management. As a scholar, what has always struck me about analysis such as these, is that one of the shared experiences of the doctors and nurses or perpetrators of these attempts at genocide (i.e. forced sterilization) is they all have gone through institutions of higher education. David Harvey, in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* emphasizes the place of the academy in the spread of neoliberal ideologies globally. He said, “The importance of this should not be underestimated. The US research universities were and are training ground for many foreigners who take what they learn to back to their countries of origin…” I agree with Harvey but I am principally concerned with how students learn and apply these theories everyday in the United States. Students learn these neoliberal racial risk management practices at the University and then go into public and private industries where they apply what they have learned in order to contribute to neoliberal management that creates third-world subjects in the first world (Vargas 2006). They share that institutional experience—a topic that I further explore in the chapter on shame and solutions.

**Racial evasion: White people don’t have ‘culture’**

In this section, I show how students were made to feel after these events. I also show that whiteness, as an unmarked racial and ethnic affiliation allows students and administrators to police boundaries by marking those who are not white or have a marked racial or ethnic affiliation. Students who had friendships with TriDelt women felt those friendships change. After Tacos and Tequila, racial-risk emerged in some inter-racial interactions. One student on campus,
Bernardo, felt he had developed close or at least friendly relationships with some of the women of TriDelta. Bernardo also heard about the sorority prior to really knowing its members. He said that they embody that institutional presence of who sorority women are. It was only after Tacos and Tequila that he became disheartened, more so by his encounters with them after their actions were called out as racist. He told me that when he would see them on campus, they would hardly meet his “hello” with acknowledgment. As he recalled his encounter with one woman in particular, “She thinks she knows how I’m going to react by the color of my skin.” Before Tacos and Tequila, he was greeted with conversation; after the Tacos and Tequilas incident, he felt rebuffed with a wave and half-smile. His interactions with them after the incident were almost painfully awkward.

Although members of this sorority and college students in general, want or try to be color-blind or race-neutral, not acknowledging race does not necessitate equal or even cordial treatment. In this instance the risks of confronting a particular racial reality were assessed and one of the outcomes was the avoidance of this particular student of color. For Bernardo’s friend, the Tacos and Tequila incident framed this entire interaction because he was a man of color. There was a very personal interaction that left him frustrated even a year later.

For some sorority women, Tacos and Tequila was a terrible incident. Sarah, a leader on campus involved in Greek government told me that stereotypes among the Greek System are not only a campus concern, but also a national concern that sororities are constantly trying to debunk. Sarah was actively engaged in Greek government before and after Tacos and Tequila. When we spoke, she told me that stereotypes are one of her major concerns on campus. In fact, the lack of diversity within the Greek system is the most common “stereotype” she combats—
although she later explains that there is actually a real lack of diversity in the Greek system. I asked Sarah what kind of stereotypes she combats. She said,

Well, in terms of this day, what’s most relevant would probably be our lack of diversity. And I think that that does stem from lack of representation of a bunch of different cultures in our organizations. And while all the councils, UGC, BGC, Pan-Hellenic- where we’re all accepting of different cultures and backgrounds, in terms of recruiting new membership, just the way our campus is designed that [diversity within each council] doesn’t always happen. And it’s much more individual into what people feel is most fitting as to what they’re going to get as the most beneficial experience that they want out of college...

...A lot of it too is just historical. When people see our councils and just visually see, ‘oh these are Caucasians, those are African Americans, Latinas/Latinos are in this organization, um, they see that but they don’t understand the background behind our organizations... People who aren’t Greek and don’t know that history behind it, um, don’t understand that these aren’t meant to separate us, they’re meant to just provide each other with more appropriate resources.

Sarah told me that there are historical reasons why there is a Black Greek Council and United Greek Council and that those matter for recruitment and retention. Sarah also said that she doesn’t believe all students know there are four Greek councils on campus. It is up to each individual chapter to orient students to Greek life and not all of them do so in a context outside of their chapter. The U of I has one of the largest Greek Communities in the nation. In fact, the Fraternity and Sorority affairs website boast that we have “the largest number of members in the Greek Community on any college campus.”

There are 95 Greek Chapters on campus composed of 36 sororities and 59 fraternities. Of these organizations, 10 are historically African American, 11 are Latina/o, five are Asian-American, two South Asian, and five multicultural chapters. The other 62 chapters are not racially, ethnically, or religiously demarcated on the website. There are over 6,850 undergraduates in the Greek System. For the purposes of this research I do not go in depth on my analysis of how the Greek system operates on a college campus. That’s an entirely different
research project. What is important to the current study, however, is that the Greek system is big, and mostly segregated, due to historical reasons. What I find interesting in Sarah’s comments are that she easily calls upon history to excuse the current segregation of sororities and fraternities, despite the fact that when people of color call upon that history to explain a long-term legacy of neglect, they are rebuked.

In our conversation about Tacos and Tequila, Sarah stated, “You realize you took just twenty steps backwards for stereotypes against sorority women.” Sarah does not apply this analysis as easily to the implications for the Latinos stereotypes in these parties. Instead her experience centers white women. Ariel is another sorority member who is sensitive to stereotypes because she is stereotyped as a Greek student, as a “sorority girl.” Ariel identifies as a Latina from Chicago. As a member of a sorority, she encounters a lot of stereotypes based on her sexuality. Specifically, women in her sorority often encounter the stereotype that they will have sex with anyone or that they are “loose,” sexually speaking. She does not like to be stereotyped as a sorority woman. She thought that Tacos and Tequila was really offensive, but she “kind of” agrees that the whole sorority shouldn’t be blamed for the actions of a few. Ariel was not the only sorority sister I spoke with to mention a sensibility towards stereotypes based on how she felt stereotyped as a sorority girl. Where is the concern or empathy over the damages done to communities of color? How much harm is done to our communities over the years?

For some women who were members of the sororities on campus, the recognition of racial theme parties as part of the sorority experience was embarrassing. I spoke with less than ten women in depth who were also members of Panhellenic sororities on campus. In general, the feeling among the women I spoke with was that fraternity men experience less scrutiny for their actions on campus. Women are more likely to be seen wearing their letters because they are
bigger consumers of items that would allow them to wear their letters, like purses or bags, and because they usually order them as a group.

The student party-goers responses to the protest that appeared in the paper and at student meetings suggests that the Delta Delta Delta women took the brunt of the burden, publicly, for these events. They see their experiences as consumers rather than as products of a neoliberal gender management. They call for and take personal, individual, responsibility—a neoliberal solution that will never fix a systemic, collective problem.

“Anti-Racist Racist” = culture-less

What is further intriguing about Tacos and Tequila is that some party-goers did not consider their actions to be racist and would never view themselves as such. Bernardo said “everybody cares nobody wants to be racist.” For Bernardo there was still questions: “its just an understanding of what constitutes racism. There were huge discrepancies.” There were discrepancies on what racism is. He went on to say that “We had conversations on why there should be an African American home coming. We had conversations about why there should be the cultural centers. They don’t get it.” And yet they do get it, right? Sarah just explained how historical reasons lead to different fraternities and sororities for people of color. For some reason for most college students that logic does not extend to the cultural centers.

They are “anti-racist racists,” an identity and practice that is becoming more prominent in U.S. society where people argue not only that they are unsusceptible to race but that the history of racial oppression and privilege in this country no longer matters because they do not believe themselves liable as individuals to be racist. In other words, if they can’t see race, then they cannot be racist. Unlike the term “colormute” (Pollock 2004) or “colorblind” that Barbara Applebaum (2006) critiques for its use of “disability related language,” anti-racist racist is
agentive and centers intentionally racist behavior. It is a term that describes the action involved in “not seeing race.” Further, “anti-racist racist” gets directly to the harm being done. It de-centers the perpetrator’s view of racism (choosing to not see race) and centers the effect of viewing racism through the perpetrator’s viewpoint (perpetrating and de-politicizing anti-racism). De-politicizing multiculturalism through ahistorical analysis is also part of the project of Neoliberal practices that push race-neutral policies as a way to seek racial justice. We know from Critical Race Theorists and work by other scholars like Dr. Christopher Span (remember the equation in the introduction) that racial neutrality does not equal racial justice. Not seeing race or keeping race hidden keeps these students unaccountable for their actions and their actions’ subsequent impact. In other words, the anti-racist racist masks/hides racism by actively hiding, erasing, or denying the racist intentions and/or results of their actions. This identity is closely linked with the racial risk-management strategies I outlined before. Racism is always hidden even while it is perpetrated. In this instance, racism is enacted through expressions against a particular culture. Tacos and Tequila was not just about a racial group but about mocking Mexican gardeners and Mexican women (who are stereotypically depicted as hyper-fertile). There is a socio-economic class dynamic as well. Racism is classed, gendered, and embedded into our cultures. And for the anti-racist racist, that makes all the difference. They are less liable when race is not mentioned because it is harder to unearth the deeper layers of meaning when racism is expressed through cultural, class, or gender superiority. Ignoring how race is present (and it is present even though it’s hidden) serves to de-racialize racism and anti-racism. Ignoring race also devalues how racism is expressed through class, culture, and gender. If University Administrators do not take the time to unravel the complicated meanings in these racist actions, we cannot begin to unravel institutionalized privilege or gate-keeping on college campuses.
The development of the anti-racist racist identity coincides with the continuing expression, expansion, or promotion of neoliberalism multiculturalism within the academy, in that it de-racializes (and de-politicizes) “anti-racist” efforts and what it means to identify as anti-racist. In this context, anti-racist no longer means acting against racism. Instead it means not being intentionally hurtful and offensive when being intentionally racist. In addition, it enables institutions such as the University to be unaccountable for their (in)actions while promoting a multiculturalism rooted in white hegemonic practices. The University aids in producing a population of “anti-racist racists”- groups of people with seemingly conflicting racial logics. For example, anti-racist racists easily claim to be anti-racist but just as easily dress up as racial stereotypes to participate in racial theme parties. Diversity is emptied of its ethical or moral meaning, but made meaningful as a necessity for a globalizing economy. This is shown through the administrators’ response to Tacos and Tequila on campus.

Linking the Actions of Students and Administrators

I witnessed the anti-racist racism at work most acutely in the Illinois Student Senate. At least once a year Illinois Student Senate meetings become a space for heated debate on racism and the Chief. Prior to my official years of dissertation research, I was frequently called to attend one of two senate meetings in which the primary agenda item was a policy or practice related to the mascot. The meetings were very intense. During the public comment session of the meetings, non-senator students would give their opinions/arguments for or against the continued use of Chief Illiniwek as a mascot. After the Tacos and Tequila party, a very outspoken member of the S.T.O.P. (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege) coalition, Chime Osonye, was
elected Student Trustee. He attempted to push for justice as part of the student grass-roots movement.

During the first few meetings I attended, which occurred over the course of two or three years, I sat silently, clapped, or shouted in support of a more seasoned speaker. Beginning in the fall of 2008 I attended student senate meetings on a semi-regular basis. In the Spring of 2010, as I was already transitioning from researching to writing, I was notified that I was elected as a graduate student senator on the Illinois Student Senate. After considering not only what it meant to do “observant participation” but also after having a conversation with one of my advisors about what activist research entails, I decided to participate in the Student Senate as I continued to work on my dissertation.

Following the logic of the University Administration, student participants of Tacos and Tequila under their own management, decided that enough was enough. In this way the victim’s perspective becomes secondary to the perpetrator’s, a maneuver Critical Race Theorists have critiqued as the underpin of the U.S. legal system (Delgado and Stefanic 2001). Just nine days before the protest, Lindsey, a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority wrote a letter in response to the outrage being voiced by student protestors as they became aware of the event. Her letter was published in the *Daily Illini*, the Independent Student Newspaper of the University.

Enough is enough. We know. We made a mistake. We have accepted full responsibility for our actions following an inappropriate party and have expressed our deepest apologies. We are making an effort to educate ourselves. Every day, our hearts are re-broken by the barrage of shame we feel upon seeing ourselves bashed - in the latest news article, opinions column, letter to the editor, cartoon, as the top story on the channel 15 news - we are emotionally drained.

What is interesting to note about the first paragraph is the subject of harm—it is not the community who was mocked, but the party-goers themselves who are now harmed. They are
harmed because they are being called racist—because their actions were racist and they now have to deal with that representation, that they are reframing as a stereotype. Although the students in the sorority house, along with their fraternity counterparts, organized Tacos and Tequila, perpetuating racist representations, they reject the outrage of the communities impacted and their understanding or perspective on the harm done. Further, Lindsey positions the responsibility as hers and not part of a larger system of university culture, Greek life, or society in general. In effect, even the Tri-Delts release the University from any responsibility in producing racist students. What is clear is that the racial events on campus have an effect on the entire community. The alternative interpretation of the party by Latina/o and African-American students and activists on campus (i.e. as racist) caused a rupture in how party-goers self-identify politically as anti-racist. The letter continues:

If you continue to judge me and my sisters and our character as members of a sorority, continue to place stereotypes on the Greek system, then you are no better than anyone else on this campus who plays into stereotypes and prior judgment.

Again, the creators of the theme party are at the center of her narrative. However, what is particularly important is her definition of racism. Although Lindsey never mentions race, the sorority was facing this scrutiny because their actions were racist. In equating the impact of the racial theme party to the experiences of her and her fellow sorority members, she reveals her definition of racism as “stereotypes and prior judgment.” There is no historical context of discrimination of Latinas/os in the U.S., nor is there an analysis of power. What is more problematic is that Lindsay is angry she is framed as racist. She feels that it is an unwarranted stereotype even though she and her sisters intentionally planned and participated in a racist party. Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997) asserts that this type of definition, a power-neutral definition, is one of prejudice, not of racism. Tatum states that racism is “not only a personal ideology based
on racial prejudice, [but also] a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals” (7). For an action to be racist, there has to be a power dynamic.

Additionally, in a 2008 article by Stephanie Fryberg et. al. on stereotype threats and their impact on school-age American Indian children, Fryberg uses Lippman’s (1922) definition of stereotypes—“pictures in the head of the world beyond our reach” (209). For Lindsay, stereotyping TriDelta sorority sisters for their role in Tacos and Tequila is the equivalent of degrading Mexicans, a community of people who at the moment are being subjected to extreme racial hostility that includes ICE raids, forced deportation, racial profiling, and the separation of families. However, there are very important group-level distinctions between the impact of stereotyping sorority sisters and Mexicans or Mexican-Americans. In media and popular culture, there are diverse representations of white people and white culture. In my many conversations with students on campus about theme parties, I often encountered the retort, “what if we had a ‘white-trash’ party” or “we have white trash parties too.” This mockery of poor whites just serves to confirm a sense of elitism. For Latinas/os, African Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians, these representations are far fewer, less diverse, and more simplistic. There are many more diverse representations of White people and whiteness than there are of people of color. Peggy McIntosh (1988) considers one of the invisible privileges of whiteness to be “I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group” (2). In other words, what some white people do is not used to judge and define all white people.

Racism, as Lindsay describes it, resides in individual actions. She does not define it through power or group ideologies of the university in particular, or society in general. For her, only the students who participated in the Tacos and Tequila party should be held accountable,
not the entire sorority. Power dynamics on campus are not part of Lindsay’s definition of racism or sexism. In fact, it was only the sorority women who were speaking out about being targeted by pranks—not the fraternity. (Although both later alleged harassment in the aftermath of Tacos and Tequila.) As a participant observer on campus, I noticed that the male participants were never subjected to verbal assault and pranks. Lindsay centers her perspective as a sorority member, but in her letter, addresses the gendered nature of the attacks. As Lindsay grapples with her ideas about accountability, it may be helpful for her to center the victim’s perspective and the harm done to groups of people, for example, Latinas/os and Chicanas/os, historically racialized populations, women, and the campus community. (For an analysis of the impact of stereotypes see Fryberg et.al. 2008.)

Additionally, Lindsay’s letter suggests that the solution to the problem is to “promote acceptance across the campus” through education. In other words, students need to be told that mocking people’s cultures is wrong, hurtful, and racist and that it perpetuates racist stereotypes and ideologies. Who is supposed to tell students that racism is wrong? The University? Society? Coincidently, both the University Administration and Lindsey perform a similar response to the events. Perhaps this suggests that Lindsay is also working within the definition or framework of racism as articulated by the University, that to name “race” or “racism,” (i.e. to talk about it) is itself racist and contributes to the problem, not the solution. Following this logic, to racialize cultural practices is not wrong since “race” is never mentioned. What is also ironic is that we can’t educate or learn about racism if we can’t talk about it. Anthropologists and critical race scholars have documented this aversion to naming race (Pollock 2004; Crenshaw et al 2005). I believe it suggests that students learn how to respond “responsibly” according to a neoliberal multicultural logic from observing the University’s response to events. That is, they learn to
practically apply a logic of neoliberal multiculturalism in the actions they take in response to
their own acts of racism. They learn risk-management strategies designed to keep race and
racism hidden. So we must ask, what has the University taught its students about the seriousness
of racism in its public response and subsequent action or inaction to these events?

Lindsay continues to assert in her letter that the women of her sorority are being
sanctioned. Racism, what for many is a matter of social responsibility at a public institution, is
positioned as a private matter for the sorority.

We are already inflicting punishments upon ourselves and receiving punishments from
the University and our executive office. This is an opportunity for education and
campus-wide awareness, not to turn around the recent events, but for us to accept fault
and hope for something like this never again to occur. I ask for your support in uniting
this campus, not your hindrance. [Lindsay Kordik 2006]

For Lindsay the self-inflicting “punishments” are enough. She is ready to move on, an option
that students of color do not as easily have. Dr. Raven’s experience confirms this as one of the
privileges of whiteness. She said, “Many individuals in these systems don’t, I mean have the
privilege to not have to understand these issues at all. And so they can opt-out at any time.”

Following the corporate management logic, the Tri-Delts would discipline themselves and by so
doing learn about “diversity” productively. Although I do not condone the pranks (e.g. ding-
donk-ditch, etc.), the student protestors wanted a greater involvement in the process. The victims
are not included in the decisions about the appropriateness of the “punishment” or “education” of
the sorority or fraternity. Critical race theorists like Alan Freedman (1995) point out that in the
U.S., racism is constantly addressed from the perpetrator’s perspective, not the victim’s. The
perpetrator’s perspective used in the legal system, according to Freedman, serves only to
“neutralize the inappropriate conduct of the perpetrator” (29) and in so doing negates the deep
investment in racial hierarchies, thereby rendering the perpetrator’s perspective useless in
actually ending racism. The U.S. legal system has always centered this perspective, and so does the TriDelta sorority. In her letter, Lindsay then takes fault for her sorority, suggesting that it is time to move forward. A move, I argue, that is an attempt to forget the shame of being called racist.

My attempts to speak with members of the Delta Delta Delta sorority over the past few years were unfruitful. In an email exchange, the sorority declined to meet with me regarding the nature of my research. They stated:

While we as a Greek chapter understand the need for a dialogue on racism, we would like to thoughtfully decline from participating in your research. Tacos and Tequila has impacted us in a very positive way and we have taken many steps to diversify ourselves individually as a chapter. From this, however, we wish not to be labeled or categorize ourselves as a "Greek community" in terms of racism. When it comes to race and racism, we are not a "Greek community" we are a student body and must act against racism together and not single out any particular group.

—The Women of Delta Delta Delta

Neither members of the sorority nor the dean of fraternity and sorority affairs were willing to speak with me in depth about Tacos and Tequila. The sorority respectfully declined to participate whereas the dean did not even respond to my emails. Although the sorority was not particularly forthcoming, it is important to note that they did speak publicly on a few occasions, which I was able to utilize in my research. A few members came to La Casa Cultural Latina on the anniversary of the incident. Others agreed to be interviewed by local activists. However, in the three years since Tacos and Tequila I have not heard of the participating fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau, speaking publicly about the party. This is important to note.

In general, the majority of people with whom I talked remembered the participating sorority, and not the fraternity. What happened to the fraternity? One administrator I spoke with did tell me that the fraternity did receive sanctions and also went through trainings from the Program on Intergroup Relations (PIR). He said,
The fraternity had to work through a lot after the event. The fraternity felt under-siege and re-victimized. It’s something they had to work through. It was a Jewish fraternity so many of them had an understanding of being othered but also had the opportunity to explore their economic, sexual and other privilege. It was an opportunity to think about whiteness particularly for ethnic-whites who have become integrated, some more or less successfully. *It’s like mandatory development.* (emphasis added)

The fraternity did receive a lot of social stigma after the event. Their house was vandalized and their experiences around campus, like the sorority, were marked by their actions in Tacos and Tequila. It was an important teachable moment. Another administrator, Horace, told me that, “At that moment, they [the fraternity and sorority] had enough social and political pressure to do some reflection. For some, it was probably really meaningful, and for others it was probably an exercise, and for others still it was probably offensive.”

This is an important lesson for activists and organizers. Oftentimes our solutions must reside outside of the law or policy. We must think creatively. What if part of our strategy was to move white-students to shift the burden for racial gate-keeping back onto the University or back to the U.S. Government? In an era where no one wants to be wrong or embarrassed, we must use “social and political pressure” to encourage people to be accountable for their actions when they are out of line with their stated shared values. We can use these same measures on campus administrators because they do profess these values in their strategic plan. I state more on this in my conclusion.
CHAPTER FOUR

SHIFTING RACIAL RISK, SHIFTING RACIAL BURDENS

In this chapter I show how neoliberal economic practices operate within the University in a way similar to a multinational corporation with a factory in the third-world. Neoliberal economic practices world-wide shift risk towards the most vulnerable people—third world workers, even those that reside in the first world. Under neoliberalism, institutions manage risks—financial, legal, and other forms of culpability—by shifting these burdens to the people who already shoulder the most risk (Mathews 2005). According to Biju Mathew, in his book *Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City*, the central to the neoliberal economics practice is “…its logic of shifting risk downward to those who have the least power within the system” (2005:81). As Mathew explains, “When a credit card company outsources its marketing, customer support, and billing to the Third World call center, there is nothing left in the First World except the profits” (2005:81). I argue, in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, that the same is true at the U of I and in universities across the country. Mathew goes on to give another example of neoliberal economic practices at work, “When a Third World farmer produces cash crops for a First World multinational under the logic of leased farming, the risk of crop failure and prices gluts are all pushed down to the impoverished farmer in rural Peru or India” (2005:81). As a system of governance, neoliberalism supports a free-market economy without considerations for the health or well-being of people or groups of people. Although students, faculty, and administrators of color at the U of I are still very privileged, the operation
of neoliberal economic practices is very similar. In this chapter I show how this operates at the U of I specifically, and in higher education generally.

At the University, shifting racial-risk is a neoliberal management strategy that moves the burden of substantively addressing moments of racial rupture in the campus climate, because of overt acts of racism, away from the university as a system, and onto individual students, faculty, and administrators. The burden and work is shifted away from institutions that have the power and resources to address systemic racism onto those who have the least capacity to end racism—individuals. Historically, these institutions had the responsibility for communicating societal values, and they still do. Schools as institutions have always had the responsibility to communicate societal values. When schools do not address racism as a challenge to a multiracial democracy, we can ask whether or not as a society we value democracy. Shifting racial risk renders the risk and burden of addressing racism, publicly or otherwise, on the protestors, in my case here by predominantly students of color—an already marked population at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), an institution that serves a majority white-student population. The results of neoliberal economic practices in the University are similar to the results for a corporation, all that matters is the profit.

**Navigating Liability, Shifting Risk**

During the 2006 Tacos and Tequila incident, an upper-level University Administrator, Chancellor Richard Herman, struggled with what many university administrators appear to struggle with, namely negotiating the charge to take action against such harmful offenses while not becoming *liable* for trampling students’ rights of free speech. Herman, like other administrators, manages racial-risk. This excerpt is from then-Chancellor Richard Herman’s
letter to the campus after Tacos and Tequila. Like a corporation or CEO, the University Administration’s primary concern is the University’s legal liability.

Although I’m not in the business of telling students how to think, I expect more of our Illinois students. They are the best and the brightest of the next generation, and such callous behavior is beneath them. The challenges of our multi-cultural society demand that each of us constantly examine our biases and work hard to put ourselves in the shoes of people who come from widely varying backgrounds, cultures and experiences. We can have strong and differing opinions about culture, politics and policy, but we must never lose touch with granting everyone the kind of respect and dignity we would like others to grant to us. Everyone of every background is welcome at Illinois, and I want them to feel welcome.

Herman’s words makes clear that the University is not going to step on party-goers first amendment rights to free speech—that’s not his job. He is concerned with legality, and more specifically, risk. To Herman, risk equals loss. And his job as the public official of a state funded university is to produce socially responsible citizens who engage in critical thought and make autonomous decisions about the world. Or is it? In an age of advanced corpratization of the University, in which risk equals loss and some kinds of research are king because of its potential to generate revenue for corporations and the University, the job of a public official may now be to protect profit at the ultimate value.

Earlier in the Chancellor’s response to Tacos and Tequila he said “Students who took party in such behavior were being insensitive, thoughtless, and quite frankly, juvenile.” Although students put time and effort into organizing a theme party and into their costumes, they are portrayed as “thoughtless” acts. Most insidious is the maneuver that frames twenty-something college students as “juvenile.” It negates the intention of the students, the seriousness of the harm, and infantilizes the criminality of white college students. It also erases the institutional complicity that university governance, like corporate governance, necessitates an implicit racial order of white privilege and oppression. In the State of Illinois, “juvenille” is defined as someone
between the ages of 10-16 (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority 2004). In a national context where people of color are criminalized at a much earlier age (Roberts 2006), the Chancellor’s use of “juvenile” to describe the racist actions of students between the ages of 18-22 highlights the privileges that come with whiteness. That privilege is marked in contradiction to that of Indigenous peoples on a campus that reveres American Indians as relics of the past. The revere neglects the current context that, “native people are per capita the most arrested, most incarcerated, and most victimized by police brutality of any ethnic group in the country” (Smith 2005:139). The Chancellor’s remarks allude to the privileges of whiteness and the absence of awareness of the different community contexts from which students come to the university.

Tri-Delta and Zeta Beta Tau students planned Tacos and Tequila. By characterizing the student’s actions as “juvenile” the Chancellor’s words further shift racial risk and erases institutional complicity in the racist actions of students. Although university administrators may not directly take on a role of moral guardianship, the statement indicates the not-quite adult status harkens back to In Loco Parentis—the informal stewardship of college-students who were still considered not fully adults. In so doing, white students in the State of Illinois are still juveniles who need protection and training while young men of color are locked up for their juvenile acts, and slapped with records that will follow them for the rest of their lives (Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano 2007).

Herman states that he expects more from students at Illinois, but what exactly are these expectations? Is his goal to end overt acts of racism? Or is it to understand the historical and political context that these racist actions have on multiple communities on campus and throughout the country? In order to face the “challenges of our multi-cultural society” students have to be vigilant of how other people may perceive the world. But for Herman there are no
right and wrong views of the world, only differing opinions that should be equally respected. What’s that old adage? If you stand for nothing, you’ll fall for anything. Herman states: “We can have strong and differing opinions about culture, politics and policy, but we must never lose touch with granting everyone the kind of respect and dignity we would like others to grant to us.” In other words, Herman is saying that students can be racists; it’s ok to hold deeply racist beliefs, just don’t express them or be rude about it. Rudeness is unacceptable (see my chapter \textit{Displacing Racism} where I show that curbing rudeness instead of racism, is in fact a tradition at Illinois.)

Although the University Administration attempts to remain neutral by not telling students what to think, for student protestors it is clear that the University is not a “neutral” place. Although attempts are made to show neutrality, this is an unrealistic and unattainable goal. In attempting to remain neutral on an issue of racism, the University advances an ideology of the University as ahistorical and culture-less. (Again, this ahistorical, culture-less ideology is similar to the colorblind ideology although I choose not to use that term for its lack of agency.)

By shifting the risk away from the University it placed the burden of responding to racism on individual students, faculty, and units of the University. It did so in several ways. In the case of Tacos and Tequila, the University tried to manage racial risk using several management strategies. They tried to shift some of the racial risk towards the Delta Delta Delta (Tri-delts) Sorority and Zeta Beta Tau (ZBTs) Fraternity and away from the University and its values. In an interview with Dr. Smith, he said in regards to Tacos and Tequila, “we have to find a way to work with organizations to police themselves.” Dr. Smith thought that the way to manage the situation was by pushing organizations, specifically the fraternities and sororities to manage themselves. In this way the University is not responsible, legally, for regulating
behavior. When I asked Dr. Smith to say more, he continued, “It’s something that the head of a university can deem important, lend resources to, and put processes in place.” In fact the resources that the sorority and fraternity identified was La Casa Cultural Latina, which is a cultural center, a program designed to serve Latina/o students on campus—not White students. He also said that an administrator could “Use the Bully Pulpit.”

One of the ways the University managed racial risk was through its public statement to the campus. A statement by the University Administration after Tacos and Tequila states that they “expect more” from students at Illinois, but what exactly are these expectations? Is the goal of the University Administration to end overt acts of racism? Or is it to understand the historical and political context that these racist actions have on multiple communities on campus and throughout the country? Or both? The answer to this question lies in deep layers of what we as a society value. Do we value racial equity? Do we value democracy? If so, perhaps the role of the University is to lead by example—a form of In Loco Parentis in which the University Administration models racial risk management strategies. Regardless, the University Administration is in fact leading the campus.

In the University Administration’s public response they made sure to assert that as the administration they are not there to say racism is right or wrong. Another part of the email response from the University Administration finishes by hinting at the potential future action steps that will be taken in response to Tacos and Tequila.

As is so often the case with these kinds of incidents, the ensuing debate is an education in itself. The controversy has spurred a great deal of conversation about treating one another with common decency, and that is good. The process of reviewing the incident is now underway, and I believe a deeper appreciation of our cultural diversity and individual responsibility will be the result. Vice Chancellor Renee Romano has been working with the various groups involved to turn what I believe to have been poor judgment on the part of students into a
learning experience. Already, the controversy has added impetus to our plans to heighten diversity education on campus. (Emphasis mine)

The responsibility for fixing racism is not put on the perpetrators but on “education” that comes from the very people who have been victimized. Specifically, the University Administration names “diversity education” as the future redress for racist actions. As a Latina student and ethnographer, my observant participation on campus over the past several years shows that the first people tapped to be on “diversity education” committees are underrepresented students, faculty, and administrators (Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano 2007). The responsibility falls to under-funded ethnic studies units who are asked to take on the responsibility of “educating” the campus. Again, the University Administration switches how protestors framed the theme party, as a racist action and matter of social responsibility and public accountability for the University, to a private matter for individual Tri-Delts and ZBTs.

Adhering to corporate management practices this shifts legal risks away from the institution to individuals (Giroux 2001; Mathew 2005; Duggan 2003; Mohanty 2003), and the University Administration re-positions racism from public accountability to private responsibility. If students discipline themselves, and the Greek Council composed of students disciplines Delta Delta Delta and Zeta Beta Tao, the University cannot be liable for Free Speech violations. However, if campus leadership cannot even express these actions as racist, students learn to manage and discipline the inevitable racist action, and not to be transformative leaders in an increasingly diverse society. The Administration’s solution is not to express moral outrage and model socially responsible behavior but to educate students who need to learn a corporate etiquette that includes being politically correct (i.e., having no controversial public opinions only private opinions). This maneuver depoliticizes an action even though the action has political
consequences, in this case for the maintenance of racial hierarchies and white hegemony in that extends far beyond the academy.

**Profits and Values**

In order to manage the racially charged decision to retire the Chief, the University shifted itself away from the center of decision-making. When the University retired the Chief, the Board of Trustees (BOT) tried to shift the blame of making an unfavorable decision from the University and onto the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The University shifted the risk associated with making this decision away from the BOT and upper-level administrators and onto the NCAA, which benefits the administration because the upper-level decision-makers who do not want to incur most of the blame for this largely unpopular decision. The University did not want to concede that the Chief was racist and it did not want to tell Chief fans that they were racist. The University was unwilling to take a moral stance against racism. (For more on this point see the chapter *Hiding Racism.*) The BOT did shift the blame on the NCAA and the burden to the campus. The rest of it fell to students and some administrators at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

What was clear from the Board of Trustee’s statement on the Chief retirement was that multiple university stakeholders, including students, alumni, administrators, and community members, were not giving up the Chief. Each decision by the BOT, the Chancellor, the President, and University Legal Services that followed the Chief’s retirement clarified any doubt about the University’s priorities. There were no upper-level administrative calls for a new mascot. The last upper-level administrator who came-out as anti-Chief was forced out of the University (see Nancy Cantor).
The decision-making was strategic racial-risk management. Administrative management of the Chief is a convoluted balance of racial-risk that is also deeply entrenched in University finances. The Chief represents a racial logic that is invested with meaning to the campus and alumni—in part White ownership over the University. The Chief represents white ownership of the university as if the university was property. Legal scholar, Cheryl I. Harris describes this interaction between whiteness and property ownership in her article in the Harvard Law Review, “Whiteness as Property” (1993). Harris points out that race and property were intentionally intertwined in the founding of the United States in order to secure white privilege to own African Americans as slaves and to seize ownership of Native Lands. The law secured these rights and has done so since in nuanced and varied ways. The results has been a sense of entitlement to ownership of anything, property and in the case of Tacos and Tequila the ownership over how a group of people is represented. Harris says “Whites have come to expect and rely on these benefits and over time these expectations have been affirmed, legitimated, and protected by the law.” The forced elimination of the Chief was for financial reasons but the investment in the Chief was for reasons that go beyond profits. Are students and alumni invested in the Chief because of their sense of ownership over the University? Yes. If student and alumni ties are solely in the mascot, it begs the question of whether or not the University gave students an experience they could be invested in, outside of the Chief.

The decision to retire the Chief showed that the University did not stand on any values outside of profit—University Athletics were threatened with the loss of hosting post-season events. The decision was not a stance against racism. Both sides critiqued the BOT’s actions. How could the campus community relate to the values of the University, if the only values the University stood on were profits? Those members of the campus community who did not care,
one way or another, still suffered because without a firm stance on values, the debate continued. The reasons for the maintaining the vestiges of the Chief’s performance, like the *Three-in-One* music, are also financial because the University cares about keeping happy the alumni who are invested in the Chief.

The result of this decision caused more work for multiple groups of students and faculty on campus. In the Spring of 2010 the Illinois Student Senate and Faculty Senate voted on the “Unity Resolution” which called for University Administrators to establish a search committee to decide on a new mascot for the University. Three years after Chief Illiniwek was retired the University had made no progress on establishing a new mascot. The resolution had to explicitly call for a search committee that would find a new mascot that would not link or harken to the imagery of Chief Illiniwek. Students were upset, including members of Students for Chief Illiniwek (SFCI). They felt that the University’s decision to retire the Chief, and the way that it was managed, left opening for the Chief to be resurrected. Is it hard to understand why? For pro-indigenous/Anti-Chief advocates and organizers, the decision did not end the controversy in any meaningful way. Instead of students struggling over whether or not the Chief should be retired, they are now struggling over whether or not the Chief should be resurrected. SFCI still organized the “Next Dance” and coalitions of students groups on campus organized protests, petitions, and senate resolutions in an attempt to end the controversy. It’s relentless and draining. In my ten years at the U of I I’ve witnessed students exhaust their mental and emotional resources strategizing how to maintain or eliminate the Chief. There is no release from the controversy and no unity of healing. Upper-level administrators have failed to take action to restore relationships on campus. In 2012 the Chief is a conflict still to be resolved.
The long and costly process of appealing the NCAA ruling is insightful in this regard. Administrators gave the appearance of fighting the “external” forces who wish to change the racial logic (see Nancy Cantor), they give the appearance of an investment in both pro-Chief and anti-Chief forces, by allowing the vestiges, but not the dance, to remain, and consequently the racial logic that is the original symbolic investment in the Chief.

The NCAA was not the only group that paid the price for the University shifting racial-risk. Students paid a high price as well. These vestiges of the Chief Illiniwek tradition are a disservice to the entire campus community. Just this past spring (2012) students continued to debate the use of the Three-In-One music. The campus cannot move on. Some students on campus still attempt to bring back the Chief. (I will discuss this in greater detail in my section on the Next Dance.) Many argue that the Chief is a positive stereotype. For pro-Chief students and alumni, the Chief is a symbol of honor. They argue that the positive stereotypes outweigh any of the negative representations. This is false. Psychologist, Stephanie Fryberg researches stereotypes. Her research (2008) challenges the position that positive stereotypes must have positive consequences (209). In fact, researchers found that positive stereotypes or high expectations associated with a particular population of students may cause students to have trouble dealing with the high-pressure that comes with these stereotypes. These students are more likely to do poorly in high-pressure situations than students who are unfamiliar with the stereotype-threat. Again, the burden is shifted away from institutions created to shape societal values and onto the most vulnerable populations.

This letter of apology from the Delta Delta Delta sorority to the campus community is a perfect example of that forced burden.
Delta Delta Delta Statement

October 25, 2006

Delta Delta Delta would like to extend our sincerest apologies for the social event that took place on Thursday, October 5, between our chapter and Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity.

During the event, a group of our members represented a minority culture in a negative way. TriDelta was founded on the idea of being "kind alike to all," and as a whole, we use this principle to guide us as we strive to adhere to high moral standards and strength of character. Such cultural insensitivity is absolutely not what we represent as a chapter, and we are truly sorry that our actions have hurt such a vital part of our campus. Please be assured that we are working to correct the matters of ignorance and insensitivity that led to our hurtful actions. We have also been in touch with Adele Lozano at La Casa Cultural Latina, and she and her office have been invaluable resources to our chapter.

Our hope is that we can turn this negative incident into a positive force for change. We firmly believe that an open dialogue on issues of diversity will prevent such an event from happening in the future and aid us as we work to reclaim a legacy that makes us, our national organization, and the campus community proud.

Delta Pi Chapter of Delta Delta Delta

What’s most important in this letter is that these women reached out to Adele Lozano, the director of La Casa Cultural Latina, for their help and resources. Who has the burden? La Casa Cultural Latina is a cultural center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meant to serve Latina/o students with a safe space on campus. La Casa is a home away from home. It serves as an invaluable resource for the recruitment and retention of Latino students on the campus. We have La Casa Cultural Latina because of the struggles of activists students and students of color at the University. Did Delta Delta Delta pay for a percentage of Lozano’s time that would go towards helping them overcome their racial biases?

I cannot answer that question because both the TriBeta sorority and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs declined to speak with me about this incident.

Ariel, the sorority woman I introduced in the chapter Racial Gate-Keeping, came from Chicago Public Schools, the best of which are the most elite schools in the state and the hardest
to get into. The typical neighborhood Chicago Public high schools do not nearly rival suburban or private schools in terms of college preparation, students here are asked to carry an additional burden. Latina/o students from the city become teachers of their peers.

Two years after Tacos and Tequila, some members of Ariel’s sorority wanted to have a redneck exchange party modeled after the television show “My redneck wedding.” She believed the theme was wrong and said so to the other members of her sorority. In fact, Ariel prided herself in being a teacher or interlocutor of sorts for cultural sensitivity within her sorority. Even though she expressed to me earlier a dissatisfaction with attempts to let her identification as a Latina determine her participation in the Greek Community, she welcomed the opportunity to teach students about diversity and sensitivity. This past year Ariel ran a workshop on stereotypes for new recruits to her sorority this year on stereotypes. It was the first of its kind. She organized it because it is similar to workshops she did in high school. She went to a predominantly Latina, private, high school. Although there were a good number of students who wanted to have this party, there was also strong opposition to the party from within her sorority. This particular redneck exchange party never took place. My immediate thought was that maybe some students wanted to engaged in this theme party in an attempt to show that Tacos and Tequila was not racist because they have parties about white people too. White students often use this logic to defend their actions. Over the course of my research I had several casual conversations with students who said, “I don’t care when African Americans and Latinas/os stereotype them as ‘white trash’” (iq). The ease with which white students concede this type of mockery is because its not their identity as upper-middle class suburban residents but rather what they associate with rural, poor, areas—ironically the people most often blamed as racist. White college students who come from less-privileges backgrounds do not readily acknowledge identification with the ‘white
trash’ stereotype.

Ariel welcomed the extra work of teaching her fellow sorority members about racial and ethnic sensitivity. Other members of the campus community do not welcome this burden, especially when it is not an active choice but rather it is forced on them. A fellow EUI (Ethnography of the University) researcher, Cristina Rodriguez, captured a moment in which Latina/o students were angry about Tacos and Tequila. Here is a section from her research project that is archived on the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship (http://www.ideals.illinois.edu/).

At the meeting, one of the ZBT members said that by meeting and making up this class, they were having a positive outcome to the situation they had created. This remark heated up the conversation, making some of the Latino students object by saying that there should be no reason for any of these exchanges or meetings. In other words, if the community was more accepting and respectful of other students on campus, specifically ethnic minorities, and not neglect the fact that they are around, this event would not have occurred.

Why were Latinos heated in this conversation? Because the burden consistently falls onto them as individuals and to the already limited resources of their communities, to teach white students, faculty, and others, about why their actions are harmful and problematic. After Tacos and Tequila there were several conversations with multiple groups of students—those who had offended, and those who were offended. Bernardo, a student leader on campus said the meetings were “an exercise in bringing the theoretical to the very concrete.” He went on with exasperation in his voice, “You talk about these issues…” issues of racism and biases people hold. But in this instance, he understood: “This is what people think but then you actually hear people say what they think…it was a lot more material when you hear white privilege exposed.” (emphasis mine)

Eyes blazing with intensity Bernardo looked straight at me and said, “You know its hard for people who want to be activists on campus, because you know, sigh [hands in the air] you’re
a student.” He sighed. In our interview we discussed our experiences. “You have to go through a lot to defend your culture, identity, and personal location, and still be a student,” he sighed. “It’s hard to do.” I would argue that we should read Bernardo’s use of “defend” as “teach.” This is a teaching labor that is not free and that students, faculty, and administrators of color do at a cost—it is one of the racial prices of admissions into higher education. The benefit of a diversity in higher education is that diversity becomes an important commodity to students and to industry. This is part of the social capital of students of color that allows white interest to be met. University administrators encourage this kind of inter-group dialogue but they give limited resources to the students who teach, thus exploiting their labor while simultaneously making them responsible for fixing the racist culture of the University. The same is true for the industry and military complex. The burden is shifted again to those with the least resources. White students can learn from students of color and turn those skills into profit in a global world order where whites dominate everyone else.

Bernardo went on to say, “I dropped two classes that semester.” Although Bernardo’s experience can and should be read as the experience of a man of color in higher education, I also want to suggest that we look at his choice and agency in this. One of the ruptures in neoliberal multiculturalism is this “ah ha” moment in which students, who thought racism was over and that we had arrived at an oppression-free era, confront the reality. In fact they might also confront that diversity is a double-edge sword, a catch 22. A student (or faculty) could be run ragged trying to decolonize the racist and oppressive cultures of the academy, knowing that their fate is inextricably linked to that work. Although we can state that it was naïve of some young people to believe that racism was over, I argue what is more important is that neoliberalism has created the conditions for an awakening of sorts. Working to decolonize academia is a labor of love that
opens up possibilities and opportunities for future students to imagine other ways transform systems of oppression. La lucha sigue. In this moment of neoliberalism it is important for us in the struggle to reflect on where we have come and how we should strategically move forward.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISPLACING RACISM: BLAME IT ON THE ALCOHOL

In this chapter I explore displacing racism, which is another racial risk-management practice. To displace a person, or group of people, is to remove them from a place or position, usually against their will. To displace racism is to remove it from its central position or place in a moment, especially when it is key to understanding an event or ethnographic episode. Racism is managed as risk by displacing racism from the situation and substituting it with something else. I demonstrate that framing racist behavior as something else, most often as rude conduct due to alcohol consumption, allows university administration and students to acknowledge not that something racist has happened, but rather to reframe racism as unintentional or benign (e.g., as a product of alcohol). It is probably the most common racial-risk management practice at the university because so many incidents of racism involve alcohol consumption. I will argue that taken together these incidents operate as a collective action of racial gate-keeping, which I outlined in chapter three. Racial gate-keeping is not limited to instances in which alcohol is involved just as acts of racism are not limited to racial theme parties. There is a historical legacy that is continuously maintained through a type of administrative management that does not address racism. In this analysis I present several ethnographic cases as to why I consider racism to be operative. In addition to showing how racism is at work and explaining how it contributes to racial gate-keeping, I also believe it is important to explain the potential harm done to the University and its students. Finally, I discuss administrative responses to these instances. In so doing, I will reveal a pattern of racial-risk management that conceals, trivializes, or excuses racism by citing alcohol consumption as the sole vice (i.e., the immoral or wicked behavior).
These strategies are discussed together because in key ethnographic moments, these
strategies are used together to manage racial risk.

**Blame it on the Alcohol**

In the mid 1980’s students celebrating the end of four years of study brought champagne
to graduation ceremonies. Commencement was held at assembly hall. As colleges were
announced, champagne corks flew onto the stage. Students cheered. As the College of
Engineering was called, students began to chant “WE HAVE JOBS! WE HAVE JOBS!”
seemingly directed toward the students in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS).
Engineering students were especially excited at that time because jobs in engineering were
booming. Most engineering students had secured relatively high-paying jobs in comparison to
students in the Liberal Arts & Sciences. As the proceedings wore on, students became more
jovial. Towards the end of the ceremony, when presumably most of the champagne was gone,
the Chancellor began to confer the honorary degrees. Among the honorees was a Japanese
scholar with, as one faculty member recalls, “numerous accolades.” After the Chancellor
finished reading the scholar’s many accomplishments he motioned him to rise and receive his
degree. He was also asked to say a few words. As he approached the podium the crowd of
students broke out into chants of “GO HOME! GO HOME! GO HOME!” Clearly dismayed by
the students’ actions, administrators quickly acted to ensure that such overtly racist behavior
would not be repeated at future graduation ceremonies.

They banned alcohol.

I heard this remarkable story from one of the faculty members I interviewed. This faculty
member told me about his experience attending the University’s main graduation ceremony. He
was on stage at that very moment and remembers the expressions on the faces of administrators as “telling.” He told me that he could tell that this was a moment when University Administrators realized the type of students they were producing at the U of I—a moment of clarity. The professor himself, however, let me know that he had not been particularly surprised that these events had transpired in that particular venue. While it was clear that he was deeply appalled by what had happened, it was not from a sense of naivety or disbelief that such a thing could happen. He moved up in his chair, hands stretched out, as he told me this last part. “After four years at the University of Illinois, the only thing these graduates could say to this man was ‘GO HOME’!?!?”

Why did this faculty member tell me this story? In his office I told him that I was struggling to identify a specific ethnographic focus area for understanding the role of the University in reproducing racism and racists. Since the mid-1960s, after the Civil Rights movement, University administrators at predominantly white institutions have made commitments to racially diversifying the student body (Williamson 2003). As a result of civil rights legislation, educational policies attempted to transform some ideologies and values of the U.S. public through school policies like desegregation. It is telling that today many more people believe racism is “bad” then people did 50 years ago (Williams 2006; Rodiger 2001). Clearly some ideologies have changed. But has the underlying structure of racial hierarchies changed? Or has it remained the same? Some have argued that although many believe racism is bad, racial hierarchies are just as entrenched in the policies of U.S. institutions today as they were prior to the Civil Rights Movement (Guinier 1994). Much of the landmark Civil Rights Legislation turned into or influenced educational policy. Higher education is an important institution in which to examine the effects of Civil Rights Legislation on educational policy and racial-
learning in schools. The institutional bureaucracy and decision-making serve as an informal education that teaches us about race and racism.

Part of the historical legacy of the University is not only turning a blind eye to racist action, when possible, but also ignoring how racism has changed over time but still maintains White Privilege through maintaining boundaries around who or what is or is not White. There was a time when no one would criticize the University for being racist. There was a time when men were both administrators and members of the Ku Klux Klan. Today administrators are careful about how they manage racism. I imagine this legacy of indifference to racism is why this faculty member interpreted these actions as the responsibility of the University, rather than, for instance the national anti-Japanese climate in the 1980s.

The administrator I interviewed told me this graduation story because for him, it was a moment, when beyond the shadow of a doubt, administrators realized what type of students they had trained—shameless students who did not know that at the very least, racism is rude—and that this was not the time or place to be “rude.” The student actions at commencement were not just rude but racist and xenophobic.

By the 1980s, only two-decades after the passage of civil rights legislation, most University students came from mono-racial (i.e., all-white) rural, city, and suburban areas. How was the University to democratize itself, without addressing that the University was founded only three years after the emancipation proclamation? The University’s response to shameless displays of racism was to ban alcohol.

Alcohol is an all too frequent element in racist situations. For many of the students and alumni I spoke with, the campus bars were white spaces—that is spaces that were not only predominantly white but that personified white cultural values. In the 1990s, when students
encountered explicit acts of racism that involved the campus bar culture, they took action. As one alumni, Theodore, told me:

We remember when we had [black] students above Kams and they wrote “Nigger Bitch” on her door and we had to take over Kams. It was a student protest in 1990. Yes, where we shut down Kams. Everyone went inside. They ordered water all night. And those of us who were too young to get in stood outside holding a little piece of string, in January. And the white kids stood across the street in front of the psychology building mad and cold cause they were underdressed because they did not expect to be sitting outside while we were protesting inside.

I asked him to tell me more.

There was a black woman who lived above KAMS who was experiencing racialized harassment and had enough, and people decided to move on it. So people decided what we’d do. They strategized and they decided, “We’ll shut it down. We’ll make an economic statement.”

I got a call at ten o’clock “Come out we’re shutting down KAMS”

Theodore recounted this story of racism against Black students in 1990. He went on to say that most black students realized that when administrators were talking about the student experience they were talking about white students. He said, “In fact, I think that it was known in some communities that when they talked about students they weren’t talking about us.” He recounted in a high-pitched tone, “When they talked about ‘student experiences in the bars.’” He paused as he looked into my eyes. Then said, “Black people didn’t go to the bars! That didn’t happen like that for us. We just kind of exist[ed] alongside the rest of the pristine campus.” For Theodore, an African-American alumni of the University the campus was a predominantly white space. The bars were definitely spaces where students of color did not belong.

Many of the campus bars were intentional about maintaining these spaces as white. As an undergrad in 2003 I heard a doorman at one campus bar deny entry to a biracial couple stating
that he was not going to tolerate that sort of “social experiment” here. In 2010 Kristin, one of the sorority women with whom I spoke told me the following:

There used to be corona night at Clybourn. One day me and my friends had gone to Cly's and it had changed. It was now Jimmy Buffet Night. So I asked my friends, “well why is it not Corona night?” I heard that the managers didn’t like that Corona Night was bringing in a ‘different crowd’ and it eventually got bad and there was a big fight outside of Cly's and after that they decided that there’s no more Corona night. They’re making it Jimmy Buffet night.

Kristin was clear that the ‘different crowd’ managers were trying to avoid was a crowd marked but its racial makeup (i.e. African-American and/or Latino). That’s why there was a very deliberate and intentional switch to Jimmy Buffet Night. In this instance, managers of the local bars managed racial risk through racial-gate keeping. They made a distinction between the type of crowd “Corona Night” would bring and the type of crowd “Jimmy Buffet Night” would bring. Jimmy Buffet would bring the right crowd: a white crowd.

Kristin went on to tell me that she had also heard that Fubar was the ethnic bar and Clybourn’s “Bomb Night” (Jägerbombs are cocktails in which a shot of Jäger is dropped into a glass of Red Bull) and people don’t want to go there anymore “because it’s too much of an ethnic crowd.” I asked her who says that. She told me that her friends have said this to her. She went on to say that, “I’m half Latina also and I feel comfortable hanging out in different crowds.” A few of her friends are “half like me” and she felt most identify as white but that most of her friends feel more comfortable in mostly white spaces—including campus bars. For white students and students of color, there is racial gate-keeping going on in the bar scene.

As we saw in Chancellor Herman’s response to Tacos and Tequila two decades after the collective racist chanting at commencement, the University was again more concerned with students overtly expressing racist sentiments than with the fact that students are racist. Instead of
dealing with the fact that students could only think to be racist, the University wanted to train students not to express these sentiments publicly. Did students learn that lesson? Hannah, whose experience we talk about next, suggests that students and the University did not.

“Alcohol No Excuse for Racism”

When I first came on this campus three years ago, I never thought it would be a big deal that I was a minority. I though that, by now, racism was not as prevalent, especially on a college campus where there would be people my age. However, I was wrong. In fact, nothing has changed except for the fact that people now blame their inappropriate behavior on the fact that they were inebriated at the time they called me a “gook,” or said that I should “go back to China.”

What is horrifying is the fact that people think it’s okay to say these things because they were drunk. Just the other night, a group of semi-sober people shouted “Asians!” and pointed at my group of friends as if we were part of some sort of circus act. Honestly, what would you think if I shouted back “White”? And is it necessary to call us “chinks” or mutter under your breath that we’re “f’n gooks”?

Must you do this in public while I’m trying to cross the street? All I want to do is walk home at night without being called a racial slur. Being drunk does not give you the right to call out racial slurs. Alcohol does not make you a racist; so don’t use it as an excuse. Handle your tongue before you handle alcohol.

Hannah Kim Junior in LAS
This article appeared in the Daily Illini on November 4th, 2008—the day that Barack Obama won the 2008 Presidential Election. This was the first time Hannah felt compelled to write to the student paper. She is a Korean-American student and was raised in a “white community,” in the suburbs of Chicago. Her high school was predominantly white but she maintains a mixed group of friends, mostly white and Asian, through church. She came to the U of I and thought race would not be a “big deal.” It was a big deal. When I met with Hannah a few weeks after she wrote this article, she explained that her experiences here were not what she expected. Hannah does not feel comfortable walking on campus, especially near or on Green Street. Although Green is the name of an east-west street that runs through Champaign, Urbana, and Campus-town, when Hannah mentions Green Street she is specifically referring to the Campus-town area contained by Wright Street on the East and Neil Street on the west. This part of Campus-town is in Champaign, not Urbana. (Urbana starts at the North-South street, Wright Street.) This area of campus has several bars, restaurants, bookstores, and coffee shops. Most days Green Street is overwhelmingly populated by University students. In the evening, there is a marked sense of ownership of this space as a student area. Although carrying an “open container” of alcohol is not legal, it is still common practice, despite the risk of a police citation. Theodore’s experience was similar to Hannah’s except that as a Black man, he had learned campus survival skills. He told me, “There are just times when you avoid it [campus].” He continued,

Around football season. You’re not going to find us around here. We will avoid campus. Or around one o’clock in the morning when the bars let out. We’re not going to be around campus then because I’m going to have to fight somebody. I’m going to have to have to be aggressive in some way. And you don’t want that. So there were periods when you figured out how not to go. Those were experiences I had and my friends had.
I got those messages from peers and mentors. And I think what’s different is that was basic survival information. Now, that kind of information is seen as someone with a political agenda, someone who is maybe a little bit racist themselves, someone who has an aught against the university, and that’s been very different.

To have an analysis that would suggest race plays out on a personal level and it can play out on an institutional and a structural level and a cultural level is to suggest that um you are, I don’t know, you may be some kind of bitter black guy looking for race in obscure places. And this is not only by white students but by some black students because you know, we listen to the same music, we have a lot of friends from different spaces, um, and uh, we just have a different sensibility when it comes to race. Which is why in 2006 when Tacos and Tequila hit, and in the spring before, when the ghetto party happened, and that long string of consistent racialized parties that happened on this campus, people began to look back. “What is this about?” “This doesn’t fit well with my understanding of how we get along and how we’re all the same.” “Maybe he’s not so bitter. Maybe, he’s explored other possibilities in the history of race, as an American, as a hallmark of American life.”

As a Black man, Theodore, learned to avoid campus at certain times. He also suggested that students don’t always know that now because it’s not only taboo to talk about your racialized experience as a Black Man, but it’s also sometimes seen as racist. Theodore went on to explain that his experience is a “hallmark” experience of life in the United States. He went on to say that although people in the campus community may want to dismiss him as an angry black man, Tacos and Tequila as well as the other theme parties brought to light a reality of the U.S. experience that those with privilege and dominant ideologies can easily forget.

Hannah’s experience was different. She told me that she felt she had a different experience the year we spoke. She lived in Urbana two years previously. Urbana does not have the same dynamic. Between the two cities it is less populated. There is also less student housing in Urbana both University and private housing. The local restaurants, bars, and other business are in the downtown area, which is further away from campus than most undergraduate students venture. About Champaign Hannah said, “there are a lot of frat houses, places where people get drunk.” Hannah expressed that there was a different culture of sorts in Champaign. On the lawns
of the fraternities, men stand outside, drink, play games, and feel emboldened and entitled to shout at or harass passers by. I would argue that there is a different sense of ownership of the place in this particular campus-town area of Champaign—fraternities and sororities own this space and the space is constructed as outside the boundaries of “real world” morality.

Hannah did not feel comfortable walking around campus even when she was with a group of friends - especially if the group was composed of all women. Hannah was harassed on several occasions especially when she was with a group of her friends, who are predominantly Asian women. Hannah also said that she did not want to generalize, but that it is always the men who call out slurs. She went on to explain more of her experiences. “There are sometimes girls with the guys, but [it’s] always guys who call out.” Hannah said that it is the women who usually apologize. She said, “It’s never the actual person who apologizes.” The person who apologizes usually asks Hannah to excuse the person’s drunkenness and then blames the alcohol for the slur.

Hannah was frustrated over how alcohol is used to displace racism perpetrated by white students. This strategy, of displacing racism has permutated throughout the generations. In 1992 when students protested and held a sit-in at Henry Administration Building, administrators were out-right hostile. They displaced of racism as a frivolous concern that did not need require reflection on university policy or practice. Instead their institutional response was to bring in police and publicly threatened students with arrest. Today displacing racism is not done with hostility—it is much more covert. Displacing racism with alcohol is a common-sense logic used by people across the nation and beyond.

The University’s racial risk management practices provided students a model for dealing with racist conduct: Students could frame racism as something else in order to get around the
consequences or guilt associated with racism. In 2009 it was not the administrators but rather, the campus-town virtual community who attempted to displace racism with alcohol.

“Beyond the Chief” Vandalizing Art on Nevada Street

As I explained in the introduction, in the spring of 2009, two years after the Chief’s retirement, a public artwork displayed at the Native American House (NAH) was repeatedly vandalized. In April of that year American Indian Studies held an open dialogue in response to the ongoing acts of vandalism. It was a chance for students to come together and talk about their experience with how the art was engaging the community. At that time, the artist, Edgar Heap of Birds revisited the campus as part of the response to the vandalism. He stated clearly that none of his previous artwork, however controversial, had ever been vandalized. His artwork has been exhibited across the country and world. The University administration responded that they were hesitant to define the string of vandalisms as hate crimes. In this way, they attempted to deny racism was a factor in the vandalism, instead displacing racism with alcohol consumption or “tom-foolery.” Denying racism is not a racial-risk management strategy I describe and analyze in great depth because in my experience the management of racial risk has been much more nuanced than denial; however, it is relevant in this instance.

It was not until the art was vandalized repeatedly that the University finally spoke against it. University administration went an entire two months without publicly responding to the crimes. This left the burden of responding to attacks that targeted the Native American House (NAH) to students and faculty who use the NAH. Their first public response came 15 days after students organized a vigil and petition signing outside NAH. Some community bloggers suggested the first act of vandalism was a random incident or drunken act. But after several more
destructive actions targeting American Indians, the University found it difficult to deny the racial character of the attack—or could they? The Chancellor issued the following mass email—something that did not happen in response to Tacos and Tequila. He said:

The continuing assaults on the Native American public art displays along Nevada Avenue are not only unlawful and malicious, they are also an assault on the values and fabric of Illinois. In other words, our university has also been vandalized.

We need to begin thinking of these crimes differently. First, let us not view this as happening to someone else. What threatens one member of our community threatens all of us. We are all diminished in the wake of such an act. Indeed, Illinois is diminished and that should concern our community.

Upon first glance it appears that the Chancellor is reframing a targeted attack against Native Americans as an attack against the entire University. He did do this, and this is an important difference when compared to his response to Tacos and Tequila, which was not only delayed but he also spoke rather lovingly of those offenders. The fact that he did not speak about the people who vandalized the NAH means that protestors, organizers, and activists should consider this a small win in that Herman framed the conversation differently around institutional values. Yet it is important to note why Herman was able to do so. University administrators took a stance against a crime that diminished the value of the University, its physical property. The crime is easily condemned because the law makes clear that vandalism against property is unlawful, unlike racism against groups of people. As we know from Critical Race Theorists, the law and U.S. culture exist in synergy with each other. Both the law and mainstream U.S. culture define racism through an individual. Verbal assaults on groups of people are not as easily characterized as unlawful or as an attack on the whole university. Further still, racism is not mentioned in the characterization of the attack. Racism is still displaced as first and foremost a criminal action. Racism is never mentioned as a motivator of these attacks.
The response by the Chancellor did not come right away. The Board of Trustees and the upper-level Administration, again, did not respond until after students held a public meeting with local press coverage and were circulating a petition. The email response was sent to all students, faculty, and staff members of the campus community via a mass email on Tuesday, May 15th, 2009. The first vandalism occurred on March 15th. Although Herman’s words seem to have gained more strength than during Tacos and Tequila, he heard students’ analysis of the attacks, prior to issuing a response. This was a moment of listening, and responding. However, the targeted nature of the attacks was not mentioned except as a location. It was not mentioned that this was a vandalism that targeted a safe space for Native Americans on campus. A criminal action targeted against a specific group of people or an individual based on race, such as vandalism, is a hate crime. The U.S. government defines hate crimes as “a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin” (Department of Justice, 2006). The Department of Justice contacted American Indian Studies, and the Native American House, about this series of events. They considered them to be hate-crimes.

I argue that the university’s racial-risk management practices of hiding racism led to this point. Although this campus was still rife with tension over the mascot controversy, especially the Chief’s retirement, it is incredible to imagine that university administrators and members of the campus thought that these acts of vandalism were racially neutral. This is the “business as usual” of the University to deny, displace, and hide the racial meaning of Chief Illiniwek and its lingering legacy. Managing racism in this way is part of the fabric of the institution. Incidentally
early estimates of the monetary damages were around $40,000 but the damages were far greater when we factor in the effect on campus climate. Herman went on to say:

Let me be clear. This is our very lifeblood. This is our DNA as a great public university. When our foundation as an inclusive and welcoming campus is threatened we need to unite as a community and collectively stand as one voice in condemnation. We have done so in the past and we will do so at this crucial moment.

We can ask: how could Herman assume that the foundation of this institution is either inclusive or united as a community in condemnation of racism? What does “this is our very life blood” refer to? The “this” in the second sentence is an attempt to refer to “inclusivity.” His attempt to be “clear’ isn’t very clear at all. It is hard to believe that inclusivity is the very life-blood of the University within the context of Chief Illiniwek’s lingering presence and the inability to name race. How can the university be inclusive and welcoming when the University does such a poor job in recruiting and retaining Native students? Where was the Chancellor declaring inclusion was our very lifeblood when the numbers of incoming African American and Latino students dropped in the fall of 2009? Is there action or accountability to maintain diversity in the student body behind this statement? Dr. Raven told me, “There is no system of accountability for anyone on campus …I’m talking about even with the Deans academically, like admissions. They [upper-level administrators] wanted to do 100 Native American Students a year. There is nothing about an admissions performance evaluation that even remotely asks them that question.” For Dr. Raven, if the university really valued diversity, not only would there be more initiative to recruit and retain students, but there would be systematic measures in place to keep administrators in units, like admissions, accountable to those goals.

The fraternity and sorority involved in Tacos and Tequila were targeted for alcohol violations. Consequently, many U of I students and faculty were unsatisfied with the light punitive measures that addressed Tacos and Tequila (O’Kelly, 2006). Since race was never
mentioned, the University could not punish students for race-related offenses, even if they weren’t protected by free speech. In my interview with administrators they revealed that they sought out charging students with non-race related violations, i.e. alcohol violations. Again this move serves to displace the racial implications of the party and the racial harm done. Even though party-goers intentionally participated in degrading Mexicans, their actions were not defined as racist. They planned the party, presumably while they were sober. In fact, they were re-defined by the University Administration as “innocent, juvenile, and insensitive” (University Administration 2006; Heisel 2006). According to this logic, intentionally racist actions were merely playful, harmless actions that were, unfortunately, in bad taste; immature students will eventually learn to know better. Henry A. Giroux states, “Racial justice in the age of market-based freedoms and financially driven values loses its ethical imperative to a Neoliberalism that embraces commercial rather than civic values, private rather than public interests, and financial incentives rather than ethical concerns” (2003:195). These actions suggest that the University is more interested in honing corporate skills and deflecting public responsibility, than in preparing socially responsible citizens. This is a process engrained in administrators’ everyday actions that maintains white privilege and cultural citizenship hierarchies in higher education. In other words, protests by Latinas/Chicanos students of “Our Culture is Not Our Costume” are transformed into exercises in neoliberal multiculturalism. Mocking culture is de-racialized by removing it from discussion of power and systems of meaning and turned into a lesson in “real world” management strategies.

Maintaining White Privilege
If racism, especially as it occurs with the prevalence of a drinking culture on campus, is such a persistent problem for students, faculty, staff, and visitors of color to our campus, why has the university failed to institutionalize substantive racial equity programs? Protestors of racial-theme parties like Tacos and Tequila wanted the University to implement mandatory courses on racial and ethnic justice and multiculturalism. Upper-level University Administrators refused citing all of their racial risk-management strategies. Most usually they would claim to mandate diversity programs would be a violation of free-speech in that it would mandate behavior. When I asked Dr. Raven about this she said:

What’s funny about orientation is that it’s mandatory to go through the sexual assault information. It’s mandatory to do the alcohol one… on this campus, where diversity is so critical, I mean and we’ve had, Tacos and Tequila is one incident and clearly things have happened after that …but the fact that they come up constantly that means it's a systemic problem. It’s not just a one-time incident.

People could leave here, we could have new Chancellors and Provosts and the same problems will pop up.

Racial-theme parties specifically, but racism on campus more generally, is a systemic problem. Yet we do not have any system-wide solutions mandated by the upper-level University Administration. Dr. Raven is clear that a new Chancellor will not change the situation—a point I return to at the end of this chapter. We can ask, does the university value racial justice? From the lens of critical race theory, we can answer no. In this sense, the University only values “diversity” that is marketable, so that it can be sold to students as consumers buying an education that will help them manage racialized populations. This is a neoliberal model of investment. It is not in the interest of the University to pursue racial equity—to make the lives of students of color a little bit better. It is in the interest of the University to prepare students to become global managers.
In that sense, in it being so systemic, why not have it be mandatory because it’s so important? That’s a struggle in itself because people will use all kinds of things [to get around it].

Dr. Raven went on to tell me that she has lobbied other administrators on the importance of having mandatory training on racial justice and diversity. She is also clear that it is a struggle to get some administrators to understand that this is a systemic problem. She recounted one such instance in which she made a strong argument for having mandatory programs.

She said, in a meeting, “Basically it’s racist to not make it mandatory and this is my argument. The drinking issue is really a predominantly white issue on this campus, as it is across the country. Binge drinking, you know, if we look at the racial makeup of students that get transported, and I don’t have that but let’s do that. I can bet you that it’s probably 75-80% white. So clearly we’re instituting it because whether we thought about it or not, we know that if we have this educational program about drinking, we save lives of white students. So why don’t we do a mandatory one that makes the lives of students of color just be a little bit better on this campus? And that’s the part that’s racist about it and you don’t even know that it’s racist, but I’m here to tell you that it’s racist.

We look at it again, the programs that we fund, and who that benefits. Whether we intentionally make it beneficial for white students or not, it benefits them more. It benefits Greek Students more and the majority of students in the Greek Communities are [white].

Essentially, Dr. Raven presented other administrators with evidence of how University policy maintains white privilege. We mandate programs around alcohol consumption and sexual assault that serve primarily white populations on campus. Dr. Raven not only questioned the displaced or hidden racial undertones in these policies but also confronted her fellow administrators with that evidence. She is also clear that intentionality does not matter—the results are the same. The mandatory programs benefit white students. Diversity programs are not mandatory. She told me, “The thousands of dollars we put into making sure people are safe during unofficial, I mean what’s that about, right?” Unofficial is the campus celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. It’s called unofficial because it happens the week before St. Patrick’s Day, (when the campus is on the
spring-break holiday). Students start celebrating as early as possible. For undergrads it is considered a badge of honor to have started drinking before breakfast. Campus-town is a sea of green shirts. Some of which have images of the statue of the Alma Mater funneling beer through a tube into the mouth of the retired mascot Chief Illiniwek, and a leprechaun. The University Administration pulls out all the stops to attempt to maintain safety and order during the festivities. The main participants in these events are Greek Students.

The University has taken measures to insure campus safety. As an undergrad, some of my friends would be out in the bars before 8am. It was also very unhealthy and led to numerous cases of alcohol poisoning and in more recent years, injuries and even deaths due to poor choices made under the influence. One student attempted to climb the statue of the Alma Mater drunk and fell off. Another student jumped off a second floor balcony of an apartment. Since then, the university administration has lobbied bar-owners to open their doors later in the day. During my research I frequented a local bar every morning before 9am to get a cup of coffee. On the morning of unofficial I stopped into get a coffee and was told that I could not purchase anything before 8am. The owner himself told me about the city ordinance, and he was upset. He was so upset, in fact, that he gave me my morning coffee for free and said that the city-council could not stop him from giving away his products. I’m sure that the city council ordinance stopped him from actually serving alcohol, so he could not give away liquor. This story is important because it shows the lengths through which the University Administration was willing to go to successfully pass a city ordinance that stops the bars from making sales before 11am. They were willing to impose their values and interests on the city and on private business owners. Some might argue that University Administrators do so because students could be injured or die from alcohol consumption. I would respond, and have, that racism kills too. The history and ongoing
struggles with racism in the United States are clear that the battle against racism is a battle of life and death. What the university administration communicates, by making some programs mandatory and others not, is whose lives are more valuable.

**Alcohol and Racial Gate-Keeping**

At my undergraduate graduation ceremony students did not chant “Go Home!” but students, parents, and community members did something similar. At my graduation ceremony, the tone of the event was quite different. The year 2004 was a milestone year, 50 years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Nancy Cantor, who was chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, sponsored one of the most expansive commemorations in the country. The Brown Commemoration was a year-long theme on campus. Events were sponsored in a range of disciplines. It is notable that the only college that did not sponsor an event was the college of engineering. Chancellor Cantor invited several speakers to mark this historic moment in education. Those speakers would not only speak about the successes we have had but also the unfinished legacy of racial justice. Lani Guinier and John Hope Franklin were two of the prestigious scholars who graced the stage. Lani Guinier was the commencement speaker. Guinier’s speech on the current state of public education was both grounded in factual analysis of statistical data and personal experiences.

There was no alcohol at graduation. But there were expressions of racial and gender antagonism. Rampant dissatisfaction among white middle-class attendees with the primary commencement address was immediately evident. In her remarks, Guinier advocated for increased access to higher education for Black, Latina/o, and poor students. Her analysis of the state of public education at Illinois pointed to the fact that all people, regardless of race, pay
taxes that support public higher education; however, few African Americans, Latinas/os, and poor people are granted access to these institutions. She highlighted that today’s graduates had their education paid for, in part, by people who were not granted access to the school. She said that this is a failure of our current systems of governance. She challenged the students to go out into the world and tackle the pressing problems of U.S. society and not to be afraid to fail. Yet students and parents did not welcome her challenge to change the world, instead she was berated after the ceremony.

However, it was after the ceremony that Guinier’s message came under heavy attack. Several letters were sent to Cantor scolding her decision to invite Guinier to speak. Parents and students responded with outrage at her words. What follows are excerpts from e-mails sent to the University and Cantor. The first was from a LAS graduate who sent the email at 4:20 p.m., six hours after her ceremony had begun.

I understand that [Brown v Board] is an important issue for our campus and has been ‘celebrated’ all year long, however, hearing how people are constantly being suppressed and [how] failure is a way of life, especially for the upper class citizens and white children, was not appropriate for [a] commencement address comprised of majority white students as well as students who have obviously succeed throughout their college career as well as life. There was nothing in the address that made me want to give more to the University or community, it simply reinstated facts that have been harped upon through this academic year… that Lani spoke about near nothing positive can not be changed. [personal communication]

What can we learn from this excerpt that is pertinent to addressing racist actions? For this student, Brown was “harped upon” all year—it was not a college experience she wanted. And white students should not have to hear about the oppression of African Americans and Latinas/os in the state of Illinois or about their privilege at the University. Also, notice how Dr. Guinier is addressed by her first name “Lani,” not by her last name and not as a PhD, which betrays a lack of respect. Another parent wrote the following email:
The University’s choice of Lani Guinier as the party to deliver the commencement address is very puzzling to us. Perhaps not the person, but rather her subject and the manner with which she presented it are what has caused us the greatest distress. We were there to celebrate an achievement. What we received instead was a speech about dead canaries and failure. What could she have been thinking? Our daughter was so discouraged by the continual and redundant use of the f word (failure) that she honestly felt discouraged rather than uplifted… We can only hope and pray that Ms. Guinier was speaking on her own behalf and the views she espoused are not the views of the public university to which our many tax dollars flow. [personal communication]

This parent rejected Dr. Guinier’s dis-investment in whiteness shown in Gunier’s rejection of the myth of meritocracy and individual effort. The rejection of Guinier was an act of racial gate-keeping. These parents also rejected Cantor’s attempts to promote racial justice in higher education. One way that racial gate-keeping operates is by policing which politics and ideologies can be shared and when, even facts such as the statistics on African American, Latina/o and poor tax-payers in Illinois. A fact that parents displaced as inconsequential or inappropriate to discuss thus racially gate-keeping. Because Guinier’s politics were not invested in white ideologies and middle and upper class politics, there was no room for them here at Illinois.

It says something that a student can leave the University not knowing the state of the world or the people of Illinois. We learn what is important to Illinois and to a U of I education when we consider what types of knowledge graduates lack. This final email is particularly telling:

…To say that the taxes of the poor have put my children though school is just wrong. Yes, my wife and I are white, suburban, middle class parents, but we are born of immigrants who came to this country with nothing, and grew up in the inner city. We took advantage of the opportunities that were available to us, which I might add are far less than those being offered today to poor students… The remedy for the type of discrimination she alleges, sounds discriminatory in reverse. I think that she needs to also address the issue of the parents’ role in helping their students take advantage of the many opportunities out there, and yes they are there for Afro-American and Hispanics too. [personal communication]
This father mobilizes the myth of the American Dream and meritocracy with perfection. For him, being white does not confer privilege gotten from years of legal, educational, and social hierarchies that privileged white people, ideologies, and institutions that excluded people of color. Further, he mobilizes an argument reminiscent of anthropologist Oscar Lewis’s “Culture of Poverty” (Lewis 1959) to discuss African American and Latina/o families. For this parent, if African Americans and Latinos are not getting into college it’s because their parents are not helping them—they’re not working hard enough, and that they are somehow culturally deficient. These emails reinforce the maintenance of white space and of the borderland as “a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” that Gloria Anzaldua describes (1983:7). This is a very telling example, but maintaining white public space through gate-keeping at Illinois is often more complex.

To further complicate our understanding of racism and highlight the many forms racial-gate-keeping takes at the U of I, compare the reactions to the 2007 commencement speaker to the two previous narratives. The coveted commencement speaker in 2007 was Jawed Karim, an Illinois alumni and creator of YouTube (www.youtube.com) an internet site for video sharing that is incredibly popular among college students. I was there for my younger sister’s graduation from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. At the ceremony Jawed Karim was the only visibly non-white person on stage, unlike the 2004 ceremony. Karim was smart, funny, young, and got the audience excited in his story of success. He even got the audience to dance after showing “Dancing Man” video by Matt Harding, one of the first videos ever on youtube. It was very entertaining. Although he was phenotypically a person of color, his presence was not met with shouts of “Go Home” or with any other form of outrage. The audience read Karim as the prototypical example of the American Dream. Karim’s message was entertaining and uplifting. It
was not overtly political. However, in another way it was not that much different from Guinier’s message of learning from failure. Karim recounted how he left the University early in order to pursue his computer science interests and how he struggled with the initial conceptualization and application of Youtube. But after several failures, he succeeded. His failures were acceptable because they were not contesting the myth of the American Dream and of the U.S. as a meritocracy where race and skin color no longer matter.

As I sat there listening to his speech, I thought back to my own graduation. When Lani Guinier was the Commencement speaker, her message was not nearly as entertaining, but she contextualized the education and learning mission of the University within a commitment to serving the poor and minority populations of the state. I felt inspired to go out there and do the hard work of racial equity. It was clear that we still had a lot of work to do to reach our goals as a society. Karim’s technology revolutionized how internet savvy people share videos. Lani Guinier’s message three years earlier was that the mission of a public university, like Illinois, is meant to include accountability to all people of the State of Illinois. It wasn’t only Guinier’s body that was policed but her assertion that the American Dream is based on racial and class privilege that not everyone can access. Guinier’s cultural citizenship was questioned and rejected. She was an “outsider.” Karim did not break the adherence to a mainstream (i.e. white) ideology as Guinier did and was thus accepted by the largely white audience. Again, I am reminded of what anthropologist Renato Rosaldo states, “Curiously enough, upward mobility appears to be at odds with a distinctive cultural identity. Capitalism depends on and reproduces racial hierarchies. One achieves full citizenship in the nation-state by becoming a culturally blank-slate” (1985: 201). Whereas Rosaldo links cultural citizenship to class status, at Illinois, being “free” of culture means to believe in these myths. In order to be upwardly mobile, you
have to be able to access ideologies of whiteness, like the myth of meritocracy and the American Dream. In predominantly white spaces where borders are created to police belonging and whiteness, cultural visibility and invisibility matter.

However differently the Commencement speakers’ visions of the mission of the University may be, both see the opportunity to develop alternative ways of living in the world. Both speakers challenged the graduating class to change the world, to be technological and social revolutionaries respectively. Lani Guinier’s message was of social justice and responsibility. She was not welcome. The audience did not react defensively to Karim. His presence on stage was not a threat in the way that the two previous speakers I mentioned were framed. What this tells me is that racism is constantly changing and what is safe in public spaces and what is not is contingent on how the mainstream defines racism and anti-racism.

The commencement events and Tacos and Tequila reveal processes of racial gatekeeping and how the university manages racism. Racially diverse bodies are acceptable only when their politics and ideologies display an investment in whiteness—such as Karim’s message. The reaction to commencement speakers reveals what type of racial diversity is acceptable. In instances where racism is overt, such as the Tacos and Tequila party and the commencement address in the mid-80s, alcohol allows students and administrators to write off their own racist actions, ignoring the harm done to students of color on campus. In social situations where students act unacceptably and are intoxicated, administrators use alcohol to interpret students’ judgment and not look to deeper problems. If racism is seen as just another opinion, but one that is not politically correct, controlling alcohol is the biggest problem in that it releases racist inhibitions. If racism is seen as a moral peril to society, something else needs to be done.
Alcohol also seems to have another inadvertent consequence: It gives a reason for students who would otherwise protest or find these actions morally repugnant to dismiss the actions and harm as the alcohol talking and not the genuine sentiments of a racist. So not only does alcohol become a way to dismiss racism as a part of student and campus culture, but it does more subversive harm to the moral and ethical grounding of the entire student body.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, displacing racism is a racial-risk management strategy that maintains white privilege. It does so by providing a seemingly race-neutral frame for understanding racist incidents. In many instances this alternative frame is alcohol. In displacing the problem, which is racism, the University’s solution, which is to ban alcohol, can never address it. What this chapter also showed is that upper-level University Administration is not invested in racial-equity when anti-racist goals do not align with its own economic, (i.e. neoliberal) interests. In my conversation with Dr. Xavier, he pointed out that individual administrators can influence policy personally. “You’ve been here a little while, how many Chancellors have you had?” he asked with a smile. “And I’ve had about two or three more than you and with each one there is a shift, there is a clear division that they begin to live into. So there are places where they kind of ebb and flow on how these priorities get shuffled and that becomes different and we experience that as a nation.” Dr. Xavier drew upon what he knew about me to explain that there are regimes within the University and each regime has different way for managing and understanding racism—but that these regimes are always informed by the national regimes of power. He told me that “we used to call this the Hidden Curriculum.” I told him that we still do. In the next
chapters I attempt to show how that curriculum has changed under neoliberal economic practices.
CHAPTER SIX

HIDING RACISM: THE INTENTIONAL TRAPPINGS OF THE BLACK/WHITE PARADIGM

Once upon a time there was a racist mascot named Chief Illiniwek. Every game day Chief Illiniwek would perform at half-time. Until one day, the Chief danced his last dance. But those that loved the Chief did not understand why the Chief stopped dancing. Because of this students got angry. They snuck around and attempted to resurrect the Chief. And so the Chief haunted the University and continues to haunt them still until they finally let him rest in peace.

Well it’s like the University tried to walk this line, because they wouldn’t say [it’s wrong], they said that ‘the NCAA made us do it’ you know, they wouldn’t say its wrong, it doesn’t reflect a University that’s trying to promote diversity, it doesn’t reflect a University that’s trying to be excellent and so that’s why we got rid of it’ so that’s where the problem comes from.

-Susan Street on how the University retired Chief Illiniwek

Hiding Racism: If Race Isn’t Present, How Can Anyone Be a Racist?

As I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, administrative managers hide racism in an attempt to eliminate the chance of racial risk. Racial risk is the material and legal jeopardy to the University if it attempts to remedy racism. Hiding race masks the institutional aggressions towards the racialized intersections of culture, class, sex, and gender, and sustains more nuanced forms of racial gate-keeping and in so doing maintains hierarchies based on race. As I argued in the Introduction, in this vein the University Administration considers naming “race” and “racism” to be contentious –part of the problem, rather than the solution.

Anthropologist Mica Pollock (2004) states that “talking in racial terms can make race matter, but not talking in racial terms can make race matter too” (16). That is, racism has an economic and material legacy that confers privilege to whites and oppression to people of color; however, it does not mean that people of color are innately inferior or sub-human, which is the argument scientists, politicians, and conquerors advanced in previous generations to maintain their power.
What Pollock’s research shows is that a colorblind approach to race—that is, not talking about race as significant to a person’s experience—also makes race matter as well although it matters in a different way than if it had been directly addressed. This is the power of eliding racism and it is just as important as acknowledging it. I will show this specifically in the chapter, Hiding Racism. In other words, hiding racism is like trying to hide a problem in the hopes that it will go away, when in reality hiding from the problem just makes the problem bigger and drags on the process. Administrators and students also attempt to hide racism so that they do not have to acknowledge that racism is at work in the institution because if they do then they would have to address it. In this section, I discuss how administrators and students on campus attempt to hide racism.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign students and administrators have actively hidden racism because of the so-called Native American mascot, Chief Illiniwek. In addition to the poor recruitment and retention rates of Native American students at the University of Illinois, which students and faculty link to the presence of the hostile climate towards Native Americans that is perpetuated by Chief Illiniwek, there is a body of research that documents the racial harm done by university administrators at Universities that keep Native American mascots. Stephanie A. Fryberg, Hazel Rose Markus, Daphna Oyserman, and Joseph M. Stone wrote an article titled “Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots.” The premise of the authors is that “American Indian mascots are harmful because they remind American Indians of the limited ways others see them, and in this way, constrain how they can see themselves” (208). They quote Lippman (1922) in his definition of stereotypes, which he defined as “pictures in the head of the world beyond our reach” (209). Fryberg et. al. draw upon this definition of stereotypes to explain why American Indians are in a
world beyond reach for most of us. They are only 1.5% of the population, and over a third of that population still lives on reservations (209). Additionally, American Indians are seldom pictured in mainstream media representations in any form (209). Although the scholarly evidence and the obvious and ongoing tension around the Chief that has existed for decades, the Board of Trustees is still actively engaged in hiding the racism generated and perpetuated by Chief Illiniwek.

A student leader on campus explained why students and administrators hid racism because of the Chief. Bernardo, an African-American student was clear that how the campus discussed the Chief was tempered by how we reacted and addressed the Tacos and Tequila issue. Bernardo said, “The issues with the Chief is that since we walked around and danced around trying to be, like, ‘we’re pro the Chief but we understand when something’s wrong.” In this instance he is referring to Tacos and Tequila. He went on to say, “I think it honestly created a very clear way, in the way we respond to things like racism on campus. We have to dance around the issue.” In this regard Bernardo was specifically referring to administrators and those who support the existence of the Chief. Bernardo expressed how students and administrators alike had a hard time in acknowledging that Tacos and Tequila mattered, and that the representations of Latinas/os were racist, because it was acknowledged as such, then they would have to acknowledge that the existence of the Chief was racist. He continued:

We have to dance around the issue. We can’t acknowledge, that if their [anti-Chief/ pro-indigenous folks] arguments are true, that this creates that climate, then we have to say that the Chief is bad [read: racist], and we’re [pro-chiefers/ BOT] for keeping the Chief. So we have to talk about the Chief in very uncertain terms, as opposed to saying that this is wrong and we don’t tolerate that.

Bernardo is clear that the administrators and students with whom he interacted were evasive with acknowledging that Tacos and Tequila was racist. They were hiding discourses of racism
because they wanted to keep the Chief. Talking in very uncertain terms is being purposefully
evasive to how race matters. Bernardo went on to say:

> We [as a campus] have to be a little bit wishy-washy on this subject. Which doesn’t help
in terms of declaring a clear stance in which values are embodied and engrained in the
campus republic. And it just creates unpredictable and uncertain terms, which isn’t good
when you’re trying to find clear flagship examples for the campus body to follow. In that
sense I don’t think the Chief helped address Tacos and Tequila and in fact laid a
framework in which, um, we continued to have race fester, and never confront or
encounter it, to try to solve it. That impacted our solutions to the response and how we
talk about it. We can only talk about it and discuss solutions that fit into a rubric that
upheld certain institutional norms.

Bernardo articulated two points. The first is that members of the campus community were
purposefully being “wishy-washy” in how race mattered. They had an interest in keeping racism
out of the conversation of the Chief. The second is that hiding racism did not allow the university
to declare clear values. Both students who supported the Chief and those who did not felt that the
University stood on monetary values instead of moral values. In fact, in the following years I
heard several students say that the University was only motivated by financial considerations and
not beholden to any clear values.

After two semesters of public campus conversation, many students accepted the idea that
racial theme parties had racial significance. These same students, who now acknowledged that
these theme parties like “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros” or Tacos and Tequila were racist,
still rejected that the existence and practice of Chief Illiniwek was racist. This was especially true
among the sorority and fraternity members who acknowledged these events were wrong but
continued to support Chief Illiniwek. For example, in response to Tacos and Tequila, students
decided to host a forum, called Racism, Power and Privilege. At the planning meetings, Bernardo
pointed out the dissonance between naming Tacos and Tequila as racist and not Chief Illiniwek.
Bernardo, one of the campus leaders attended what he called “joint meetings with multiple Greek
councils.” He called them, “stakeholders” meetings, a group of privileged people. These were the people who created the Racism, Power, and Privilege forum as a response to racism on campus. When I asked him who was present at these meetings he said “ZBT, TriDelts, S.T.O.P., campus leaders, and administration, who all met in Clark Hall.” He said these meetings were:

an exercise in bringing the theoretical to the very concrete. You talk about these issues… issues of racism and biases people hold. This is what people think but then you actually hear people say what they think…it was a lot more material when you hear white privilege exposed. (Emphasis mine)

Bernardo was clear that there was clearly dissonance in organizing against mock-Latino/African-American parties, and having a mock-Indian perform as the school mascot. If it is not wrong to perform Indian-ness in stereotypical ways, why would students think it was wrong to perform Black-ness or Mexican-ness? He went on to say, “and then it was much more material because you saw people wearing Chief stuff.” Me: “at the meeting?” [He stated in a high-pitched exasperated tone] “at the Meetings!!” After Tacos and Tequila, several fraternities and sororities conceded that racial theme parties were inherently racist. They acknowledged that it was racist to mock races or cultures. Yet, no traditional (read: Pan-Hellenic or Inter-fraternity Council) fraternity or sorority has ever taken a stance against Chief Illiniwek.

What is more interesting than the Greek System operating as the base of support for Chief illiniwek is that today it is much more common to see a great number of diverse students wearing Chief Illiniwek paraphernalia than in previous decades. Walking around campus and even in the diverse cultural centers, you’ll see students wearing Chief Illiniwek apparel. A number of my interviewees mentioned that at different moments in time, a greater number of diverse students saw anti-Native American racism as racism against all underrepresented students.
The Racial Politics of Chief Illiniwek

What are mascots? Mascots are often defined as symbols of an organization or event. For a college or university, they most often symbolize the values of the school they represent. In previous decades African American students at the University of Illinois saw the Chief as seriously damaging to the campus climate for all students. In Joy Ann Williamson’s book, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois 1965-75*, Williamson states that “Black students used the university symbol, Chief Illiniwek, to describe the pressure and stress of academic demands. They portrayed the Chief as a malicious force attempting to kill their aspirations through intense competition and a high drop-out rate” (2003:42). African-American students did not see the Chief as racially neutral. They saw the Chief as racist. Williamson interviewed students who recalled the warning they received as incoming first-years of the rigors and pressures of campus life by stating, “Beware, or the Chief will get you, too” (2003:75). Williamson’s oral interviews confirm that both students and administrators found there was a hostile racial climate at the U of I and that it did affect African American students’ retention rates and chances for academic success.

As part of my preliminary and dissertation research, I read the *Daily Illini*—The Independent Student News Source at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign on a regular basis. A few days after Tacos and Tequila made headlines on campus, an undergraduate editorial drew an analogy between Tacos and Tequila and blackface (Pierce 2006). The writer suggested that there would have been a greater reaction to Tacos and Tequila if the event had been a blackface party in which students ate watermelon and fried chicken. A blackface party, he thought, would have been considered more blatantly racist than a party stereotyping Latinas/os. Although he felt that both parties were equally racist, his letter to the editor suggested
that his perception of the University community deems some action to be racist enough for action. Pierce thus suggested that for most people, racism on campus is defined as anti-black and/or that racism is only taken seriously, and named as such, if it is anti-black. As it happened, there was a blackface party at the U of I the semester before and there was not an all-campus outrage. This is the history of racism—racism against African-Americans runs so deep that it causes less outrage even among allies. Racism is constituted through a series of convoluted hierarchies based on a color diaspora. The lack of protest and outrage in and of itself is emblematic of a form of racism. If we contextualize this in the national climate for anti-black racism, since the 1992 Rodney King Riots, it has become acceptable to ignore and deny anti-black racism. How African-Americans were treated and then represented during Hurricane Katrina is an excellent albeit disturbing example of erasure of concern for African-American even among supposed allies and anti-racists. Further still, it has become far to easy to ignore it completely. As a campus, we need to learn to move from the black/white paradigm of racism.

This is an astute observation of the racial dynamics on a campus that claimed Chief Illiniwek as a mascot for nearly 100 years. It is important to note that in each of these ethnographic events I outlined in the introduction, as well as many of the secondary narratives I draw from, I do not delve into many cases of anti-black racism (this is in itself indicative of my own complicity in an erasure of the significance of anti-black racism). At the University of Illinois, hiding race is sometimes as simple as denying racism. If it is not racism against black people then it is easier to deny; but if it is racism against black-people it is less of a concern because it is racism against black people. Racism against African-Americans matters less precisely because they are targeted more frequently and therefore speak to its relevance regularly—something the university administration seeks to deny and suppress. This is the
position the U.S. government and mainstream news media took in response to their incrimination in the devastation to African-American communities during and after Hurricane Katrina. This serves to deepen the effects of racism on black people. African-Americans are positioned as I argue that this is the reason why, as Bernardo pointed out, the University’s carefully crafted responses were “wishy-washy” on whether or not representations/existence of the Chief was racist. Contrary to Pierce’s perceptions, anti-black racism does occur at the U of I, such as the black-face racial-theme parties that occurred before and after Tacos and Tequila.

In response to Pierce’s initial letter-to-the editor claiming that administrators would act more deliberately if Tacos and Tequila was anti-black, another student reminded readers that although the actions were racist, it should come as no surprise given the University’s mascot Chief Illiniwek, which was controversial for precisely the same reason (Montes 2006), paralleling racial aggressions towards people of color. Namely, Tacos and Tequila was a stereotypical mock-Latino performance and Chief Illiniwek is a stereotypical mock-“Indian” performance. Like some of the Halloween Day protestors, this student made a clear connection between the University’s condoned use of a student dressed up in stereotypical representations of Native Americans (i.e. Chief Illiniwek) and the use of racist stereotypes for themes at fraternity and sorority exchange parties. Student protestors emphasized this to university administrators after Tacos and Tequila in order to bring home the point that both costumes are equally detrimental, despite the University’s attempt to hide racism from the controversy around the Chief.

Nevertheless, part of the “risk” of anti-black racism is that it is (at least perceived as) more difficult to manage and/or needs to be managed differently and more publicly than racism targeted against other groups. At the U of I, anti-black racism represents a higher-level racial-
risk than racism against Asian-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. This appears to be a trend nationally. For instance, the “Compton Cookout” incident at the University of California San Diego received national media attention, arguably because the targeted group was African-American. The Tacos and Tequila incident made the local papers and some national blogs, but news about it did not spread to Chicago or St. Louis newspapers.

On the U of I campus, anti-black racism may have a higher racial-risk because it is more readily acknowledged as racist because it falls into the black/white paradigm for understanding racism, but interestingly, that is only the case if there is organized student protest over the racist action. In the semester prior to Tacos and Tequila, there was a “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros” party at the U of I that drew upon stereotypical representations of African-Americans. In that moment, anti-black racism did not illicit the same kind of reaction from students in the form of mass-protest as did Tacos and Tequila. Perhaps had students organized an immediate protest, it would have been harder for administrators and students to hide racism when the perceived target was African-American. For example, in the Spring of 2009 when the Central Black Student Union’s dance was shut down prematurely by police, administrators quickly responded to the concerns of Black Students who argued this was racial profiling. Dr. Storm said, “then this goes into questions of the relationships between students of color and the police.” She was actively working on facilitating a better relationship between these groups, students of color and the police, which historically have had tension. Dr. Raven elaborated on the black/white rubric for understanding racism at the U of I. She said,

Race, here. The issues of race and ethnicity here is still very black and white. It just is. It’s accepted it’s just part of what happens. You know, we could bring in some of the best Latino or Asian American intellectuals, Native-American Intellectuals, and um, the campus’ outpouring for that would be minimal but it wouldn’t be to the extent if you just bring Cornell West.
That’s been a challenge for me.

I think Tacos and Tequila was one [instance] in which it just exploded. It was, in a way, [it] put out the issues there about Latinos and other groups, but it still becomes black and white on many levels. When we talk about police profiling and racial profiling, it becomes a larger issue when they break up an African American dance.

For Dr. Raven race on campus is still very black and white. The campus community responds more to African-American scholars who talk about racism. And when African-American dances are shut down, which is a common practice for University and local police, it is “a larger issue” for university administrators. It is important to note, however, that this is a systemic issue as well. For at least ten years, since my first year at the U of I, the police have shut down African-American dances. These dances are in place precisely because the bar-scene that I discussed in Displacing Racism is a predominantly white space. I remember in my freshman year two friends rushed into our dorm room after they had been maced as they left one such party.

Although the “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros party” party did not illicit a high-level of racial risk immediately, the absence of action against it certainly contributed to the overwhelming rally and protest of Tacos and Tequila. Many students reacted to “Big Bootie Hoes and Ghetto Bros” with outrage, but students did not organize rallies or protests. At the protest of Tacos and Tequila, students responded to each of the recent theme-parties through counter-story-telling. They told stories of these theme parties and their struggles to each other and to members of the campus community who would discount that racism was a meaningful factor in the college experience at the U of I.

Unfortunately for many racism is still perceived as white versus black and omits several underrepresented groups such as Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Americans as groups of people who experience racism. One of the logics at work here is that if the racist action is not anti-black, it does not immediately register as racist “enough” (not politically or legally risky
enough to manage) and is therefore harder to convince students that racism is operating. Over the course of my research, the primary racist incidents I witnessed were anti-Latina/o or anti-Indigenous/Native, challenging these easy frames. Again and again, I witnessed that many students and administrators were not readily acknowledging these actions as racist or even as significant.

Protestors against Tacos and Tequila paralleled the image of the Chief’s dance to that of blackface performances in order to explain how racism operates similarly in both. At the protest a young African-American woman held up a image of a blackface performance alongside the image of the Chief. They used the blackface image since it is recognized as racist and attempted to show how the Chief’s performance was a similar racial performance. In this case, students used the black/white paradigm in order to make the anti-American Indian racism legible that simultaneously reinforces the paradigm as it challenges it. The following photo taken on October 24th 2010 of myself and fellow student/activist, Socorro Morales illustrates this point.

How can there be so much racism without any racists?
It is a rare person who is a proud racist. Over the course of this research project I’ve had several people tell me or yell at me “The Chief is not racist!” Outside protests to “The Next Dance” — a mock half-time performance at Assembly Hall— a drunk white man stepped up to the protestors, myself included in the crowd, and shouted “The Chief is not Racist!” He then placed his hand to his mouth and tapped it as he howled and danced toward the entrance. This incident is a reflection of his unacknowledged position of power as a “white male” performing “red face” without fear of consequences. He flat out denied that the Chief was racist as he simultaneously mocked Native peoples in an explicitly racist way by appropriating Native American performances and cultural practices. Further still he does not have to acknowledge racism because he says the Chief’s not racist. One of the privileges of whiteness is that White folks get to decide and then legalize their definition of racism in the law and policy. His actions are indicative of the black/white racial binary in action at the U of I. A binary that Latina/o, Native American, and Asian American students and their allies have attempted to rupture year after year.

**Interest Convergence: Why did U of I really retire the Chief?**

Why did the University retire Chief Illiniwek in 2007? In this next section I attempt to answer that question. I outline some of the history of protest and tension around the Chief and I demonstrate how the Chief retirement was not a moral or ethical decision. It was not even a decision in which student protestors forced University administrators to acknowledge long-standing dissonance on the Chief. Dissonance only occurs when people are not acting on their values. In this section I contend that this decision was financial and that it was in the University’s legal and financial interest to retire the Chief. I use what Critical Race Theory scholars call
“interest convergence,” “material determinism”, or “racial realism” (2001). It is rare when the interests of elites and the majority of people of color merge. That is, as Delgado and Stefanic point out “Because racism advances the interest of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (physically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it” (2001:7). In other words, the University of Illinois’s Board of Trustees was not going to retire the Chief unless their interests were met in doing so. As we will see, even the financial interests of the University were not enough to keep the University out-of lengthy legal proceedings.

It was in 2005 that the Board of Trustees was thrown off its axis as the center of decision-making on the Chief issue. Activists’ prior appeals to external or government bodies had failed. But finally in 2005 the NCAA took a moral stance on the national controversy of stereotypical mascots in collegiate athletics. The NCAA deemed Chief Illiniwek hostile in response to Native American protests and campus controversy. A 2005 NCAA Press Release stated,

“Colleges and universities may adopt any mascot that they wish, as that is an institutional matter,” said Walter Harrison, chair of the Executive Committee and president at the University of Hartford. "But as a national association, we believe that mascots, nicknames or images deemed hostile or abusive in terms of race, ethnicity or national origin should not be visible at the championship events that we control.”

Although this statement was incredibly important in eliminating the Chief as the “official” mascot of the University of Illinois, the statement itself indicates the difficult terrain of managing racism. On the one hand, the NCAA clearly recognizes that colleges and universities have their own autonomy by stating that they can adopt any mascot they wish. On the other hand, they simultaneously suggest that these institutions were accountable outside of the institution, in this case, to the NCAA. If the NCAA decided an institution’s mascot was hostile or abusive, that institution would be sanctioned.

“The NCAA objects to institutions using racial/ethnic/national origin references in their intercollegiate athletics programs,” said NCAA President Myles Brand. "Several
institutions have made changes that adhere to the core values of the NCAA Constitution pertaining to cultural diversity, ethical sportsmanship and nondiscrimination. We applaud that, and we will continue to monitor these institutions and others. All institutions are encouraged to promote these core values and take proactive steps at every NCAA event through institutional event management to enhance the integrity of intercollegiate athletics related to these issues.”

The NCAA designated that the University of Illinois’s Mascot, Chief Illiniwek, was among the mascots deemed “hostile or abusive.” Integrity, diversity, and ethical sportsmanship were the core values considered in the NCAA Executive Committee decision. The NCAA cited 18 schools that would be affected by this new policy. They were given until February 16, 2006 to comply. Although I have not seen the University’s legal appeals to this ruling, I do believe claims to institutional autonomy surfaced in those appeals because they circulated in the pro-Chief, anti-NCAA rhetoric on campus. Several students and alumni on blogs stated that the University should decide its own fate and not concede authority on this or any issue.

On February 16th, 2007 the Board of Trustees at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign issued a press release notifying the campus community and public that the schools controversial mascot Chief Illiniwek would be retired. The decision came after the U of I exhausted its appeals to an NCAA ruling that banned hosting post-season games at any institution with a racially offensive mascot. The fact that the University exhausted the appeals process was made very clear in the press release. Retiring the Chief was the only way for the University to maintain “a high integrity athletic programs” that would allow our student athletes an “opportunity to compete at the highest levels” (Board of Trustees, 2010). The wording of the press release made clear that the University had no choice but to retire very specific uses of Chief Illiniwek imagery. On one level, this is interest convergence at work. That is, the retirement of Chief Illiniwek is an instance in which a civil rights victory goes hand-in-hand with the self-interest of the white majority (Delgado and Stefanić 2001:18). Specifically, the National
Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) ruling banned the use of the name “Chief Illiniwek” and “the related Native American imagery in connection with university athletics.” Unfortunately it did not ban maintaining a racially hostile campus climate—this is an example of how law and policy fails to redress racism. If the NCAA had banned the tradition of Chief Illiniwek maybe the hostile climate would have dissipated since the ruling. This very specific and narrow ruling on the use of the Chief Illiniwek is very important to understanding racial risk management. Financially, it was in the University’s best interest to retire the Chief two years earlier when the NCAA first made this ruling. But, because of the material advantages of whiteness, the University held out to the last possible minute.

**Consequences of Racial Risk Management**

Although the Board of Trustees officially made the decision that Chief Illiniwek would no longer be the university’s symbol, it still sanctioned the use of what Board of Trustees member Laurence Eppley described as “The Chief Illiniwek tradition [that] inspired and thrilled members of the University of Illinois community for 80 years” (Board of Trustees, 2010). What that meant for the rest of the campus was that all racial-risk was assessed through the racial politics of Chief Illiniwek. In the months and years that followed this decision, Chief Illiniwek was still present in a way that directly related to University athletics. The man who danced as Chief Illiniwek was no longer center-stage, but the stage was still set for his performance and the audience packed the house. The Chief still danced in Assembly Hall. The only difference was that he did not dance at half-time. Instead he danced hours after the homecoming game. He danced again after fans had a few more hours to tail-gate and drink.

Members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) advanced their wide-ranging theoretical and
ideological agendas (Homes and Marcus 2005) for the University, in part, through the Chief. The BOT of the University refused to acknowledge that representations/performance/imagery and discourses of the Chief as racist, despite insurmountable evidence to the contrary. The BOT of the University actively maintained a hostile climate that contributed to cultural and psychological harm against students of color and Native-American students specifically. They did so by denying that race was at play by actively hiding racism. In their rhetoric of the Chief, the racist history of American Indian caricatures was never discussed. In this sense the University is complicit with the agendas of U.S. Empire (that is the foremost political and military power in the world), that maintain the current racial, class, and gender power-structure (Harvey 2005; Lugo 2008). The legal and policy decisions here matter world-wide and have the greatest sphere of influence. Despite the clear relationship between mock-Indian performances and mock-Latina costumes, members of the Board of Trustees and the University Administration continued to situate the Chief in a position of reverence to the University community. They did so to the detriment of students, faculty, and lower-level administrators alike, all of whom had to deal with the everyday consequences of the Chief’s ghost.

In my everyday experiences on campus, students expressed a desire to maintain the symbol of the Chief in ways they “felt” more than they could articulate. When I spoke with students their frustration was tangible. Pro-Indigenous/Anti-Chief supporters had a strong argument that stood on history and experience, more than the word and idea of tradition. When I listened to conversations on campus or at forums the anger of Pro-Chief supporters was palpable and sometimes visible as their faces turned red with frustration. I cannot count the number of times students have stumbled the words “It’s tradition” (i.e. entitlement) in defense of the Chief, as their anger becomes visceral. Tradition is read as entitlement, that is, having the right to do
something, solely based on historical dominance. For these students it is about ownership of the University. They expect the University to confer the material and other benefits that come with whiteness. They are not willing to give up the Chief simply because they don’t want to. So they participate in acts of racial gate-keeping, planned events, like the Next Dance, that clearly articulate that Native Students and American Indian Studies, do not matter here. Susan Street, a mid-level university administrator and I discussed this to some depth as she ran me through a typical scenario that occurs when she discusses the Chief with a pro-Chief student. In this scene we have pro-Chief Student Mike and Susan.

Susan is sitting patiently listening to Mike’s concerns.

Mike (sad depressed face): “But [the Chief’s] not here. I miss him”

Susan: “whether you think it’s wrong or not, it’s divisive on our campus. It’s terribly divisive”

Mike: Sigh. “But it’s not divisive”

Susan: well “nationally we look like a bunch of hoo-haaas, really”

Mike: “I like the Chief and I don’t care what the stupid University says God Damn-it”

Mike leaves unsatisfied. End scene.

Susan went on to tell me that she sees it as “an act of defiance.” “That’s what I’ve kind of come to see it as—real fans yell CHIEF!” Susan continues to tell me that she understands this defiance as linked to whiteness and the rhetoric of the far-right. She said “I see this defiant thing, one of the places it comes from is that I think that some white people [think] that, [pause] that the University succumbed to the politically correct left. You know. And there’s this, and it’s not with all white people, it really isn’t, but there’s this group of white people out there who think that everything is about being politically correct.” As an aside to this conversation Street
acknowledged that attitude of defiance is in part due to how the University presented the Chief’s retirement. There was so much ill will toward the NCAA that at Illinois Athletics games and around campus you will see Calvin “Pee On” decals in which Calvin from the “Calvin and Hobbs” Comic Strip is peeing on the letters “NCAA.” Often times this appears on the back of a t-shirt that says “CHIEF.”

This link to the politics of the far right is a link Bernardo made as well. For Bernardo, it was clear that pro-chiefers had a hard stance that not only denied racism but also did not allow anyone to question the racism in the Chief. When I asked him about the Chief, he said:

Hah! I don’t like to talk about the Chief. I think that it [the Chief] reinforced lineage, and a right, and a stake at this University versus people who were against the University. It’s kind of like the rhetoric you see in the current election campaign. [Obama and McCain]. If you support winning the war in Iraq, then you are pro-America. If you critique what’s going on, then you are anti-American. This is a claim about you and your identity. About who you are implicitly. The lines were drawn. If you were anti-chief, you are anti-University, you are not Pro-Illinois, you’re anti-sports and our accomplishments, you hate your degree, if you’re anti-chief.

Bernardo went on to say,

It created a climate where the other was always entirely other. The other individual wasn’t just a student at this campus. But they were a student who was against your campus. They were threatening.

Bernardo was clear that these absolutist arguments about the Chief were similar to the United States war in Iraq. If you have a critical stance on the war, that means you do not support your country. Similarly, if you critique the Chief, that means you do not support the University.

Bernardo had a response to this logic. He said, “I believe in the institution of the University of Illinois and I don’t believe you should cede the institution to figures who would want to bastardize and destroy what is so great about public education.” Bernardo wants to claim space and ownership of the University.

Arguably Chief Illiniwek symbolized the actual values of an institution created in 1867
amid a nation bereft with racial violence and hostility. Chief Illiniwek was first seen at the University of Illinois in 1926. To be critical of the Chief’s relationship to those values, for some, is blasphemy. Although the U of I, as an institution was challenged morally on the use of Chief Illiniwek for decades, the Chief’s retirement took direct action from a national organization outside the community. The NCAA had posed an ethical dilemma to the University two years prior to its decision to retire Chief Illiniwek. In 2007 the BOT had exhausted all of its appeals against a 2005 NCAA ruling against racist mascots and post-season play. If the BOT had chosen to ignore the NCAA ruling, after exhausting the legal appeals, University Athletics would not be allowed to hold post-season sporting events.

The Retirement

In February 2007, just a few weeks after a forum entitled “Racism, Power, and Privilege” designed by several of the organizers of the Tacos and Tequila protest who had formed the S.T.O.P. Coalition (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege), the Board of Trustees (BOT) announced that in two weeks, the Chief would dance it’s last official dance at any University event. As a result of this announcement, there was mourning.

Many in the local community were outraged. Chief supporters dressed in black and held vigils on the main quad. Several scathing reviews of the campus administration and “liberals” appeared in the local paper, the Champaign News Gazette. The “Last Dance” was held on February 27, 2007 at a regular-season basketball game.

Many anti-Chief students did not feel safe on campus at this time. The Chief’s retirement came after a white student threatened to throw a tomahawk in the face of a Native student-activist on campus. Several of her friends organized patrols to walk with her to and from classes
for protection—myself included. It was that intense. The University was aware of the threat and sought legal recourse and punitive measures. Those punitive rather than restorative approaches only exacerbated the climate of hate.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that the Chief controversy was harmful to the campus climate, the University maintained the use of much of the related Native American imagery in the same breath that it used to retire “Chief Illiniwek.” In another interview, Dr. Street said to me, “I wish they didn’t still play the music. I don’t know why that decision was made or by whom.” Susan was referring to the “Three-In-One” music played by the marching band during half-time events. Conversely, Dr. Smith, another administrator said, “We took a good step [in retiring the Chief], but allowing the Chief to appear in the parade is a non-issue, it’s free speech.” Dr. Smith felt that the Chief retirement was managed well. He said “There are competing people... allowing the music was the right decision.” As an upper-level administrator, he owned the management of the Chief and thought that much of the legacy should remain. This decision-making reflects neoliberal governance. Relegating the Chief to the private domain where it cannot be regulated in the same way as it can in the public sphere, like all legal decisions on race.

The “Three-In-One” tradition has been by far one of the more problematic vestiges of the Chief. In response to the board’s 2007 decision to retire the Chief, The Marching Illini, the marching band of the U of I, immediately issued a statement. They said they were disappointed but respected the BOT’s decision. Soon after their first statement, the Marching Illini issued an additional statement assuring the campus community that they would continue to perform the “Three-In-One” which includes musical compositions entitled “The Pride of the Illini, Hail to the Orange, and March of the Illini” (Board of Trustees, 2010). This is the same music that was used
in Chief Illiniwek’s official performances and continues to be used in unofficial performances—and this campus has a strong tradition of celebrating unofficial events.27

In the years that followed the official retirement of Chief Illiniwek, I attended a few basketball games. As a basketball fan, I attended games prior to the Chief’s retirement in spite of the Chief performance. Sometimes I would wear an anti-Chief shirt—on my braver days. If I was at the game with men they would tell me that I was jeopardizing their safety by wearing anti-chief apparel more than I was jeopardizing my own safety. They assumed that anyone who had a gripe with my shirt would take it out on them and not me. In fact this had been true on other occasions in which I wore anti-Chief shirts out to the campus-town bars that led to heated discussions with mostly male students.

The half-time performances were simultaneously very different and very much the same. Although the official performance of Chief Illiniwek was gone, the audience’s participation as co-performers of the Chief was the same and perhaps even more intense than before. The Three-In-One music tradition harkened the audience to enact the same performance of the Chief it had always enacted. Fans stood, crossed their arms in a very austere pose, and the stadium fell silent. The official university band, the Marching Illini, would play the same “Three-In-One” music it always played. In the center of Assembly Hall—the indoor stadium and concert center at the U of I—students locked arms as they always have and swayed to the music. And although the young man who danced the Chief was no longer in the center of the room, fans called out “CHIEF!” in low rumbles throughout the stadium. Everywhere I looked, there were people standing, seriously and intently, staring at the middle of the hall. Many were wearing Chief shirts. Despite the fact that Chief Illiniwek no longer performed a half-time dance, the Chief was still present: The Chief was part of the tradition of Illinois athletics. The Chief’s racial legacy
lingered, even if racism was denied. The intolerable climate was no different than before except that now the Chief haunted us all (Rosaldo 1993).

Susan Street told me:

The three-in-one, again, I’m not a University of Illinois grad so I don’t know these things, but it’s got three pieces of music and one of them is the alma mater, and the other is some other non-Indian type music, and then one of them is a Native American-Indian type music, and that’s where people, you know

At this point Susan crosses her arms in front of her chest, puts on a stoic face, and then raises her arms to 90 degree angles so that her hands are parallel to her body. It is the same mock-Indian move that the Chief used to do as part of his half-time performance. Susan went on to say,

And my contention with playing the three-in-one is that it rubs salt in the wounds, in the wound, and that neither side is happy with it. Neither the anti-chief people are happy with it, nor are the pro-chief people happy with it. Because you’ve got everything. I was here the first year when the Chief danced and I saw it. [Now] you’ve got everything there except the Chief there. And if you kind of squint, especially on the football field you know, cause you know how they’re all like marching around and then the Chief comes in between [the crowd] [me “uh huh”], you know they don’t separate like that [anymore], but you know, you can kind of imagine the Chief being there.

Chief Illiniwek still haunts the U of I campus, especially those who love the Chief. Susan describes the scene at the half-time performance of a football game. Post-retirement, the Chief still exists, even if only in the imagination of hundreds of fans. Susan could imagine it. Other administrators also knew that the vestiges of the Chief’s performance were meaningful.

Although Dr. Smith thought the Chief’s retirement was managed well, the music fed the controversy and prolonged the resolution. Tension on campus is still playing out among students, on the student senate, in student affairs and in the Champaign-Urbana and greater central-Illinois community. Even as I write, the controversy over the music festers. Two active petitions actively circulated the campus and alumni networks—one attempts to keep the “Three-
in-One”, another argues for its permanent removal. For the board of trustees and some university administrators, the decision to keep the *Three-In-One* was a way to appease staunch Chief supports. Dr. Smith told me that, “leaving the music lets them feel good about the past and then they’ll move on.” But the *Three-In-One* music only continues to stir up resentment and emotions of loss among Chief fans. This is part of the legacy of managing racial-risk through the Chief. Hiding racism, not standing on clear values, allows the Chief to still be a contested part of the University’s future.

Personal investments of administrators are caught up in this complex negotiation in that administrators simultaneously want what’s best for the university. University administrators consider what is best for the university both financially—in the form of Pro-Chief alumni dollars, and in status—that is anti-racist/welcoming campus of the future not tied to the racism of the past. Administrators cannot disentangle the pro-chief alumni/students’ financial investment from their racial investment.

Dr. Smith explained some of the reasons why he felt it was right to let the music remain. He said, “how do we draw from that point on [the NCAA’s ruling on the racial harm in stereotypical mascots] without telling them they’re bad for liking the Chief?, that they’re racist?” At the beginning of this chapter, Bernardo framed this tension in terms of Tacos and Tequila. He argued that some administrators, like Dr. Smith, wanted to hide racism in Tacos and Tequila so that they could continue to deny the Chief was racist. Dr. Smith clearly did not want to send a message to students that the Chief was racist. He did not want students to “feel bad.” He wanted to hide racism—he did not want racism to be an issue in the Chief controversy, despite the fact that the NCAA ruling was designed to eliminate racial stereotypes in college mascots. Dr. Smith did not want pro-Chief students to feel that their safety was threatened or their humanity targeted
because to reflect on one's own complicity with racism may be dehumanizing and humiliating. Was the same compassion shown towards Native-American Students? No. The concern of white-majority students outweighed any concern for the dehumanization and humiliation of students of color on campus. Dr. Smith said, “Nancy Cantor, she made people feel bad about supporting the Chief, that they should feel guilty.” He did not think the university should go that route. Unfortunately, the decision made everyone unhappy. Student affairs administrators told me over and over again that both pro-Chief students and anti-Chief students would come into their offices to complain about the decision. The continued “Next Dance” and protests reflect the tension on campus.

**Campus Consequences**

My ethnographic research suggests that both anti-Chief activists and pro-Chief supporters understand the decision to retire the Chief was more financially than morally driven. Both camps and many in-between see the decision as reflective of the University’s actual values—legal and monetary. They do not see the decision as reflective of the values they imagined their university should possess. Students for Chief Illiniwek want a University that upholds tradition over what they see as political correctness. Anti-Chief activists and other students imagine the University should value diversity and strive to change the culture of institutional racism. For these students the decision to retire (and then resurrect) Chief Illiniwek was a failure on many levels.

Neither Chief supporters nor anti-Chief activists consider Chief Illiniwek’s retirement a firm stance against racism. This was a strategic management tactic of upper-level administrators who did not want the decision to be about race. Is it any wonder that students on campus deny the same thing? Consequently, in my research on race and campus culture I found that student
protestors do not feel that the University is willing to acknowledge their experiences of racism on campus. I also found that the rest of the student body does not see racism as morally reprehensible, even if protected by the constitution. Instead racism is seen as something managed by finances. What students learned here is that racism is something to be managed through an informed calculation of financial risks and benefits, not condemned as an unethical practice—but contingent on interest convergence. This is more impetus to disengage in any meaningful scholarly or personal reflection on the issue.

The practical application of neoliberal multiculturalism in racial-risk management does not address the racial hostility on campus. In fact it does just the opposite, racial-risk management practices attempt to hide racism by displacing it with other factors. The BOT positioned the Chief’s retirement as a financial decision integral to the integrity of University Athletics by the BOT. Meanwhile, Student Affairs and the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations struggled with the ramifications of owning the decision in all of its complexity, one that allowed vestiges of the Chief’s legacy to remain while it eliminated the Chief—a decision that made everyone unhappy. The offices under these units handled the everyday consequences felt by students, unlike the Board of Trustees or upper-level administrators who have limited interaction with students. Whether or not the Chief’s retirement was a small victory for institutionalizing anti-racism remains to be seen. It is important to claim this as a victory because victories, however small, are constantly struggled over, contested and at times, can build a foundation for transformative change, even if there is still much more work to do. The management of the Chief does give us insight into how complicated it is to institutionalize anti-racism while maintaining expectations of white entitlement (i.e. remove the university policies and practices inspired by racist worldviews.) Or maybe it tells us how impossible it is to do both.
The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois never took a stance against the racism the Chief represents and perpetuates and never named race as such. As stewards of the University, they advanced their wide-ranging theoretical and ideological agendas (Homes and Marcus 2005) for the University, in part, through the Chief and similar racist incidents. The University did not want to acknowledge the Chief as racist, despite insurmountable evidence to the contrary. They contributed to cultural and psychological harm done Native American students. They did so by denying race was at play, and thus, used neoliberal multicultural logic to hide actively and neutralize any critical discourse of racism. In their rhetoric of the Chief, the racist history of American Indian caricatures was never discussed. In this sense the University is complicit with the agendas of U.S. Empire especially particular to Native Americans, that maintain the current racial, class, and gender power-structure. Despite the clear relationship between mock-Indian performances and racial hierarchies, members of the Board of Trustees and the University Administration continued to position the Chief in a position of reverence to the University.

The Chief is representative of structural racism and as such impacts all communities of the University. The continual use of paraphernalia associated with the Chief (i.e., the music that accompanied the Chief performance) continues to send a message that the University at its highest levels (Board of Trustees and Chancellor Richard Herman) is ambivalent about the damage this symbol continues to do to this University and its students, especially students of color. Further, the strength of pro-Chief support on campus perpetuates the notion that anti-Indigenous racism does not require a high level of racial risk-management. That is anti-Native American racism is never considered racist enough to require action. In racial risk-assessment of the Chief controversy, white entitlement wins over equity and fairness. The message is that
money and lack of liability is most important. In its management of these incidents the University’s Upper Management has shown similar ethics to the CEOs and CFOs who are more concerned with personal and corporate profit than their responsibility to their clients and the people they serve and as such, are complicit in the racism that successfully targets people of color and those who occupy marginalized positions in the racial hierarchy of the university.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SELLING DIVERSITY: THE MANAGERS AND THE SALESWOMEN

As an undergraduate student my anger for segregation and inequity on campus was directed at administrators. In my mind, administrators were faceless bureaucrats who sat in campus buildings making decisions that were completely disconnected from the reality of student life. They were responsible for campus segregation, Chief Illiniwek, and the climate of the University—a climate that seemed to value drinking over learning. As I learned about the history of the U of I, it became clear that frustrations with racial oppression were a part of the University’s legacy (Williamson 2001). In my first Ethnography of the University (EUI) class I not only realized that I was not alone in my beliefs and frustrations but also that there was a space to intervene. Many of us in that first EUI class shared our own stories of frustration with “administration” and the people we interviewed shared similar experiences.

Many of us were active leaders in student groups on campus. Looking back, our anger was not misplaced. We knew who had the power to give us the change we demanded. Oftentimes we got that part right. Many of us knew that Chancellor Nancy Cantor, when she was here, was an ally. What we struggled with as activists and organizers prior to and throughout my research was discerning who else were our allies within the University Administration. One of the complex issues that emerged as the struggle for institutionalizing multicultural initiatives progressed was the blurring of the lines between allies and enemies. Even in 1992, when U of I students had a sit-in at Henry Administration Building, they knew that administrators were not allies to the struggle for equity. In 1992 students met with administrators who were out-right hostile towards students of color. Today administrators placate students differently. Today
administrators work in offices that students demanded—offices designed to promote equity. Do the administrators who work in those offices share our values? As part of that legacy, there is an uneasy relationship between students of color and all administrators, even administrators of color, even those who may be allies. Students demanded that the ranks of faculty and administrators of color be diversified and we did make progress. But does that mean we now have allies in the administration? Maybe. It does mean that they are contractually hired with the university. As such they must engage in some level of racial-risk management because that is their job and part of their ability to occupy and ascend the ranks of power in higher education is to be savvy to the logics of racial risk management—logics that maintain white privilege. This does not mean, however, that they can’t and don’t merge racial risk-management with strategic interest convergence.

In the earlier part of my dissertation I have shown how University Administrators managed incidents of racism (without necessarily identifying them as such), or alleged racism, highlighted how decision-making processes maintain a culture of racism as acceptable. I have shown how university administrators, manage racial risk. As activists we assessed how an individual acts in moments of crisis says something about the character of the individual administrator, in the same way as the actions of the University at a time of crisis say something about the character of the institution. The values of administrators may be harder to glean in the day-to-day practices of the institution but are revealed in moments of racial crisis. Administrators’ actions often seemed contradictory and as a consequence it was difficult to really ascertain their values as individuals and how that affected their work.

In this chapter I review some key moments in which administrators use the racial-risk management strategy of selling diversity. I highlight these moments in order to frame them in the
context of struggles over institutionalizing racial justice and equity—which inevitably entails institutionalizing sexual, gender, and class equity. This is precisely the tension. Who were these administrators? Why were they here at the University? Why did they care about doing, as one administrator put it, “diversity work”? This section is an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of some administrators. I do so in order to show that to move an administrator on a particular issue, there must be interest-convergence.

Administrators know that they have to sell diversity. They know that it can be problematic for them to do so precisely because oftentimes in the attempts to increase the diversity in higher education, the outcomes often fall within a neoliberal rubric that includes shifting the burden of institutionalizing racial justice onto students and faculty from marginalized groups.

Why can’t administrators give students what they want? That is, why can’t they provide students with the tools to build a just democracy, and why can’t they lead by example?

An example of this legacy of struggle is the battle over autonomy for the four cultural centers. These centers emerged from student demands and students demanded power and autonomy in what the cultural centers did and who they served. The four cultural centers are the Bruce D. Nesbit African American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, La Casa Cultural Latina, and the Native American House. These cultural centers emerged from student demands to transform the institution. Black students in the late 1960s were the first to issue the demand for a cultural center. They were clear that the problem was systemic to the University and society, not to them as individual students (Williamson 2003). The same was true for La Casa Cultural Latina. Latino students established La Casa in 1974 and protested in 1992 as part of the ongoing battles for institutionalizing racial justice. Joy Ann Williamson speaks to this in
her book, *Black Power on Campus*. Williamson points out that the demands for the cultural centers stem from the student lead Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

A Latino studies program and a women’s studies program were established some years after the Black studies program. Most recently, Illinois institutionalized an Asian American studies program. Taking cues from the Black studies program emerging in the late 1960s, the new programs are broad, interdisciplinary fields. Also, Latina/o student demands, regarding La Casa Cultural Latina, the Latina/o cultural center, paralleled those of Black students of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the early 1990s, Latina/o students called for the resignation of the cultural center’s director after accusing her of undermining the center’s central purposes, demanded that their choice of director be instated, requested more autonomy in cultural center affairs, and accused the university of under budgeting center programs. In their quest to be heard, Latina/o students and their supporters occupied both the Office of Minority Student Affairs and the Administration Building. Like the Black students before them, they used direct-action tactics and race rhetoric to demand an audience with the administration.

The cultural spaces emerged from protest and demands to transform the University to meet the needs of students of color on campus. The circumstances that lead up to the 1992 protest included direct confrontation with administrators to meet the demands of students. Activist students knew that administrative management strategies were full of meaning, informed by an often unacknowledged but ever present value system that maintains and intensifies racist social hierarchies with consequences for the campus and beyond it. Although always present, these values are more readily visible in moments when racism is shown to be occurring on campus—like in 1992. For 1992 protestors, race and class were always interconnected. Latino students marked their distinction on campus not only as racial but more specifically in terms of a classed experience. Then, unlike now, many of the students came from impoverished communities from the City of Chicago. This contrasts the way race and racism are framed today. Now the University values diverse people who can teach others—in 1992 this was not the stance of U of I administrators.
Unlike the administration of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and even the 1990s, there is greater diversity in the administration now. I argue that this is a direct result of neoliberalism and a neoliberal multiculturalism that responded to the Civil Rights Movements. The current administration has more women and people of color, but also more administrators who care about social justice and civil rights. In 2009 and 2010 students on the U of I campus felt the same tension students felt in 1992— that the purpose of the cultural centers was undermined by mid-level university administrators who did not share the same values as students. Today, however, that tension is different because the racism is different. Racism is still present it’s just in a different form. Administrators are not always directly racist in the way students were in Tacos and Tequila. Instead, administrators make careful calculations of racial risk and interest convergence. Although administrators today may share some values with students, this approach makes the tension between students and administrators even more difficult. Who can we trust? Everyone who works at the University signs a contract to work for the University— when they do so their interests become aligned, in varying degrees, to the university’s interest. Even students can be part of the racial risk-management plan. In 1992 administrators would dismiss Latino students. Can we trust administrators who work on diversity initiatives because they are women and people of color and may be more likely to empathize? It’s a dilemma administrators and students know all too well. Everyone employed in a mid to upper level management position serves in an intermediary capacity. When the administrator is a person of color, the lines are especially and intentionally blurry because often times students are taught to go to these administrators for assistance always— instead of going to those with greater power or taking the matter into their own hands, like students did in the 1992 protest. Those students had few if any allies and in the end it was direct action that got them greater institutional resources for students.
and faculty of color. Today the structure of university administrators means that there are more mid-level administrators who are students of color who can neutralize direct action. They have stories that students can empathize with and are also signals a level of professional achievement that student may achieve if they are able to navigate racial justice according to the dictates of white interests. But we constantly have to ask ourselves: can we achieve racial justice while following the dictates of white interest?

Interest Convergence and Multicultural-Center

The activists and leaders I worked with at the U of I were taught by, in my opinion, some of the smartest and most radically thinking faculty, especially faculty in Ethnic Studies units. As we prepared for action against each of the four ethnographic episodes I outlined, students questioned whether or not to look to administrators as allies. Their analysis was fierce and sophisticated—it is one of the benefits and privileges of organizing and activism on a college campus with critical ethnic studies units.

One such moment, which I have not discussed thus far, was and is the ongoing battle to maintain the autonomy of each of the cultural centers. Throughout my time at the University, students were concerned with the status of the four cultural centers on campus. They were sites of contention as well as safe spaces. White students felt that the cultural centers were self-segregating—although they never applied that analysis to the many predominantly white fraternity and sorority houses or residence halls or any similar spaces. Students of color felt under attack and under valued in part because their cultural centers were always under-attack and the buildings themselves were falling into disarray.
Administrators could never be held accountable for transparency and to the demands of students in their calls for space. I sat in numerous meetings as a student who was invested in the autonomy of the cultural centers—that is, in keeping many cultural centers instead of having a “multicultural space” for all students. Students who were invested in La Casa Cultural Latina did not want to see their space and resources decreased by merging with not only the other cultural centers but also the women’s resources and LGBTQ centers, into a multicultural center. It was feared that this center would look more like an office building than a home and that there would be less people and resources to devote to the unique needs of each group, if they merged. This conversation about multicultural centers existed in 2000 when I was a new undergraduate. Most recently it came to the fore in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. I participated in the student-lead discussions at La Casa Cultural Latina. In those meetings we discussed the pros and cons of merging—given the information that we knew which was often misinformation. We voted. We took surveys. And in public meetings in the Spring of 2010 we decided to keep La Casa as an autonomous space.

We were presented with little option and it felt like our hand was being forced—that there was no choice. Tension around the future of the cultural centers had been growing over months. Student-affairs administrators told students that the land used by the cultural centers was claimed, in the University’s Master Plan, for the Department of Chemistry who had recently received a big grant that would allow them to expand their facilities. It had been done so in the 1970s but the Department had not secured the money necessary to develop on that land—until very recently. As such the Department of Chemistry was now ready to expand. What that meant to Facilities Management and upper-level administrators was that the cultural centers had to go.32 Again, on a campus where research trumps all, there was little room for students of color to
maintain the houses they had fought long and hard to establish. This also speaks to the decision-making of upper-level administrators at the time when they granted use of the land for the African American cultural center, La Casa cultural Latina, etc. This brought several tensions to the fore. Could students trust in University Administrators who worked in these offices and within student affairs, to challenge the Chemistry Department’s claims to that space and defend their cultural centers?

In previous chapters I articulated the messy processes by which students come to express (formally and informally) their collective grievances against the University as a site where racialized hierarchies of cultural-capital are maintained. I do so in order to begin to reveal the processes by which administrators come to appropriate activists’ calls for substantive investments in diversity and turn them into “real-world” management skills for students to consume. The process is more complex and tenuous than simple analysis of administrator-student power divides. In this section I flesh out and make transparent how the power structures between and within administrative departments and units contrive together to maintain racial hierarchies through racial gate-keeping and racial risk management. I do so in order to show that the university budget, as brought to you by upper-level administrators, de-values holistic student learning around racial and ethnic diversity—this is nothing new but part of the legacy of struggle. I argued in the previous section that what is different or permutated in this moment of neoliberal multiculturalism is that there are administrators who do value students of color and communities of color. More specifically, however, their values are also informed by the demands of neoliberal capitalism and how racial and ethnic communities are valued only when their interest converge with those of White Power and Capitalism. Administrators know that and choose to navigate this tension.
I also flesh out the power structures in order to show how and why the university administration can send mixed messages to the campus community. In some ways this is very clear but to undergraduate students on campus, it is not always understood why the “University Administration” sends mixed messages. Dr. Horace Xavier told me, “I, like you, sometimes question this amorphous administration. It’s kind of like Oz.”

I think we have to first problematize the idea of “the administration.” …you have lots of people who work very hard within all levels of the administration to make these changes. And you have people for whom it’s not part of their passion area. I mean this idea of social-justice is not a part of everyone’s focus. Some are very focused on their research, very focused on very important things like how to finance the institution, how to be more efficient users of energy and consumers of natural resources.

For Dr. Xavier, the simple answer is that the administration is made up of lots of individual workers whose passions are distinct and that is apparent in their work on institutional values. In this chapter I attempt to show, more clearly, how and why power structures and personal values affect higher education policy and budgets. As I do so, I will show how interpersonal politics are informed by adherence to racist power structures within the University Administration. As I reveal these dynamics I am able to show how these politics affect both University policy and the student experience. (The effects on administrators should be clear, as should the effects on campus climate.) My analysis in this section is highly informed by Women of color feminists, namely their insistence that the personal is political. Administrative management at the U of I makes clear that the lines between the two different but contriving politics of the personal and the political, which are constantly blurred.

Most often, administrators who address racism on campus have modest amounts of power within a University system where research is considered a priority. That is, 4.3 million dollars of the University’s 8.3 million dollar total operating budget is dedicated to research.
Research has the material power at the University (see 2012 budget). Many of the administrators I analyze in this chapter are housed in student affairs, which are traditionally not the departments considered to be most critical to the University. These administrators usually are in student affairs positions because they care deeply about campus climate. Dr Xavier told me:

> Working with underrepresented students, working with diverse students, ah, trying to look at students who are underserved and marginalized and work to make sure that they ah feel like members of the community. And really try to help students understand how to become part of this beloved community if you think of King’s definition of that concept and become a part of a collaborative environment. How do you develop many of the soft skills that students are going to need in the workforce. I think you get a lot of that through the leadership development and diversity education kind of things that we offer.

For Dr. Xavier, he was called to act in such a way that serves students of color and attempts to integrate them within all elements of society—even to the benefits of capitalism. Dr. Xavier is navigating interest convergence with his values. As an administrator he is savvy to why white Administrators, or administrators from a dominant group perspective, value racial diversity—through its material values. His work resides in a productive space between the tension of the world as it is and the world as he wants it to be. He also owned this tension in other ways. He said, as he chuckled, “And you know, there are plenty of us who are works in progress ourselves.” He continued, “I think the students believe that the faculty and staff have it together around these issues and bless their hearts, they’ll keep living and understand that many of us have less skills than they presently have because we came out of a very different context where this kind of collaboration wasn’t forced on us.” Dr. Xavier is clearly navigating multiple tensions while also learning as he goes. This is an understanding he shares with his co-workers. As such university administrators mobilize several management techniques to manage racial risk that seek to minimize the racial effects on campus climate and the overall risks to the University.
In the same interview with Dr. Xavier, who is a mid-level administrator who had worked for the University for over ten years told me, “I think it’s important to note that within the administration we are hierarchical and ultimately the leadership will flow down from the board of trustees, president, chancellors, through the chancellor’s cabinet, all the vice-chancellors.” Dr. Thompson, another mid-level administrator shared his analysis with me. He said:

I think everybody sees Swanlund as a black box or you imagine how it works based on really limited experience with one aspect or another or floor or another. What happens on each floor is very different. I guess the one thing that became very clear to me after coming here after a little while was that people in these positions which touch on the undergraduate experience in some way is much more about coordinating other people’s efforts or facilitating efforts than anything else. None of us have line responsibility. We don’t control the budget. The reality is when people imagine the sort of exercise of power they are imagining that, in terms of flows of money. That authority resides in academic affairs with the Provost and the two vice provosts have a pretty active hand in making recommendations to the Provosts as well as the deans.

Dr. Thompson is clear that the power in the University resides with those administrators who can control the budget. This power resides primarily in academic affairs. When I spoke with other administrators, especially those in student affairs units, it was clear that even the student affairs budgets were pre-determined and that there was not much leeway. Dr. Smith, another administrator I spoke with also said, “At the end of the day we (provosts, chancellors, vice chancellors) we are responsible for making decisions, its not a ballot box.” Dr. Smith clearly owns administrative decision-making, “it’s not a ballot box.” Although this is a public university his decisions are not made democratically. This is an example of para-ethnographic decision-making by university administrators. They are a result of his ethnographic data that he receives from his cabinets, lower-level administrators, and his own management expertise.

As an upper-level administrator there is a limited capacity to interact everyday with students. The Chancellor and President are the most powerful decision-makers on the University
of Illinois campus. At the Racism, Power and Privilege forum that was held in response to the string of racial theme parties, students called out the University Administration for being a space of white privilege. There were no upper-level administrators of color at the U of I. This was a point of contention for students on campus who felt that upper-level administrators were not only out-of-touch with students, but especially with the students of color on campus. Joseph B. White, then the President of the University did not respond well to a student who brought that fact to his attention. When I spoke with Bernardo about the forum he said, “The Forum… the forum, the forum, the forum…President White talked the most.” Bernardo thought this was interesting given that he had the least experience on campus, compared to the other administrators. Bernardo went on to say, “He seemed like an Oligarch on stage ah commanding troops and suppressing dissent. Ah. And making sure everybody was…it wasn’t his shining moment.” According to those in attendance, when White was asked why there were not administrators of color on the stage he turned beet-red and became very defensive. Bernardo said, “It just gave the illusion, the appearance, this is insidious…the response was ridiculous.” I asked then Chancellor now faculty member Richard Herman about this incident. He said, he did not appreciate the question of “why didn’t they have an African American administrator or a Latino administrator?” he said “But Katehi was the first female provost ever!” For many who attended the forum two things were clear first, that there was work left to do, and second, that upper-level administrators were out of touch with students and how their decision-making affected campus. (For another example of this see Hiding Racism.)

The decisions of upper-level administrators had consequences for all other administrators, especially those who interacted with students everyday. What does it mean that the people in these positions do not interact with students on a regular basis? Underrepresented
students felt that it was unlikely that administrators could understand their concerns with campus climate. Dr. Xavier told me:

There are spaces when I hear students [of color] and I’m like, oh ok, I understand that and I’m not sure my white colleagues have that experience. I think some do. I think that a woman would have a similar experience in understanding what it feels like to be othered at these different levels and being in positions where you’re working to make change however you work in that same context where you are underrepresented and you feel vulnerable in your space. There are people who are still pioneering space at the institution-this is not unique to Illinois but this is part of that experience here.

Dr. Xavier’s experience is that some people don’t get it and some do—those who have experience being marginalized are more likely to empathasize with students of color on campus. Personally, Dr. Xavier knows what it is like to feel vulnerable to the dominant racial framework. However, in the decision-making roles, too few have experiences with oppression and many more have experiences with privilege. As Dr. Xavier said, people are still pioneering space in higher education across the nation.

One of the ways programs serve to ‘pioneer space’ in higher education is through programs like the McNair Scholars Program, a federally funded T.R.I.O. program designed to diversify the professoriate by giving highly qualified underrepresented undergraduates the tools they need to receive their doctorate. The need for these programs are framed similarly to the affidavits in the Gratter and Grutz affirmative action cases that sell diversity as good for capitalism. Dr. Xavier believes part of the solution is transforming the canon of thought to reflect the diversity that comes with experience of different, non-dominant, identities. He said,

We have to figure out how to make sure these core values around how people should be treated around how we understand learning so that it doesn’t continue to be an exclusive canon but it begins to appreciate different kinds of thought and different kinds of perspective taking and different kinds of voices that ultimately will get us to that place where we have this kind of diversity—where we can appreciate, integrate, and use all of the rich talent that we have that comes form our different communities. That have in
many cases have laid dormant because we have this racial hierarchy that doesn’t allow us to fully integrate and realize those talents.

You know, more eloquent cases are made about in the Grutter and Gratz briefs. Industry and education they make great cases for how diversity can be beneficial for all of us.

Dr. Xavier explains that we still have to figure out how to ensure our core values allow for the appreciation of diversity. Again, the value of diversity is articulated through a social value that is also economic. Dr. Xavier mentions the affidavits in those cases, in which capitalist industry make strong claims to the benefits of diversity to an increasingly corporate, profit driven society. As Women of Color/Third World Feminist Scholar, Grace Kyungwon Hong points out, “racialized and gendered difference equals profit in a global economy” (2006:xv). It does so because hyper-capitalism commodifies all forms of difference for profit. Yet, in this financial crisis, however, those programs like the McNair Scholars Program are on the chopping block because they are not always seen as relevant. President Obama just announced, in spring of 2012, that the McNair program will be cut from TRIO programs. Similar programs, like Diversifying Faculty in Illinois (DFI), are consistently on the chopping block—I speak more about this in the chapter on neoliberal burdens (chapter four).

**What gets funded is a matter of Interest Convergence**

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, administrators who care about social justice are balancing the university as it is with the University as they want it to be. They act within that framework which has the potential to create new spaces as frames for identities and struggle. In the spring of 2009 when I interviewed administrators about the financial crisis and what that would mean for programs that are designed to achieve racial equity, some administrators felt little cause for concern. When I spoke with Chancellor Herman, he said that he felt proud of his
contributions to the ethnic studies programs. He was especially proud to keep these funds during a time of budget crisis. He brought together a committee of faculty and deans. This was an instance in which an upper-level administrator owned his accountability to his stated values—although at other times this was not the case. This is also a distinction from previous decades in which fewer administrators valued diversity. Herman initially thought building a strong Ethnic Studies Program was about resources. Herman realized later that struggles with Ethnic Studies were about the legitimacy of the area of work—not necessarily the amount of resources. I would argue that it is both. One of the ways they were able to aid the Ethnic Studies Units was to re-evaluate the tenure process. He said one of the challenges was “Could we provide limited tenure in the program? And we just did it.” He went on to say that, “Ethnic Studies is entitled to define their own terms of tenure,” although attrition and tenure continue to be a struggle in those units. They also worked on providing funding for the post-doc program. At the time, Herman told me that the strategy in the provost’s office was to “grow your own” academics and schools and “it worked”; the office provided funding for the post-doc that was expanded upon by the Ethnic Studies unit. He was taken to task several times, for not including LGBT efforts in these programs in order to add legitimacy to LGBT studies. For Herman, Ethnic Studies units were not in jeopardy.

Dr. Xavier felt similarly although his response communicates something more than values. As an administrator of color his thoughts on whether or not the University will maintain ethnic programs resides in a tension between the world as we want it to be (our values of racial equity) and the world as it is—one in which history shows us that racial-equity is only maintained when it is in the interest of white privilege (Delgado and Stefanic 2001). He told me:

On a gut level you’re asking me “Do I believe the university values diversity? Values these ethnic programs?” It’s almost this notion that’s we’re relatively new to the game and
you know, “last hired first fired.” I think we would be very unwise to throw ethnic studies programs and interdisciplinary studies programs out of the window because we are increasingly interacting in a global society and it is not the kind of context where the U.S. will sit on top of the world and everyone must articulate to our values, beliefs, standards, we are moving into a space where we have to learn and have to teach students how to operate in different contexts. These programs are central in understanding the perspectives that are beyond their own. So you can’t have quality education if I can’t prepare you to interact in a different context, successfully. And I think that’s the richness in how diversity is being defined. It’s part of academic excellence in our strategic plans. You can’t have it without diversity. That why I don’t believe that the first rush is going to be to run and cut through the ethnic studies or the cultural studies first in that’s in keeping with the strategic plan before us and two that is not preparing us as an institution or our students, for operating in the twenty-first and twenty second century.

In this excerpt, like in others we’ve seen, Dr. Xavier negotiates how Ethnic Studies programs are in the best-interest of white people or people within the dominant ideology. He is clear that the reason why the Ethnic Studies programs will be maintained is not because the University values racial-equity for the sake of justice, but rather that in this globalized world, it is a necessary tool for capitalism and workforce development. In this sense, even administrators who value racial equity transform multiculturalism from its original political investment into something tangible for students to consume.

Dr. Raven and I also spoke of resources. She said that staffing and resources are a challenge. In a meeting someone suggested to her recently, “The diversity offices having the least resources in student affairs doesn’t mean that it’s the least valued.” We both rolled our eyes then laughed. She remembered thinking, “That sounds so naïve.” Dr. Raven went on to tell me that “I don’t think it was meant in a malicious way, it was meant in a defensive way. When you look at the budget we do have the smallest. It’s not even .2% of the entire student affairs budget.” Dr. Raven knows that values are communicated in the budget. When I asked her if the financial crisis would bring on cuts, she went on to say,
No changes, in that sense. The campus has been, um, trying to be very protective about issues of diversity. In that sense, here’s the thing: they won’t cut. But I’m not a, um. I’m not one of those. There are some individuals who work in the field of diversity who when they get a little bowl then they’re very grateful, right. I don’t feel grateful because I think that we are here to make the University look good.

Dr. Raven did not believe the University would cut programs related to diversity because they make the University look good. Yet she was clear that she would not be happy with a small piece of the pie because she knew the value of these programs to higher education, if not specifically this campus. She went on to say,

They protect it because they probably want to but also because they have to but it’s not out of because it's a priority per se because if it was a priority in the beginning, they shouldn’t look this way. If we really want to say to the African-American and Latino communities that you’re valued, the houses wouldn’t look that bad. I mean, clearly engineering is a value to the campus.

This is a clear example of Dr. Raven’s understanding of interest convergence in the policies, budgets, and values of administrators at the U of I. Dr. Raven relates economic resources to the programs that University Administrator’s value. Dr. Raven suggests that if the University Administration valued the cultural houses, La Casa Cultural Latina, and the Bruce. D. Nesbit African-American Cultural Program, they would not be crumpling buildings. If you walk up to the third floor of the African-American Cultural Program you can feel the building sway with your weight. In contrast, the engineering campus has pristine, state of the art buildings. Another example is the Illini Leadership Center. The budget for the leadership center has a greater budget than all four of the cultural centers combined. The budgets speak to the values of the university, within units and throughout the system.

As student activists and organizers we already know that some administrators have more power than others. For all administrators regardless of their power, Tacos and Tequila was an
example of exactly what in 2003 George Yúdice predicted—diversity and multiculturalism became a tool for capitalism. Instead of framing racial theme parties as an example of hurtful racist entertainment that would not be tolerated, Tacos and Tequila became an exercise in “real world” management strategies. The University tried to “sell” the benefits of diversity to its students, faculty, and staff by expressing how diversity benefits them as individuals and students as consumers, buying into diversity as a skill they need to learn for success in the corporate world. My research suggests that their responses do not reflect a desire to produce socially responsible citizens as much as they reflect U.S. societal values of individualism, privatization, and liability. Their responses but also construct these values as assets and skills for corporate environments. We saw this in the chapter *Displacing Racism.*

**Gender: Trapped Between Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Racial Equity**

What does it mean to have upper-level administrators making para-ethnographic decisions as expert managers in this late moment of neoliberal multiculturalism? The easy answer would be that in higher education generally, and administrative positions more specifically, gendered racial roles are entrenched within neoliberal multiculturalism. Race is gendered intentionally. In so doing the work of men in student affairs is emasculated and the work of women is dismissed because it is gendered as “care-taking” work.

It means the work gets pushed further down the institutional hierarchy to those administrators who do work with students—the everyday people of the University. Student Affairs at the University is responsible for managing over 40,000 students. In fiscal year 2012 the budget for Academic Affairs was almost five times greater than that of student affairs. That material value has real implications for how administrators work together and who makes decisions for the University. It is true about individuals in these fields and how specific units,
like student affairs, are positioned within the University hierarchy. It also privileges those white men who work in academic affairs as doing the real, “hard” sciences work, not the sentimental work of culture. Even though researchers do not have the task of managing the entire student body, as managers outside of academic affairs, their work is considered “soft.” Dr. Canary, a female administrator who works to diversify the academy would use this line on several occasions: “You know, this work is much more difficult than rocket science!,,” (indirect quote).

Dr. Xavier, told me:

Student affairs, they’re charged with tending to the co-curricular life of students on campus, and really the broadest sense. So this is the division of which Illini Union operates and all of housing and McKinley, and the assembly hall, and the dean of students office, and the office of minority student affairs, and the counseling center and the career center. All of the services and support that really impact student life beyond the classroom are in student affairs. They have an educational mission. They have a basic sort of life safety mission. They work closely with the police department. They really try to provide a quality experience where people can think and grow and learn.

The job of student affairs administrators is expansive. Student Affairs is charged with maintaining everything from University Athletics to the health center. They are charged with fostering an environment in which students can “think and grow and learn.” Dr. Xavier sees the job of student affairs as one of the most expansive in the University.

People in student affairs, especially in the cultural centers, take the heat for these incidents—incidents of racial theme parties and racism on campus. As I already mentioned in the chapter Displacing Racism, the leadership center has a greater budget than the cultural centers combined. When I spoke with Dr. Raven, she said, “The expectation for these centers shouldn’t be that they have to solve all these racial incidents and problems. Because clearly we don’t have enough [resources].” Although an increase in resources does not mean racism on campus will it, it does tell others that racial equity is important. Part of Dr. Xavier’s experience is hearing how
much student affairs is depreciated on campus. He told me how students, community members, faculty, and upper-level administrators alike think about people in student affairs: “They’re called the ‘do nothing people.’” I asked a student affairs administrator about how academic affairs administrators valued those in student affairs. Deborah said:

While I’d like to think we’re integral in their eyes, we’re not(!)—until there is a problem. We’re not on the “A-list” of who’s invited to the table.

[In student affairs they are] more reflexive on how they look at students than anything else because we are always lobbying for students to have a seat at the table. Students should sit at the table. It’s hard because we do ask for students to be a part of committees. Some people don’t see the importance of students. The faculty egos, etc.

For Deborah not only does she feel that Student Affairs is undervalued at the University but so is the input of students. She believes a lot of it has to do with faculty egos. Administrators are, after all, decision-makers. As I have shown in this ethnography, upper-level administrators are the power in the institution and their personal passions influence their public decisions. Most administrators start as faculty members. But Deborah loves her work even as she understands the contradictions.

So does Dr. Xavier. He said,

Sometimes our behavior is not consistent with our professed values. Sometimes we have to re-evaluate and say, “is that your real value?” And if so, how do you realign your behavior? I think institutions are no different in that they state the values, we get them clear, we hold on to them, and then we have to work to make sure that we’re aligning with them and there are some that we’re better aligned with than others…I’ve had to figure out, ok, how do you continue to work? Well, you get clear on what your values are and you get clear on how you live in holding the University in line with it’s mission and with it’s articulated goals. That’s the reason why I continue to work here.

For Dr. Xavier, as for other administrators, the way to continue to work here is to navigate the contradictions and reflect on your values. At all levels administrators, like everyone else, are imperfect and at times act in accordance with and outside of their values. This is true for Dr. Xavier who values racial justice. Administrators, especially those of color, exist in a tension
between the world as it is and the world as they want it to be. There were times when Dr. Xavier questioned how he could continue to work for the University, but he knows that this is part of the work of racial justice. He is aware of the unexpected consequences that are the result of attempting to manage racial-risk in the form of demands for racial equity. (Examples of this include the unexpected consequences of the Brown versus Board of Education decision, which did not result in racial equity, or the Affirmative Actions decisions that resulted in a greater benefit to white women than people of color in the U.S.)

In subtle ways, the previous excerpt from female administrators of all races and administrators of color may have already revealed the complicated ways in which they make choices to participate in spaces rife with contradictions. These contradictions are central to the experiences of racism in the typical research university of the twenty-first century and as such they are central to this dissertation. Administrators on campus are aware of the contradictions within this space. And although theories and examples of interest convergence at the University of Illinois make clear that diversity and multiculturalism are in the academy for the benefits of capitalism and to maintain White Privilege, I believe it also leaves open space for agency.

In this section I showed how neoliberal corporate management creates racialized and gendered identities within the academy for those who choose to work in fields like “Student Affairs” or further still, in any diversity initiative there within. I also showed how administrators manage the parameters between neoliberal multiculturalism and racial justice in order to balance the world as it is and the world as they want it to be.

Neoliberal Multiculturalism, defining racism at Illinois through U.S. law
In their efforts toward objectivity, administrative responses not only serve to complicate and confuse many people’s definitions of racism, but also—intentionally or not—enter into a long-standing discourse on racism in the U.S. In my conversations with administrators, only two routes to addressing racism on campus were discussed—legal and educational. Administrators used U.S. law, specifically freedom of speech, to say that their hands were tied to take any punitive measures. One of the central tenants of Critical Race Theory is that the U.S. legal system is inherently racist. As Brown (1992) points out, education, unlike the U.S. law, has always seen culture as important to its mission and structure. This is true of higher education especially at the University of Illinois—a Land-Grant University designed to teach agriculture and general education to the entire population of the state, not just those with wealth. The legal system does not see culture as necessary in the law, even though the entire legal system is culturally based and biased. Brown’s contribution, like other CRT scholars, is to show how the law is informed by culture (because it is decided by people) and how the law impacts the educational institution. Brown states the “law validates its own conception of social reality by dictating the kinds of arguments that are persuasive within legal institutions” (858). He goes on to assert the pervasiveness of culture in public schools in the United States. Brown states, “Culture necessarily influences the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of individuals in public schools” (881). This is as true for public universities like the U of I as well as elementary schools.

Even as administrators attempt to avoid making race and racism meaningful in their responses to Tacos and Tequila, they do so. Their words matter. What they communicate about the saliency of racism matters. Racism at the U of I is representative of both the historical and current racial climate in Illinois and the United States. On campus that has meant and continues
to mean that some students are valued more than others. Hierarchies of cultural citizenship are maintained through racial gate-keeping and the development of the “anti-racist racist” identity. Over the past few decades in the U.S. the anti-racist racist identity emerges from the racial politics made meaningful through the values of neoliberal multiculturalism. Tracing the repercussions of the Tacos and Tequila party over the past three years reveals how the strategies for managing racism at the University are complicit with racial and gendered structures of global capitalism (Melamed 2006), which work through the conservation of racialized citizenship hierarchies in higher education.

This is done on many levels, one of which is through the tradition of curbing rudeness instead of racism. Under the guise of curbing rudeness, administrators are giving definitions of racism that turn into marketable tools. At a moment when students are exploring their identities, administrators are having a hand in shaping their racial identities and their ideas of others by their management of racism. This tradition is marketable, and personifies neoliberal values of individualism, privatization, and liability. The actions of University Administrators reflect the actions of CEO’s unaccountability or “freedom” to take risks (financial and otherwise) and not be accountable legally. 33

Similar to CEOs of multinational corporations who have contributed to the current economic crisis, university administrators do not want to be legally liable for any decisions that were profitable for the university but devastating to some communities. Learning how to avoid liability is constructed as an asset and skill for corporate environments.

Protestors of Tacos and Tequila reacted with public expressions of outrage, dissent, and condemnation. The University’s delayed reaction did not center or even consider the needs of the students offended. Instead, administrators gave the campus community reasons for learning
about “diversity” and tolerance, which followed a neoliberal corporate logic that depoliticizes our definitions and values of multiculturalism. Administrators employed risk-management strategies that expose their shallow investment in multiculturalism, an investment that does not see racism as an ethical dilemma.

Neoliberalism goes beyond the serious economic implications—which values short-term profits over long-term investments—and leads to pedagogies focused more on specialized corporate training than on critical thinking. The pedagogies emerging from Neoliberalism reinforce a hierarchy of risk and liability, thus shifting ethical and legal accountability away from the University—its policies and top administrators—over to its most vulnerable populations. These administrative practices are pedagogies—a de facto form of In Loco Parentis—that allow the serious moral dilemmas of neoliberal economic practices of the Western World to go un-interrogated by college students. Students are not just “color-blind” or otherwise unable to trace their everyday practices to global politics, they are trained not to see the layers of meaning in their actions. They identify as anti-racist but act as racists. In university management practices we see how neoliberal capitalism and the U.S. legal system work in tandem to influence racial thinking on college campuses.

Problems with racism and domestic racial politics especially are only of tangential importance to the neo-liberal University, and then only as a public relations problem, which must be managed. At best perhaps they are object lessons in the practical aspects of operating in a multicultural environment—a skill essential in a globalized economy and thus of importance when viewed through the neo-liberal lens. And yet these problems have real and serious personal implications for the very populations who are now being forced to bear the entire weight of them on their shoulders. Both the perpetrators of racist activities and their targets—
both primarily young people who are at an important crossroads in their lives -- find themselves scrambling to create boundaries, define terms, and form conceptual frames through which they will view themselves and the world for the rest of their lives.

Whereas institutions of higher education do not take the place of parents in teaching moral and ethical behavior, the University’s actions are influential. Telling students to “play nice with others” is not the mandate of University administrators; neither is the mandate to learn to build institutions of racial fairness. Teaching students moral and ethical lessons that they can use to inform their work, scholarship, and in turn their everyday life should be imperative. I believe this may serve to re-direct student activism into more complex and focused student demands at a time of advanced corporatization of the University.

Conclusion

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is unique in its history of racial struggles as well as representative of the struggles facing public universities across the nation (see Giroux 2001; Mohanty 2003; Jensen 2006; Duggan 2003). Different people, organizations, and kinds of knowledge are deemed more important than others, but who gets to decide and what goes into that decision-making process? In this instance, the University’s analysis and actions surrounding Tacos and Tequila and similar events on campus center an ahistorical analysis and neglects a social justice component. As Melamed points out, diversity and anti-racism has been emptied of its original meaning through political maneuvering (i.e. appropriation). Tacos and Tequila party-goers and protesters mobilized conflicting definitions of racism, one of which was supported by the University. Party-goers’ definitions of racism depend on intentionality- a definition made meaningful through the U.S. legal system as well (Freeman 1995). People can only be held accountable for their intentional actions, regardless of the consequences. This definition allows
for the dismissal of accusations of racism. By this definition, a racial logic that does not name race becomes a valuable skill within the logic of neoliberal multiculturalism.

The research and analysis presented in this chapter should nuance students’ understanding of “administrators” by students on campus. I attempt to answer the questions: Who has power? How does it work? What does that mean for the everyday experience of administrators? I define power as the ability to act, create, prevent or control change. I make these dynamics transparent through interviews, textual analysis, and other forms of ethnographic data. I do so in order to reveal why and how institutionalizing anti-racism so often falls short of student demands—something I naively had difficulty understanding as an undergraduate student. I believe that in researching why and how we fall short of achieving our goals, as young people attempting to eliminate racism and make the world an equitable and just place, we give ourselves some of the tools we need to shape the world we want to live in. In this chapter, I rely on textual analysis, interviews, and my observant-participation (Vargas 2006) with activists and administrators. Through ethnographic and archival data we can see how university administrations manage racism as racial-risk (i.e., socio-cultural and economic risks associated with the label “racist”). This chapter highlights how exactly this works on a college campus, within university administration.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Much of Western European History has taught us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior. In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people who, through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior. Within this society that group is made up of Black and Third World People, working class people, older people, and women. 
Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider (2007:114)

On Wednesday October 5, 2011 Derrick Bell passed away. Many of my friends on facebook posted about his passing as did I. I did not know him, but I am familiar with his work. Bell’s work on racial realism helps us frame a different type of resistance to anti-black racism. Bell’s understanding of racial realism was an understanding of anti-black racism—it is so deep and devastating that the only form of resistance is realism. That is, the only form of resistance is to antagonize and irritate whites—especially about their privilege. I read his obituary in the New York Times, and I thought of U.S. President Barack Obama. The Times mentioned Obama briefly in Bell’s obituary. “At a rally while a student at Harvard Law, Barack Obama compared Professor Bell to the civil rights hero Rosa Parks.” The Huffington Post went a little deeper:

When Professor Bell decided to leave Harvard, a member of our protest movement convinced a young Barack Obama, then the president of the Harvard Law Review, to speak at a rally for Bell. It was the first time I ever saw Obama speak in public, and he praised Professor Bell as "the Rosa Parks of legal education." Bell, who warned of "the permanence of racism" in his book Faces At The Bottom Of The Well, surely did not imagine that Obama would one day be elected President of the United States. But even after Obama's historic election, he was wise enough to understand that racism had not disappeared."

President Barack Obama knew the person and the work of Derrick Bell—a man whose works were as much poetic as they were highly logical and anti-racist. Derrick Bell challenged the common assumptions that the law was neutral. He is the father of Critical Race Theory, the body

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of work that makes me feel most alive and a step closer to creating a more just and inclusive world. His work is profound, depressing, and powerful, and in that it is productive.

What struck me about this obituary and its link to President Obama were some of the similarities between Obama and many of the activists/organizers I knew in Urbana-Champaign—many of the people who posted notes about his passing. My friends also post about Obama’s work or lack of work towards racial justice. I cannot help but be stuck on the similarities, despite the obvious differences. To do the work of social justice an activist must believe that change is possible. As we enter into another election year I cannot help but wonder whether or not President Obama will use a second term to “Change the World,” as his campaign slogans suggested, and if he even has the tools. For sure, President Obama is missing the perspective of the third-world, woman of color feminisms. President Obama was a community organizer and someone who was familiar with Critical Race Theory. Can we apply an interest-convergence analysis to his presidency? How can we understand all of the tensions and contradictions between the divergent strategies of these two men who would be characterized by mainstream thinking as after the same goals? In fact they might both state that their goals are racial equity. (Maybe that’s a stretch—Obama might say equality.)

What I find interesting is that Bell and Obama might be contrasted as a realist and an optimist. I want to explore optimism a bit as a way to engage in conversation around these two seemingly divergent strategies toward racial equity. The majority of my friends would say that they support racial justice but often disagree and criticize each other’s tactics in that passive-aggressive way that facebook facilities. Meaning that we critique each other in the same way that we teach each other, by sharing and commenting on stories that critique the strategies of our nations intellectual, political, and activist leaders—and tagging each other in the posts. We
critique each other for talking racial-equity without acting on it. We critique each other for working in the non-profit industrial complex, for action without thought, or thought without action.

In the *Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*, Lisa Duggan describes her optimism with social movements as a progressive in 1972 despite the global turmoil over the war in Vietnam, the continued struggles for racial equity, and the numerous U.S. interventions into the wars of other nations (2003). Duggan describes the response to the anti-war and pro-equity movements of the 1960s as the following:

> From the early 1970s, global competition and falling profit rates stirred U.S. Corporate interest to mount a counter movement. This movement expanded in many directions from its base of pro-business activism, and it took many years to build; it has never been unified or stable. Yet, it has successfully opposed proliferating visions of an expansive, more equitable redistribution of the world’s resources (x).

The neoliberal counter-movement took many years to build and it has never been unified. Our work necessitates a similar strategy. For example, it is fair to say that my friends and I, we all want Latinos to receive fair and just treatment in the U.S. (It is also fair to state that we want equity for people of color and women.) How we expect to achieve racial equity differs—we all disagree on strategies. Some of us want Latinos to occupy positions of power in our leading social institutions in order to direct a piece of the wealth towards Latino communities. Some of us want complete economic redistribution of wealth. And some of us want basic social safety networks in place, such as single-payer health care, nationalized education, and living wages that protect all people. What I am reminded by this quote by Duggan is that even if we do not agree exactly, our movement requires all these various part and strategies that are not unified and are not signaling one direction. It reminds me of a famous pop-culture quote from the late Bruce Lee about technique in a fight. He says, “Be water, my friend” (2000). Water takes the shape of the
container its in—but it never loses that which makes it water. I do not contrast it but rather pair it with what I would consider advice from Audre Lorde, that “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (1984:110). Combining the two philosophies I would suggest that we can take the shape of the master’s tools without becoming the tools. The work towards equity must be as expansive, multidirectional, and fragmented intentionally.

Racial Justice Under Neoliberalism: Intentional

Racism became a risk to be managed by neoliberal economic policies during the Civil Rights Movement when ideologies of racial liberalism were bound to the expansion of transnational capitalism (Melamed 2006). As Jodi Melamed (2006) points out, historically, Neoliberalism and the civil rights movement emerged together. Readily perceivable racial injustice, for example during WWII, became a threat to U.S. expansion and world domination (Melamed 2006) and therefore a risk to be managed. While more economic borders opened, the culturally constructed boundaries emerged through racial gate-keeping strategies—i.e. strategies to keep out people of color who could threaten the social order not only with their bodies, but with their cultures, thoughts, and non-western ways of being.

Both the Civil Right Movement and Neoliberal policies affect schools including higher education. They also emerged while In Loco Parentis — i.e. parents relinquishing and schools taking on the moral guardianship of their children to schools (Prendergast and Abelmann 2006) was ending at colleges and Universities across the country. In Loco Parentis was basically the university taking on the guardianship role of college students that included rules and restrictions on cross-gender interactions and curfew. I contend that a type of In Loco Parentis remains in U.S. Universities today, even though it died out as a strict practice. It remains as it is modeled in university governance.
It is part of the culture of higher education especially in college-towns. Today I would argue that this *de facto In Loco Parentis* is communicated through administrative policy and actions. Consequently it is strongly influenced by notions of legality—a legality based on constitutional law and jurisprudence (legal doctrine) heavily influenced by Neoliberalism and the Civil Rights Movement. On college campuses this *de facto In Loco Parentis* takes many forms. As it is practiced at its highest levels— that of upper-level administrators (President, Chancellor, Provost, Board of Trustees) it takes the form of racial risk management; it is neocolonial in nature and intention in that it serves to informally maintain the same heteronormative hierarchies while at the same time expand its global influence “while simultaneously disavowing its own ideological influence” (Hong 2006) on campus. Knowingly or not, administrators communicate ideological viewpoints as they respond to racism on campus. We see this play out in the administrative management of racial theme parties across the country. Administrators still take up a guardianship role, especially in college towns where most students live away from their parents for the first time. As such, how administrators manage the university matters. Former President Joseph B. White, once the face of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, broadcasted the significance of this institution of higher education to the public on his University homepage: “Welcome to the University of Illinois, the state’s most valuable asset.” What students learn and administrators at levels teach matters.

The university’s management practices communicate that racism is an acceptable part of everyday life here—as do the management practices of corporations and the U.S. government. An anti-colonial alternative to a return of *In Loco Parentis* considers the ways in which a community can substantively invest in anti-racist efforts. The management of racial risk coupled with the continuing devaluation of ethnic studies, social sciences, and humanities courses places
an incredible burden of addressing racism through teaching anti-racist, sexist, and classist strategies, on students and faculty invested in social justice. Racism is violent and allows violence to continue. In order to address it we need to address the complicated ways in which, race, gender, and class are lived simultaneously. Racist actions coded as anti-racist contribute to the violence continually perpetrated against communities of color—what Chandra Mohanty calls the “military/prison/cyber/corporate complex” (2003: 173). This complex subverts academic freedom and critical thought through adherence to corporate management logics.

One of the tools we need to institutionalize racial justice is a way to measure accountability. Over and over again administrators told me that if the University really valued racial justice and equity, there would be measures to keep the university accountable. Dr. Xavier told me,

So we are at a place where we are serving our station. We’re serving all of the constituents of the state including racial and ethnic groups and including socio-economic groups. People who have lower socio-economic status in the state. But the trick is, how do you figure out how to systematically make sure that everybody’s on board, on target, on goal while dealing with one of the worst financial forecasts anytime since 1974. It's a really tough challenge and when you have all these competing priorities you have to make sure that what you want to do in regard to social justice, in regard to diversity, in regard to being anti-racist isn’t lost.

A good way to figure out where we are and moving toward institutionalizing these efforts is to look to the extent that they’re a part of our institutional accountability systems. For instance, when you go to evaluate me on my performance, what are the metrics around what I’m doing to make sure that campus climate is what we aspire it to be and has that been worked in on that level consistently throughout a system as large as Urbana-Champaign, and Chicago, and UIS. SO that’s what I mean by tools. You know, the sort of core, consistent implementation and consistency around the message.

When I asked Dr. Raven about measures and accountability, she was clear that we not only needed a call for measures but also a system of accountability to those measures. I mentioned that many university reports called for outcomes. Dr. Raven told me, “Some reports are followed
through and some aren’t.” I asked her, “what’s the difference?” She said, “Well one is the length.” We both laughed even though we both knew she was serious. She also said that the outcomes needed to be aligned with the Strategic Plan. She told me that if she or anyone else opts out of a particular goal, no one would keep her accountable—unless it is the strategic plan. Consider this though, if racism is never mentioned it limits the possible solutions, if it is never considered a problem.

There are multiple tensions within the movement for racial justice. As a graduate student one of my greatest sources of tension was occupying the space between scholarship and activism: that tension between transforming the cannon and hopefully popular thought (through research and writing) and building power to transform policy and practices based on what we already know. During my years as a researcher and activist in Champaign, I had several conversations with students and coworkers about our frustrations with faculty members who write about revolutionary politics, but never act. We would often lament the fact that few scholars would agree to let us into their classrooms to announce our events, and even fewer would commit to speaking at a public rally or action. I had these conversations with administrators as well. Administrators at all levels would constantly tell me that tenured-faculty had the power, which is simultaneously a truth and a lie. Faculty could get in front of an issue and use their authority as experts to make a difference in their own backyards. But so could an administrator. Now that I have spent a year away from the University working as a community organizer in Chicago my spirit is renewed with the importance of transforming public opinion through knowledge production. Organizers are principally concerned with power—and not with transforming how power works but shifting power to historically marginalized groups in the form of resources. This is more often than not a temporary shift of power or empowerment in the
form of increased resources into a community. Sometimes there is a promising policy shift but it usually emptied of either meaning or resources. For me neither organizing nor theorizing alone resolves the tension of how to work for racial justice. Policy decisions alone may not achieve equity—like the \textit{Brown v. Board} of Education decision that was a result of long-term legal strategy that today still leaves many of the nation’s public schools segregated and unequal. \textit{Brown v. Board} was an example of interest convergence that served the benefits of white interests internationally (see Delgado and Stefanic 2001).

Tensions that I described in this dissertation exist within the faculty and administrators I interviewed. Dr. Xavier saw part of his calling in life to model the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by creating a “beloved community” at the U of I. Can we work with people who do not share our values and achieve a ‘beloved community’? The tension with building a beloved community is that we must work with others who do not share our values. Will our values be compromised if we work with others who do not have the same values? I would contend, as would many organizers and activists, that we will never be able to keep people accountable to values they do not hold. They will use methods we will not use. They will oppress and privilege. As Audre Lorde stated, “The Master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” The question is, can we agitate people on values they may hold or stir up values they want as part of their character? Can we move anti-racist racist to be anti-racist?

As activists, administrators, students, and scholars we must continue to operate in the tension of the world as it is while never giving up on pushing for the world as we want it to be. According to Native scholar and feminist activist, Andrea Smith, "On the one hand, it is necessary to engage in oppositional politics to corporate and state power by taking power. Yet if we only engage in the politics of taking power, we will have a tendency to replicate the
hierarchical structures in our movements. So it is also important to “make power” by creating those structures within our organizations, movements, and communities that model the world we are trying to create. Many groups in the U.S. often try to create separatist communities based on egalitarian ideals. If we “make power” without also trying to “take power,” we ultimately support the political status quo by failing to dismantle structures of oppression that will undermine us," (Smith 2005:187).

Part of this analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism and the identities forced and forged through neoliberal economic practices, may serve to re-direct student activism into more complex and focused student demands at a time of advanced corporatization of the University. Grace Hong states that “…we might see this as the new terrain of struggle, the new conditions against which the next set of strategies, critiques, and alternative epistemological formations will emerge. For if there is anything that can be learned from women of color feminism and racialized immigrant women’s culture, it is that all relations of rule are constituted out of their own set of contradictions and foreclosures, which occasion new forms of brutality and injustice, but also provide the vocabulary for new sites and strategies of struggle, contestation, and emergence,” (2006:144). This new terrain of struggle will be productive—it will in moments build power for the movement. It will also open up new ways to struggle and imagine our future.

On one very practical level we need systematic ways for addressing racism between individuals within our institutions. Utilizing Andrea Smith’s examples “Restorative Justice” programs are an invaluable starting point from which to build recourses when administrative responses fail to address racism on campus. Unfortunately, as some underrepresented students and faculty find themselves positioned with the responsibility of addressing racism on campus, we need alternative approaches to administrative governing. We must work to transform racism
from actions that are acceptable to actions that are morally reprehensible. We may use a reconciliatory model that does not privilege the perpetrators—or those who are already privileges—but still includes them. We need to de-center the University in our attempts at racial justice. Since the university will not substantively invest in racial diversity, its attempts at anti-racism are only more racist. The words and actions of administrators seek to keep race hidden and serve to de-politicize race thereby undermining anti-racism efforts. Instead, students should utilize alternative tools such as shame and public remembrance.

Shaming is a useful tool in shifting the risk of racism back to the University and to the national student organizations where events such as Tacos and Tequila may continue. Shaming and remembering go hand-in-hand and can be productive if they feelings they evoke agitate us to action. At public events in which the University speaks about diversity, or where the university is celebrating its commitment to diversity, we must remind the University of its failures to value students of color on campus. The University and sorority do not want to remember these events, but move past them, most immediately as Lindsey points out. Shortly after my interview with Lindsay, another graduate student on campus, interviewed a member of Tacos and Tequila on the two-year anniversary of the event. During the interview he suggested that after the next party we place a shameful add in the Daily Illini or a national newspaper—“take out an ad” so that we “can put them on a public wall of shame.” He went on to say, “As far as I’m concerned I want these people publicly shamed. That’s the only recourse we have.” There is no legal or administrative recourse for racism against a group of people, at a public University. I hope this dissertation serves as a method of shaming. Although scholarly researchers take an oath to “do no harm” I do not consider shaming to be harmful, but rather a method of healing desperately needed on campus.
I also believe that a politics of love, compassion, and empathy must find ways to fight against racial-normativity. We have to find ways for white people to move from guilt to loving themselves in ways that do not contribute to maintaining privilege and oppression. I am making an argument for interest convergence—white power will never relent if the only thing to love about whiteness is privilege. I continue to be in tension about this call for a re-appropriation because I fear it does what all racial projects do, that it privileges and centers whiteness. It is a tension between the world as it is and the world as we want it to be. Here is draw upon Leela Fernandes’ use of disidentification as “not simply a negative process of detachment but a positive movement of creating a different form of self. This disidentified form of self draws on a spiritualized perspective that does not need to resort to the traps, limitations, and temporary security of identity” (2002:27). Disidentification is not acculturation or assimilation. It is purposeful. Disidentification has to exist as we simultaneously mark, claim, and center the experiences of underrepresented students in ways that do not continue to commodify their worth. Further it has to exist in order to do the intellectual and practical and practical-intellectual work of third-world women of color feminisms that Chandra Talpade Mohanty urges us to do. Mohanty states, “Rather than assuming an enforced commonality of oppression, the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together,” (2006:7). The same is true for a forced commonality for privilege. We can make choices, in solidarity.

As anthropologists, we are trained in research methods that allow us to gain insights into the experiences of a cultural community. Ethnographic projects are not individual projects but rather an accumulation of collective knowledge. Ethnographies have writers, subjects, locales, and producers. The producers are the advisors, intellectual committee members, graduate
students, undergraduate students, and the graduate school training process. Anthropological training helps form the observations of the everyday into ethnography with theoretical and ideological meaning. The people who mentor student thought and research investigation from proposal and preliminary research to the dissertation write up, serve as ethnography producers. We learn theory in order to better understand and communicate how the everyday is informed through historical and structural forces. It is through these social processes our projects form. Projects without specific political goals are still political in the potential political use of the ethnography. We must simultaneously be vigilant of the ways our work can be used and produce knowledge freely because we cannot control how our research will be used but we can attempt to facilitate the creation of intellectuals, as Gramsci describes in his *Prison Notebooks*, “The Intellectuals” (Hoare and Smith 1971). Gramsci asserts that as a group strives for power it must not only strive toward ideological dominance over the traditional intellectuals of a society but it must also and perhaps more importantly develop organic intellectuals that exist in practical life and in our social institutions (Hoare and Smith 1971). We just need to look at facebook and other social media sites to recognize that this is happening everywhere, everyday. I know that my optimism, like Lisa Duggan’s optimism in 1972, will fade as we experience new regimes of racial-risk management and oppression, but it will be reborn many times.
NOTES

1 I define “anti-racist racist” as anti-essentialist but mindful of historical privilege and oppression.
2 See the definition of global assemblages by Collier and Ong 2005 that explains how global assemblages are spaces that create, cull, define, and commodify new relational and material realities. I contend that the University is a global assemblage.
3 See http://www.racismreview.com/blog/2010/03/03/are-the-racist-incidents-on-campus-done-by-outliers/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+racismreview%2FnYnz+%28racismreview.com%29
4 Review the chronicle of higher education article that talks about the Department of education's ruling that the Chief was ok… CRT analysis.
5 Charlene Teters is considered the first anti-Chief activist at the University of Illinois. Her critique of the Chief was immortalized in the documentary “In Whose Honor” by…
7 http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/nah/mascot_letters.html
8 Chief Illiniwek History Time-line, of the Urbana-Champaign Senate of the University of Illinois. Compiled by Jay Rosenstein and the Equal Opportunity Committee.
9 For pop-culture aficionados, in some ways we can explain this as Devil’s Snare from book one of the Harry Potter series. The more we struggle against it the more entangled we become. That does not mean that there is only one approach to navigating its web.
10 For more information on Heap of Birds visit his website at http://www.heapofbirds.com/.
11 I attended almost all of the talks about the exhibit. The opening, closing, and visit by Edgar Heap of Birds. Most recently I attended Robert Warrior’s talk about the exhibit in relation to campus climate here.
12 The statement is available here: http://www.ais.illinois.edu/news/features/beyond/
13 See the Ethnography of the Brown Commemoration Report done by The Ethnography of the University initiative for more on how I use “Business as Usual.”
14 This is why Critical Race Theory is the theoretical framework for this piece. The law, and the legal system are central to the racial operations of institutions, like Higher Education of Policing. The law is a key player in stifling institutionalizing anti-racism because it was so integral in mandating racism.
15 For my dissertation I will “ look at Charles Mills’ The Racial Contract—he says that an “epistemology of ignorance” for whites means “learn[ing] to see the world wrongly, but with the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated. . . . producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made” (18).”
17 For a full listing of EUI courses taught see the EUI website www.eui.uiuc.edu
18 Several EUI classes begin with a piece by Peter Ewell (Year), “Who Do You Think You Are? The Art of the Institutional Reality Check” which begins students on their interrogation of the differences between what, how, why, and who the university tells itself it serves, and who it serves in practice. In interrogating what the University says about itself, students are set up to do an exercise in counter storytelling, when students’ experiences differ from what the University
believes. In this regard I think that the EUI project encourages students to question institutional racism as it impacts them in their everyday lives, in my case, within the department of anthropology at UIUC.

For an in-depth analysis of racial micro-aggressions see the Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society (CDMS) website specifically for racial micro-aggressions working group. Their website cites Sue et. al. (2007), “Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (271)

Given Vargas’s framework for activist ethnography, Harlem World by John L. Jackson would be irresponsible in that it does not give a historical and structural context of the everyday (2006:21).

A good example would be Costa Vargas’s Catching Hell in the City of Angels.

This is an instance in which Restorative Justice practices would have been useful for the campus.

A Predominantly White Institution is a school where the majority of the population is white. Usually in a campus town like many Midwest research universities the whiteness matters differently than in a more urban setting.

See the Racism, Power, Privilege video from DTEC.


http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/PressArchive/2005/Announcements/NCAA%2bExecutive%2bCommittee%2bIssues%2bGuidelines%2bfor%2bUse%2bof%2bNative%2bAmerican%2bMascots%2bat%2bChampionship%2bEvents.html


The University of Illinois is known for the campus-town celebration on un-official St. Patrick’s Day. It is a huge part of the campus culture and a distinct event that marks the party-status of this campus. See the chapter Displacing Racism for more on unofficial.

I have an analogy for Harry Potter fans. The “Three-In-One” music is like the resurrection stone—it brings back a lifeless version of Chief Illiniwek. One that inevitably leaves survivors in more agony than if it had moved on. See J.K. Rowlings Tales of Beadle the Bard.

See the December 7, 2011 Article in the Daily Illini “Three in One May Be Done” by Hannah Miesel

This is true for the national context of anti-Native racism as well. Racism against American-Indians has never required a high-level of racial risk management because of the history or U.S. expansion that lead to the decimation of populations of Native Americans. See the works of Andrea Smith and Winona LaDuke.

See Lisa Cacho “Disciplining Fictions” 2002 for the results of racial segregation outside of the University setting.

As I write this I cannot help but wonder about the timing of this announcement. Is it a coincidence that a few years after the Chief is retired the cultural centers were threatened with being displaced?
Henry A. Giroux states “As corporations become more and more powerful in the United States, educational leadership is stripped of its ethical and political obligations and is redefined primarily as a matter of management, efficiency, and cost effectiveness” (2001:3).

A more recent event, the 2009 vandalism of a Pro-Indigenous public art project by Edgar Heap of Birds titled “Beyond the Chief” reveals how the racialized structure of the University is maintained.

For the full obituary go to http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keith-boykin/derrick-bell-dead_b_998024.html

Ibid.

Meritocracies hide the collective nature of success, failure, and in this case, intellectual production. All projects are collectively informed even if the researcher (graduate student of professor) is alone in their fieldwork.
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