

# The Mechanisms of White Space(s)

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[journals.sagepub.com/home/abs](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/abs)**Wendy Leo Moore<sup>1</sup>**

## Abstract

In 2008, I published a theoretical frame of White institutional space beginning with the generalized proposition that social organizations, social institutions, and social structure are fundamentally and recursively related. In other words, individual organizations (like particular law schools) are *produced by* and *function to reproduce* racialized social institutions (like the institutions of education and law), just as social organizations and institutions are produced in as an element of and therefore reify the racial social structure—which in the United States is based on White supremacy. Within U.S. social organizations, there exist routine and systematic mechanisms, including racist historical and contemporary institutionalized hierarchies of power, racist institutionalized logics, and racist discourses and ideologies which inform everyday racialized practices, that function synergistically to channel the resources of U.S. organizations and institutions disproportionately to Whites. In this article, I utilize elements of my original research in elite law schools to delineate and demonstrate how mechanisms of White institutional space function tacitly and explicitly to reify White power and privilege.

## Keywords

White institutional space, White supremacy, racist institutions, law schools, critical race theory

## Introduction

The genesis of my theory of *White institutional space*, articulated first in my 2005 dissertation and published in developed form in my 2008 book *Reproducing Racism, White Space, Elite Law Schools, and Racial Inequality*, began when I was a graduate

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student researching the racial dynamics of law schools and legal education (Moore, 2008). As a young scholar of race, I had casually used the term *White space* to describe the law schools in which I was conducting research. Although my initial use of the term *stemmed* from what I thought was a common sense understanding of the idea of White spaces, several members of my committee bristled at my use of the term. One member suggested that I should consider that there were some places in the law schools that were more “White spaces” than others—and perhaps I should articulate that better. I rebuffed that critique suggesting that it misunderstood how institutionalized patterns and practices of racism operated in organizations embedded within a broader racialized social structure characterized by White supremacy. Another committee member reacted, noting that while I may be correct about that assertion, I would have to define “White space” if I intended to use the phrase in my scholarly work.

My first reaction in that moment was intense frustration; although I could not have articulated it at the time, I was butting up against the White normative boundaries of the mainstream social science and what counts as taken-for-granted versus challenged knowledge in the canon. I have since described the frustration negotiating this boundary as analogous to having to explain the scientific principles of a theory of gravity and offer proofs of the operation of gravity on the body of a person as they walk to a store before one can discuss research findings about what that person did in the store (Moore, 2013). Nonetheless, I took the challenge to develop a theory of White space seriously. Although I developed the concept of White institutional space using research in the law school site, my goal was to articulate a theoretical frame that captured the fundamental connections between the racialized social structure in the United States and racialized organizational and institutional processes that connect to and reproduce that structure, as well as the consequent racialized experiences of individuals who navigate these organizations and institutions. This theoretical concept of White institutional space would have explanatory power for sites beyond law schools, and even beyond educational institutions.

My theorization of White institutional space was developed using a reflexive methodology; connecting data from ethnographic research in two elite law schools to the history and contemporary organization of law schools and legal education, and research on the sociological theories of race and racism (see Burawoy, 1998). Through this reflexive method I constructed a theoretical frame articulating White space in organizations and institutions, beginning with the generalized proposition that social organizations, social institutions, and social structure are fundamentally and recursively related. In other words, individual organizations (like particular law schools) are *produced by* and *function to reproduce* racialized social institutions (like the institutions of education and law), and these organizations and institutions are produced in and function to reproduce the racial social structure—which in the United States is based on White supremacy. Within U.S. social organizations, there exist routine and systematic mechanisms, including racist historical and contemporary institutionalized hierarchies of power, institutionalized White logics, discourses, and ideologies which inform everyday racialized practices, that function synergistically to channel the resources of these institutions disproportionately to Whites. In this article, I

utilize elements of my original research in elite law schools to demonstrate how these mechanisms of White institutional space function tacitly and explicitly to reify White power, privilege, and wealth.

## Race, White Supremacy, and Space

Speaking about the implications of residential racial segregation for democracy in the United States, Iris Young (2000, p. 196) has noted that, “[r]esidential segregation enacts or enlarges many material privileges of economic opportunity, quality of life, power to influence actions and events, and convenience. *At the same time it obscures the fact of such privileges from many of their beneficiaries*” (italics added). As Young’s quotation captures, racialized geographical segregation functions as a mechanism in the reproduction of racial inequality in part because racial separation and exclusion render invisible the lived experiences of White communities and communities of color which are differently situated with regard to connection to resources (see also Jargowsky, 1997; Masey & Denton, 1993). Everyday experiences of White racial privilege are simply as the norm by Whites. For example, geographical segregation has facilitated the racialized implementation of the crime control policies in the last half-a-century (Tonry, 2012). As a result of these policies, in communities of color, particularly African American communities, people must navigate a daily experience of consistent police surveillance and control, including frequent police stops, verbal interrogation, and searches (Alexander, 2012; Tonry, 2012). By contrast, in White communities, White people do not experience this systematic surveillance and as a result they have access to a less restricted level of liberty in their daily life. The fact of racial residential segregation not only facilitates the operation of these racial disparities, but also shelters Whites from even having to observe the consequences of racist mass state surveillance and control. Conversely, people of color may come to view excessive surveillance and control as the norm because they do not have experiential knowledge of daily life with the level of taken-for-granted liberty experienced by Whites. Because of this, spatial racial segregation facilitates, the normative experience of intense racist surveillance and punishment for people of color but not Whites, optimizing the operation of mechanisms of racist control and obscuring these mechanisms. Most importantly here, racial geographic segregation assists in channeling disproportionate benefits of liberty and freedom to White people *without their conscious thought or attention* (see also Frankenberg, 1993).

As this example helps to illustrate, spatial racial segregation does the work of maintaining White supremacy and maintaining it without conscious thought on that part of individual actors. If we think of the racial social structure as the infrastructure of White supremacy—the amalgam of all the basic organizational mechanisms that create and uphold White domination and racial hierarchy—the case of racial residential segregation provides one an example of institutional racism. The racialized structure of American society has entrenched White supremacy within our social institutions (Blauner, 1972; Knowles & Prewitt, 1969; Ture & Hamilton, 1977; Wellman, 1993). Sociologist Joe Feagin (2006) suggests that throughout the history of the United States,

Whites have systematically been the beneficiaries of unjust enrichment, while people of color have experienced unjust impoverishment, exclusion, and oppression. As a result, “U.S. society is an organized racist whole with complex interconnected and independent social networks, organizations, and institutions that routinely imbed racial oppression” (Feagin, 2010, p. 16, see also Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2017). Just as residential segregation facilitates White supremacy tacitly, a theory of White institutional space sets out to expose how tacit institutional and organizational processes facilitate White supremacy and racial oppression.

Knowles and Prewitt (1969) explain, “[i]nstitutions are fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken” (p. 5). For example, societies take collective action to organize society and codify social norms and values within law and to socialize societal members and transmit social knowledge through education. While these institutions are not always explicitly created to enact White supremacy and racial oppression, they reflect and enforce the social arrangements of the racial social structure. Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael) and Charles Hamilton (1977) provided a clear articulation of the connection between institutions and actors in the U.S. racist order.

Institutional racism relies on the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practices. A sense of superior group position prevails: whites are “better” than blacks; therefore blacks should be subordinate to whites. This is a racist attitude and it permeates the society, on both the individual and institutional level, covertly and overtly. “Respectable” individuals can absolve themselves from individual blame: *they* would never plant a bomb in a church. . . . But they continue to support political officials and institutions that would and do perpetuate institutionally racist policies. Thus *acts* of overt, individual racism may not typify the society, but institutional racism does . . . (italics added, p. 5)

This conception of institutional racism reveals the interconnectedness of racist ideology, racist social practices, and racist organization of resources within the stable social relations that organize society. It exposes the recursive relationships between individuals, organizational and institutional mechanisms, and the broader social structure that facilitates the reproduction of racist social structure (Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

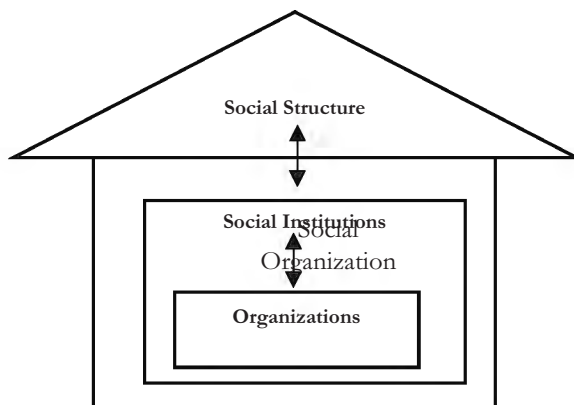
Several scholars have extended the notion of race and space beyond the context of geographical neighborhoods to analyze organizational or institutional contexts. Amanda Lewis (2003) first discussed the racialization of space in grammar school settings, noting that racial segregation in education has led to White and non-White educational spaces. In characterizing schools as a White or non-White space, however, Lewis seems to rely principally on the racial demographics of the schools—and this may relate to the demographic nature of the research on residential segregation (see also Lewis & Diamond, 2017). However, in her analysis, Lewis finds that even in schools that are demographically non-White spaces, tacit White norms remain embedded in the school institution as a result of broader institutionalized racism in education. Similarly, Feagin et al. (1997) discuss the institutional dynamics of historically White colleges and universities and their analysis of race focused on identifying the institutional characteristics that result in

the racialized nature of these institutions. They point out that there are many institutional norms, policies, and procedures that make these institutions normatively White spaces, including the history of the institutions, racialized practices and policies on the part of administrators, and the dominant White culture and discourse that often employ racism to signify that students of color are outsiders in these spaces. As well, more recently, Victor Ray (2019) has constructed a theory of White organizations, which extends beyond demographics to examine organizational practices, norms and values, and hierarchies of power.

In *Reproducing Racism* (Moore, 2008) as I developed the theory of White institutional space, I drew on much of this work—and connected it to the work of Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations. Acker's work looked at social organizations which by the 1990s had been transformed in terms of gender demographics, but were still disproportionately transmitting institutional resources to men. Acker (1990) called attention to the ways that "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine." (p. 146). I extended Acker's theorization of gendered organizations to explicate the racialized dynamics of organizations in terms of a distinction between Whiteness and non-Whiteness. I suggested that such an extension requires turning the gaze on Whiteness—which, as Toni Morrison (1992) discusses, contains an implicit conception of non-Whiteness—as the source of oppressive racial control and exploitation.<sup>1</sup>

## The Production of White Institutional Space

A theory of White space should explicate how social spaces are organized such that the organizational and institutional material and ideological resources of flow disproportionately to Whites. Moreover, a comprehensive theory should include how social organizations are fundamentally connected to social institutions, which are fundamentally connected to the racial social structure, and the recursive relationships between these levels of social organization operate synergistically to reproduce White supremacy. I illustrate this as such:



This interconnectedness is fundamental to a complete theorizing of White space. The data from the individual law schools I studied revealed racialized organizational processes; however, the totality of those processes could not be theorized without an analysis of the racialization of the powerful social institutions of law and education within which they were situated, as well as the racialized social structure within which they operate. The racist logics embedded in the institutions of law and education, as well as the dynamics of the racial social structure provided what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) has described as the “organizational map” of racist organizational practices within these schools.

### *Racist Social Institutions and Interinstitutional Synergy: The Case of Legal Education*

Beginning with the construction of a Constitution that recognized and politically protected racialized slavery, White supremacy was deeply embedded in the United States legal structure.<sup>2</sup> One of the first acts of Congress in the newly developed state was the statutory construction of the 1,790 Immigration and Naturalization Act, which restricted citizenship to “free White persons.” This restriction posed a problem for U.S. courts of naturalization because the term “White person” was far from unambiguous. Through legal cases involving individuals who sought to become U.S. citizens, the law codified the boundaries of Whiteness. This occurred largely through a process of judicial decision making about who was *not* White (and therefore could not naturalize), so that the boundaries of Whiteness got constructed through negation, by legally identifying those who were not entitled to the privileges of Whiteness (Lopez, 1996). Thus the law played a central role in actually establishing racial boundaries—that is, who was designated a member of what race—and racial boundary construction was deeply connected to the institution of slavery and the notion of Manifest Destiny, the ideology that advocated the geographical spread of White power across the country (Lopez, 1996; Takaki, 1993).

Cheryl Harris (1993) suggests that the economic interests of Whites were so fundamental to the development of this country’s legal structure that Whiteness took on the legal characteristics of property. Initially, she suggests, this was based on legal and political theories concerning who had the right to own property (Whites), who did not (American Indians), and who became the object of property (African Americans). As time went on, however, Whiteness came to be treated as a property interest in itself. Harris (1993) says,

The law’s construction of whiteness defined and affirmed critical aspects of identity (who is white); of privilege (what benefits accrue to that status); and, of property (what legal entitlements arise from that status). Whiteness at various times signifies and is deployed as identity, status, and property, sometimes singularly, sometimes in tandem. (p. 1725)

Not only did the law concretely define the economic and political interests that corresponded to race, the law also served, and continues to serve, as a mechanism of

hegemonic ideology with regard to White privilege and power.<sup>3</sup> As Kimberle Crenshaw (1988) similarly points out that the law serves as an organizational framework that reflects dominant racial ideologies while inherently structuring racist hierarchy. In other words, while law itself is fundamentally discursive and ideological, it operates as the primary mechanism of the racialized state *coercively* enforcing the racial structure both through actual physical coercion and as the hegemonic moral voice of state authority (see also Mills, 1997).<sup>4</sup>

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, law schools began to develop as an institutional power with regard to the practice of law (see Seligman, 1978; Stevens, 1983). The formation of a law school curriculum focused on the analysis of judicial case law, explicitly designed to facilitate the understanding and internalization of the doctrinal logic used in the judicial process—or as it is commonly stated, to learn to “think like a lawyer” (Seligman, 1978). This method, termed the “case method,” was combined with a style of teaching whereby professors challenged students to tease out the information in cases through rapid and forceful question and response, now known as the Socratic method. Developed at Harvard, this method of teaching combined the case method curriculum and the Socratic method of instruction, and soon became the model of legal education for law schools throughout the country. The very foundation of the law school curricular model rested on an assumption that law students must internalize the logic, and hence the ideological frame, of the law—as articulated by an exclusively elite White male judiciary.

Legal education, in the form of law schools, combined the reproductive power of the law as an ideological frame, and education. Education, is widely recognized as a fundamental social institution (along with the family) that inculcates dominant social ideology, and as such serves as an institutional source of social control.<sup>5</sup> Pierre Bourdieu has gone so far as to suggest that through tacit ideological reproduction, education has become a form of symbolic violence.<sup>6</sup> Symbolic violence, according to Bourdieu (1990), is “every power which manages to impose meaning and to impose them as legitimate by concealing power relations which are the basis of its force,” (p. 4). Education gets presented as a neutral and objective endeavor, yet it imposes meanings and symbols associated with the dominant culture, thus imposing an ideological frame that rationalizes and reproduces structures of inequality. This, according to Bourdieu, typifies symbolic violence. And as Kimberle Crenshaw (1994) has pointed out, one of the central problems regarding race and legal education is the implicit assertion of “perspectivelessness,” in the teaching of a fundamentally racialized body of law, precisely the kind of symbolic violence to which Bourdieu alludes.

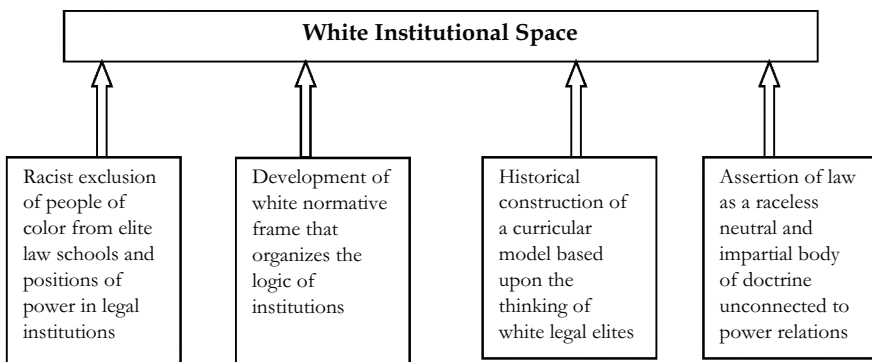
So the very institution that trains the people who will be most influential in creating and interpreting the legal structure that organizes United States society, socializes them to *not* problematize the connection between law and domination. Given the central importance of the law with regard to race and racial hierarchy in the United States, this fact powerfully implicates law schools in the reproduction of racial inequality. Furthermore, the reproductive power of law schools is exacerbated by the fact that the law has been the central institution through which people of color have attempted to challenge racial oppression, through an appeal to legally protected civil rights. The



racialized social institutions of education and law operate synergistically to support White supremacy as well as to channel the ideological and material resources of legal education and law disproportionately to Whites.

*Historical Racist Exclusion and Embedded White Supremacy*

As Feagin, Vera, and Imani have discussed the history of White supremacy and exclusion in educational (and legal) institutions is central to the development of White space. Historical exclusion of people of color is not merely a demographic phenomenon, if it were we could articulate racialized space with singularly demographic description—for example, people of color were historically excluded from these institutions (law, education, legal education), today facilitating access for people of color into these institutions could resolve the demography of racialized space and thereby deconstruct White space. However, this historical exclusion embedded White space in much more insidious ways—in major part because of the symbolically violent assertion that these fundamentally White supremacist social institutions were nonracialized, neutral, impartial institutions. White racial exclusion of people of color provided the context for the uncontested construction of White institutional space that became the foundation for contemporary White institutional and organizational norms and policies that reproduce White privilege and power in legal education. Taking into account the foundational history of racist exclusion that characterized elite law schools, like most other powerful social institutions in the United States. Here, I suggest the following model assist in the conceptualization of the *formation* of White institutional space in the specific context of law schools:<sup>7</sup>



The White institutional space of elite law schools has its foundation in a history and legacy of White racist exclusion of people of color. Not only did this result in generations of White accumulation of economic, social, and political power reaped from these institutions, it also permitted an exclusively White construction of institutional and organizational norms of behavior and logics (see Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008,



for a discussion of White logic). White elites constructed the curricular model that typifies legal education, the case method and Socratic method of teaching, identified the centrally relevant materials for learning the law (appellate cases), and enforced a particular form of cognitive processing of these materials that characterized a successful student—thinking like a lawyer—which translated to thinking like the (White) appellate judge authors of the cases that formed the curriculum. The adjective “White” here is purposively both in parentheses and underlined to note the other central White logic enforced by the exclusively White institutional actors who constructed White institutional space—the presentation of an explicitly White supremacist logic as a natural, neutral, and impartial body of law and education (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Within the institutions of law and education this logic of White supremacy was largely uncontested historically because racist exclusion limited the power of people of color to influence the processes of law and education making or the presentation of these processes as nonracialized and normative. The consequence of these historical facts is a deeply embedded, and today generally tacit, White logic that defines and organizes legal education and law schools as White institutional and organizational spaces.

As the discussion of the historical development of White institutional space illustrates, the historical organization of racial logic and practice becomes embedded over time in such a way that White space becomes tacit and is naturalized as part of the normative (and neutral) working of the institution (Moore, 2008; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Thus, the historical racialized organizational and institutional processes that formed contemporary White spaces remain an essential element of contemporary White institutional spaces.

## Contemporary Mechanisms White Institutional Space and Racial Reproduction

White institutional space was *produced* historically through explicitly racist processes that were facilitated by deliberate racial exclusion from important social institutions. Contemporary White institutional space relies on the often tacit remnants of this historical production, but the reproduction of White institutional space continues through contemporary racialized discourse, ideology, practice, and hierarchies of power that reify White power and privilege in throughout these spaces. As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) notes that racial ideology and racialized social structures are always interconnected, once a society becomes racially structured,

there develops a racial ideology . . . This ideology is not simply a ‘superstructural’ phenomenon (a mere reflection of the racialized system), but becomes the organizational map that guides the actions of racial actors in society. It becomes as real as the relations it organizes. (p. 470)

Bonilla-Silva (2017) further notes that in the postcivil rights United States, Whites have developed particular “storylines” or “frames” that impose an asserted commitment to

abstracted concepts like formal racial equality atop participation in behaviors and practices that support and reproduce White power, privilege, and wealth. One of the most powerful frames of what Bonilla-Silva terms color-blind racism, is abstract liberalism—or discursive storylines that equate equality with treating all individuals the same, while ignoring racial differences resulting from contemporary racial hierarchy or the history of White supremacy. Through a color-blind racist ideology and abstract individualistic story-lines individuals in law schools obscure and reproduce the consequences of racist institutional history without having to engage in any intentional racial animus for people of color.

One of the first elements of the physical structures of law schools, I visited was the silent racist history echoing off the walls of hallways and classrooms. From portraits and pictures of historical legal figures, law school administrators and faculty, and graduating classes the tacit message that those in positions of power in law and law schools are normatively overwhelmingly White and male. These images of history combine with panoptical classrooms structured to convey the natural power of law professors, who are remain overwhelmingly disproportionately White, and facilitate an atmosphere of surveillance of students. In addition, the curriculum, still overwhelmingly characterized by the case law and Socratic methods, carries into present legal instruction the logics and perspectives of elite White men—yet these positions are, perhaps more today than in the past, as a result of color-blind racial frames, presented as neutral, impartial, and race-less principles of law. By not explicitly articulating the racist history of the law and legal education, contemporary law schools reify and reproduce White privilege and power within the institutional setting of legal education, through what Margolis (2001) has discussed as the “hidden curriculum” of (legal) education.

Although the act of ignoring or disregarding the relevance of history is a principal mechanism of contemporary White institutional space, there are other mechanisms that include active reproduction of White space today. As the literature on racial geographical segregation indicates, segregation is a relevant component of both the reproduction and normalization of White power and privilege. In elite U.S. law schools, the demographics of student bodies remains an important element of the White space; the vast majority of historically White law schools, which are the considered the most highly ranked and elite schools in the nation, remain disproportionately White today. African American, Latinx, and indigenous students are underrepresented at all elite law schools in the country (Evans & Moore, 2015). Thus, a demographic disparity exists in individual law school organizations and in legal education as an institution. This basic demography is influential for the perpetuation of racialized tropes and norms about who possesses sufficient “merit” to be in law school. Perhaps more institutionally important are what I called *demographics of power* in legal education (Moore, 2008). White space not only relies on who is or is not *in* law schools, but more important, who *has institutional power* within those schools. In elite U.S. law schools, the vast majority of senior faculty and administrators (tenured faculty, deans, and associate deans) are White, whereas people of color in the schools are disproportionately

represented in positions holding less power or positions of service such as adjunct or instructional faculty, staff positions, and even the custodial workers.

The racial demographics of power in law schools connects to the interactional dynamics referred to by Joan Acker points to in discussing gendered organizations. The fact that law school deans are overwhelmingly White and custodial staff are overwhelmingly people of color in U.S. law schools is a visual signifier of White advantage and non-White disadvantage, White control and exploitation of people of color. Racialized patterns of institutional power create tacit institutional meanings, which are embedded in individual law schools, that White power is natural and normal. Moreover, the naturalization of White domination in these spaces is, once again, bolstered by a narrative of objectivity and impartiality. As Kimberle Crenshaw stated, despite a racialized body of law, a racialized curriculum, and racialized organizational dynamics of power, in law schools, the law and legal education get presented as “perspectiveless.” As a result, within these White spaces, institutionalized racism routinely operates as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990).

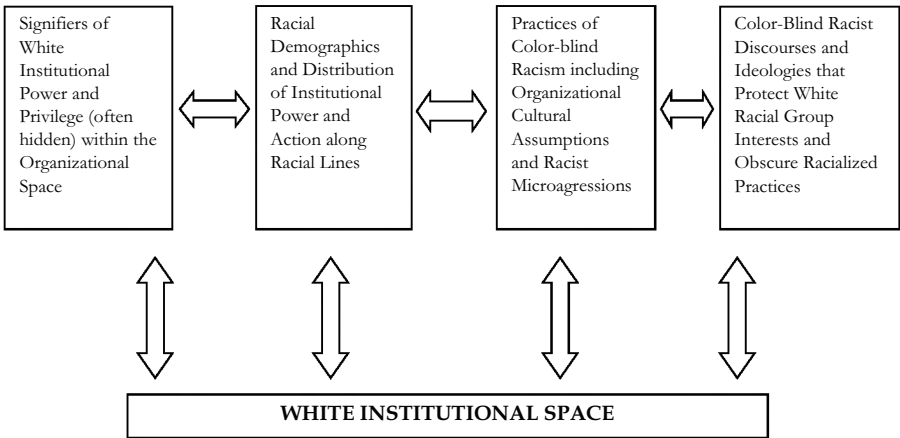
These deep structural features of White space that organize law schools also serve as a shelter for the micro-level, everyday racialized interactions and discourses that become the cultural space of law schools.<sup>8</sup> Discursive commitment to abstract liberalism not only obscures White racist institutional history and contemporary White racist hidden curricula but it also becomes a central tactic for the discursive minimization of White racist activities and practices. I call this interaction between routine engagement in racialized practices in organizational setting combined with discursive assertions of commitment to abstracted racial equality the *practice of color-blind racism* (Moore, 2008). The practice of color-blind racism occurs as, on the one hand, institutional members affirmatively assert a commitment to racial equality, often in the form of commitment to race neutrality and/or equality of opportunity, while, on the other hand, engaging in systematic patterns of racialized practices.

Racist microaggressions often take place when power and privilege within law schools and/or legal education are presumed to belong uncritically to Whites, while people of color are viewed as outsiders within these powerful social organizations and institutions. For example, when a White law student approached a Mexican American law student after an Immigration Law class and asked her whether she was afraid of deportation. Or, when a White professor closes a locked after-hours law school access door in the face of an African American law student because he did not believe the African American man looked like a “student” (Moore, 2008; see also Evans & Moore, 2015; García-López & Segura, 2008). Cultural assumptions about who is the “typical” law student versus who is the “typical” potential deportee, inform behaviors in the space of law schools that belie abstracted color-blind discourses and ideologies.

The contemporary practice of color-blind racism is, ironically, *facilitated* by the presence of some people of color in the space of law schools, again problematizing an exclusively demographic approach to defining White space. The inclusion of people of color into previously exclusively White spaces in the postcivil rights era can be held out as evidence of racial neutrality and/or equality; the fact that this inclusion occurred often in the context of extreme White resistance and without meaningful institutional

or organizational change is continuously concealed through color-blind discursive storylines and ideological frames (Bell, 1987; Crenshaw, 1988; Ferguson, 2012; Mills, 1997; Ture & Hamilton, 1977). As a result, in the context of a historical moment in which color-blind racism is dominant, it becomes even more important to evaluate the mechanisms of White institutional space. The following model illustrates the recursive relationship between contemporary mechanisms that enforce and naturalized White space and the reproduction of White institutional space.

Contemporary White Institutional Space:



**Conclusion**

The mechanisms of White institutional space, historical and contemporary, result in the channeling of institutional material and ideological resources disproportionately to Whites, while simultaneously veiling the mechanisms of racial power that accomplish this racist outcome. Unique to organizational and institutional (as opposed to geographical) spaces, the mechanisms of White institutional space function most successfully in racially integrated (if disproportionately White) organizational settings. For this reason, it is essential to look beyond racial demographics of social organizations and institutions to fully understand how White racist oppression is maintained in contemporary U.S. society. A nuanced analysis of White space should include an understanding of the interactional dynamics between social organizations and institutions and the racial social structure. Capturing the production and operation of White space requires attention to the historical roots of organizations and institutions within the structure of White supremacy that characterizes U.S. society. Moreover, contemporary dynamics of White space must include examination of the racial dynamics of advantage and disadvantage, control and exploitation, and action and emotion within organizations; including the interacting mechanisms of hidden White organizing logics or curricula, racialized demographics of power, color-blind racist discourses and ideologies, racialized everyday cultures, practices and microaggressions, and how these

mechanisms function in coordination to reproduce White power and privilege within organizational and institutional spaces.

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### Notes

1. Note that this distinction focuses on an interrogation of Whiteness and organizational mechanisms of White domination. A comprehensive analysis of the racial dynamics of White space must eventually include a nuanced analysis of how White supremacy imposes its exploitative gaze on different racial groups differently (see Mutua, 1999). In my analysis of race in two elite law schools, I was attentive to these differences, but this is clearly an area of research that will benefit from further research.
2. Cite the constitutional provisions for slavery here.
3. Alexis De Toqueville (1876, p. 358) makes a similar point when he notes that "the language of the law . . . gradually penetrates . . . into the bosom of society . . . so that at last the whole people contract the habits and tastes of the judicial magistrate." See also Sarat and Felstiner (1989).
4. Note here that I am rejecting (or perhaps expanding) Marx's conception of the law as *merely* superstructural, in favor of a more expansive explication of the law as articulated in Bonilla-Silva's (1997) discussion of racial ideology. While the law does clearly operate as an expression of material relations, it is also an *expression of dominant racial ideology*; a component of the organizational map of racial ideology that functions to reproduce ideological and material relations.
5. See, for example, research on what scholars have called the "hidden curriculum," suggesting that ideological reproduction in education serves to reproduce structures of power and inequality. For a thorough discussion of the hidden curriculum, see Margolis (2001).
6. See Bourdieu (1990) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990).
7. Note that I do not suggest that this model has captured every mechanism in the production of White space; instead, I offer this model as an example of the historical production of White space in the case of law schools. In other research sites, there may be similar and different historical exclusions and consequences of those exclusions. As with any theory, further social science research in a diverse array of sites will lead to a more comprehensive articulation of the historical and contemporary mechanisms of White space.
8. As Omi and Winant (1994) suggest, race takes place on the macro-level, signifying structural racial inequality, and the micro-level of everyday interaction. We notice race, we notice the race of individuals we come into contact with, and we draw on "common sense" understandings of what it means to be a particular "race" (p. 59). Through structural inequalities, and the racial meanings we draw on to account for these inequalities, race becomes "real" in the lived experiences of individuals. And, as Bonilla-Silva (1997) points out, micro-level processes of everyday interaction and ideological beliefs about race are connected to and tend to reproduce the macro-structural organization of race.

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