Original Research

Understanding Campus Space and Whiteness as Ontological Expansiveness

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Abstract

This paper discusses findings of a quantitative, causal-comparative study that sought to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between a rural predominantly white institution and an urban minority-serving institution in terms of their white American male students' perceptions of whiteness as ontological expansiveness. As the demographic makeup of the United States of America continues to become more diverse, so too are the colleges and universities that support students of all backgrounds. Given this shift and understanding the need for social justice awareness, it is important to grasp how white students understand and take part in this shift. The study found low effect sizes and statistically significant differences between the two institutions as assessed by the study instrument, finding minority-serving institutions' white American male students are slightly more accepting of their white racial identity and have a slightly higher affinity for social equality. Higher education institutions can utilize this data to improve campus-based student activism as a rejection of the assumptions of whiteness within the ivory tower. Thus, there is a pressing need for critical interrogations of whiteness in higher education.

Keywords: whiteness, campus space, urban institution, and higher education

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Introduction

American higher education institutions were established to prepare white colonial males for society and educate them in ministry (Thelin, 2011). As the demographic makeup of the United States continues to become more diverse, so too are the colleges and universities that support students of all backgrounds (Banks, 2009; Denson, 2009; Hu & Kuh, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics projections to 2026, white American students project to have the slowest college enrollment growth. White American students will only grow 1% from 2015 to 2026, while African American students will grow 20%, Hispanic American students will grow 26%, Asian American/Pacific Islander students will grow 12%, American Indian/Alaska Native students will decrease 3%, and students identifying as two or more races will grow 37% (Hussar & Bailey, 2018, p. 27). Given this shift, and understanding the need for social justice racial awareness, Banks (2009) stated, "therefore, even as racial diversity increases and must be addressed by our institutions of higher learning, it is also important to grasp how white students understand and take part in this shift" (p. 149).

Colleges and universities are predestined white spaces, no matter how diverse an institution is or how comprehensive its diversity statement claims to be. White males rarely encounter a space where they feel estranged based on race. This has been described as ontological expansiveness, or the way "whiteness as a structuring ideology in U.S. society permits white people to think, act, and interact with the space around them in such a way that they have a right to inhabit any space, be it material or otherwise" (Corces-Zimmerman et al., 2020, p. 432). This is problematic because white males, who benefit from white and male privilege, consistently commit racial incidents and microaggressions on college campuses yet have the most authority in challenging the racial status quo (Cabrera, 2011; Ratcliff, 2020). Even institutions can perpetuate whiteness through their images, policies, and overall structural diversity, or lack thereof. Therefore, it is important to interrogate how white male students navigate campus spaces and whether the structural diversity of an institution impacts their white racial identity.

Many researchers have identified the college undergraduate years to be the best time for cognitive and social development, stating the collegiate experience is prime for developing the social justice racial consciousness in undergraduate students (Cabrera, 2011; Hall et al., 2011; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Ford, 2012; Reason & Evans, 2007). This article discusses findings of a quantitative, causal-comparative study that sought to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between two geographically-similar, demographically-different universities in terms of their white American male students' perceptions of whiteness as ontological expansiveness as it relates to the tenets of critical whiteness theory (Cabrera et al., 2016). After the introduction, a summary of relevant literature centers around whiteness as ontological expansiveness within higher education. The methods and results of the study will follow and end with a discussion of the findings.

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Whiteness as Ontological Expansiveness in Higher Education

Most higher education institutions are inherently designed to cater to white people, and this further develops ontologically expansive attitudes. For example, Cabrera et al. (2016) stated, "Whereas the vast majority of race-based analyses in higher education focus on interpersonal interactions as the center of analysis, whiteness also informs issues of campus space" (p. 22). Gusa (2010) referred to this as White Institutional Presence (WIP), and others simply called it white space. Both of these terms "refer to the means by which whiteness becomes the social and environmental norm within institutions of higher education" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 23).

Type of Institution Matters

In the United States, there are over 5,000 institutions of higher or postsecondary learning (NCES, 2018). These institutions include public and private universities, liberal arts colleges, for-profit entities, and technical and community colleges. Universities can be classified on a spectrum from urban to rural. The major demographic categories are predominantly white institutions (PWI), minority-serving institutions (MSI), historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), Hispanic serving institutions (HSI), and Asian American/ Pacific Islander serving institutions (AAPISI) (College Board, 2018). This study focused on two public four-year universities, one PWI and one MSI, in the geographic region of southeast Texas. Their demographically-different student populations and structural diversity are central to this study.

In an essay regarding land acquisition and its relation to higher education, Patel (2015) stated, "Education is and represents property, and more specifically in the U.S., white property" (p. 658). She continued, "universities and colleges are themselves sites of property rights in terms of economic, cultural, and social capital" (Patel, 2015, p. 663). She termed this notion of property as "white settler colonialism," which is practiced in three steps: (1) seize the land, resources, cultural practices, and goods of the desired location, (2) practice state-sanctioned genocide, and (3) import slave labor in chains (Patel, 2015, p. 661). Patel (2015) argued American institutions of higher education, even the most elite, have long had oppressive practices that have "manifested to protect white property rights, such as the use of slave labor to build and maintain campuses and also in sanctioning and rewarding research that justified slavery through account of biological difference" (p. 663). Additionally, Patel (2015) called out the idea of "meritocracy" as "hegemonic work," and accused higher education institutions of spreading false rhetoric by stating, "desiring diversity without reckoning with the core settler property interests undergirding practices of inequality fulfills appearance needs while staving off transformation into other possible futurities. It is a desire for symbol but not material change" (p. 670). She argued this false rhetoric invalidates many of the diversity programs and initiatives on campuses since meaningful change is not the primary goal, but more so, the university's image.

Patel (2015) highlighted an important distinction of this study when she stated, "by altering the number of racial minorities on college campuses, equity can be achieved. However, to assume that simply wedging in more people of color into college campuses will alter inequity grossly underestimates its longstanding, deep and purposeful architecture" (p. 670). The type of institution only matters to white American male social justice consciousness development to the extent to which the leadership of an institution is prepared to "attend to the policies that shape how populations historically marginalized from higher education are valued, supported, and empowered to facilitate change" and "learn from projects that were birthed from explicit purposes of social responsibility and social transformation" (Patel, 2015, p. 670-671).

While Patel (2015) emphasized an increase in marginalized students on campus would not lift the veil of racial oppression, structural diversity is especially important for white American students at higher education institutions (Bowman & Park, 2014). Bowman and Park (2014) stated, "structural diversity has been operationalized as the proportion of students of color, the proportion of underrepresented students of color (excluding Asian Americans), and the relative representation of several racial groups" (p. 663). The structural diversity of an institution has a positive effect on white American students due to the availability of different-race peers and cross-racial interactions. Without strong structural diversity, interracial interactions, and friendships cannot occur (Bowman & Park, 2014). Keeping the concept of structural diversity in mind, this study will seek to compare PWIs and MSIs' impact on white American male social justice racial consciousness development.

Predominantly White Institutions

Thelin (2011) and Patel (2015) mentioned that most institutions were developed and tailored towards educating the white American man. As a result, many institutions today remain predominantly white institutions and continue to perpetuate whiteness (Gusa, 2010; Hikido & Murray, 2015; Patel, 2015). However, researchers have highlighted the benefits of white American students being exposed to and engaged with multicultural organizations and diversity programs and its profound impact on their social justice consciousness development (Bowman & Park, 2014; Cabrera, 2012; Lo et al., 2017).

Lo et al. (2017) stated, "in the United States, growth of the immigrant and minority populations is diversifying many predominantly white colleges and universities that have worked to make curricula and policies supportive of racial/ethnic diversity" (p. 247). Still, white American students at predominantly white institutions are "more likely to describe race relations favorable, and minority students more likely to describe them unfavorably" (Lo et al., 2017, p. 247). Even, "some Americans affirm that a color-blind ideology holds sway in their nation today" and racism is no longer relevant as laws equally apply to all citizens (Lo et al., 2017, p. 248). However, the researchers used critical race theory in their study and noted how it combats the idea of reverse racism.

Lo et al. (2017) sought to provide two things in their study: (a) establish whether African American and white American students at a PWI in the American South showed differences in perceptions of campus race relations and (b) locate correlates explaining any differences in student perceptions via the role of race and racism in understanding campus race relations (Lo et al., 2017). They distinctly defined the terms prejudice, discrimination, traditional racism, and symbolic racism by stating, "campus race relations can hardly be conducive to an ideal of social justice if racism is prevalent among students" and "racism is made up of racial/ethnic prejudice combined with discriminatory behavior" (Lo et al., 2017, p. 248).

The study was conducted at the University of Alabama and sought to update previous work at the university, which also examined racial issues over the past fifty years (Lo et al., 2017). Their final findings consisted of data from 3,219 undergraduate students that identified as White or African American. They found "racist and discriminatory words and acts occur too often on the campus," and white American students could not identify the words or acts as often as African American students were (Lo et al., 2017, p. 257). Lo et al. (2017), addressing their first objective, found "white students to assess campus race relations more favorable than Black students did" (Lo et al., 2017, p. 257). Secondly, the researchers found both groups had higher scores of symbolic racisms, or covert acts, "acknowledged less campus racism or discrimination, describing race relations in more positive terms" (Lo et al., 2017, p. 257). The correlation between covert acts of racism being measured higher for white American students who also perceive positive campus race relations is significant because African American students perceived the campus racial climate significantly more negatively (Lo et al., 2017). Lo et al. (2017) summarized their study by emphasizing race at the center of the campus climate discussion "is necessary to a future in which interracial, interethnic contacts on campus benefit all students of all backgrounds" (p. 261).

Minority Serving Institutions

White American students have a racially dominant position in society, and most colleges continue to operate as historically white spaces (Hikido & Murray, 2015; Patel, 2015; Thelin, 2011). A significant amount of research is focused on PWIs and white identity development and "crucially demonstrated students' confusion, contradictions, and discomfort in constructing their white identities" (Hikido & Murray, 2015). However, Hikido and Murray (2015) stated, "there is limited material on white college students' responses to multiracial environments and multicultural ideals" (p. 392). Hikido and Murray's (2015) study, plus others, highlighted the experience of white American college students in multiracial environments with increased multicultural ideals.

Hikido and Murray (2015) stated, "schools where whites constitute a numerical minority or 'minority-majority schools,' are of particular interest and importance" (p. 389). These institutions serve as "crucial sites for personal development," and "they play an important role in establishing behavioral norms, and thus dictate and foreshadow students' interactions in other

steadily diversifying institutions" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, pp. 389-390). Additionally, coinciding with Bowman and Park (2015), "white students gain disproportionately from diversity compared to students of color because increased structural diversity more dramatically increases their chances of engaging in cross-racial interactions" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 393). Their study evaluated the attitudes of white American students on a "multiracial campus where diversity is experienced both as a demographic feature and an idealized model" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 390). Hikido and Murray (2015) addressed critical multiculturalism and emphasized how the acceptance of multiculturalism on campuses has become the "moral imperative of so-called 'modern' states, institutions, and individuals" (p. 390).

Multiculturalism can be separated into different paradigms labeled conservative, liberal, or critical, but Hikido and Murray (2015) argued: "only critical multiculturalism considers the complexities and inequalities inhered within them" (p. 390). Hikido and Murray (2015) stated, "A crucial tenet of critical multiculturalism is making whiteness visible and accountable. As long as whiteness eludes scrutiny as an invisible standard, it remains the marker against which all 'others' are measured, thus maintaining its centered and privileged position" (p. 391). Since minority institutions serve a multiracial student body and promote multiculturalism, they have the greatest potential to become an institution of change (Hikido & Murray, 2015). Alternately, Hikido and Murray (2015) also argued white American students could "embrace multicultural discourses that conserve the legitimacy and centrality of Whiteness" (p. 391).

The sample and qualitative method of the study were small, yielding only three white American women and two men aged 18 through 21. However, the researchers claimed the group interview "yielded a rich data set that demonstrates the complexity of white student discourses regarding campus racial diversity" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 394). The students were enrolled in a large, public university in an urban environment in California. Hikido and Murry (2015) stated, "the university prides itself for both its compositional diversity as well as its institutional support of inclusiveness" (p. 395). Their findings were unique in that campus diversity was celebrated and welcomed; however, four themes emerged: "(1) diversity fosters tolerance on campus; (2) diversity fragments into segregation; (3) institutional diversity efforts undervalue and exclude whites; and (4) the university should overlook white identity" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 395).

The findings from Hikido and Murray (2015) compliment the findings from Patel (2015), in which universities promoting multiculturalism and diversity cannot solely rely on their structural diversity and student body to ensure cross-racial exposure and development. Hikido and Murray (2015) concluded, "ultimately, these students propagated a multiculturalism that protects White superiority in a multiracial setting by normalizing whiteness and stabilizing racial hierarchies" (p. 407). They argued their findings deserve considerable attention, "not only because they ironically erode the collaborative ideals that diversity platforms seek to accomplish, but also because they serve as a template for future scenarios where whites live and work in multiracial environments" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 408). The researchers called for universities to do

more to create "inclusive environments that foster interracial collaboration and antiracism, elements crucial for a rapidly diversifying country," and they "must implement such pedagogies and institutional initiatives" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 408). Without following this call to action, Hikido and Murray (2015) stated, "white students, regardless of their racial environment, will likely adhere to shallow multiculturalism that inadvertently sustains the chasms of racial inequalities" (p. 408). Critical inquiry into higher education environments that foster interracial and multicultural collaborations is needed to understand how to interrupt whiteness and provide more racially cognizant spaces.

Method

This quantitative causal-comparative study sought to determine whether college campuses' structural diversity and environment influenced the white racial identity of white American male students. The setting of the study was two universities (names changed), Magnolia University and Tulip University, within the geographic region of southeast Texas. Magnolia University is classified as a large, public, rural, predominantly white institution (PWI), and Tulip University is classified as a large, public, urban, minority-serving institution (MSI). The choice to study white American males at two demographically-different institutions was purposeful. As stated, white American males benefit from both male and white privilege, and they have the most authority on challenging the status quo (Cabrera, 2011). The researcher sought to compare the attitudes of white American males at similar-sized institutions with demographically-different student body types to highlight the impact the institution type and its environment have on White American male students' ontological expansive attitudes.

Instrumentation Subscale: White Racial Identity Scale (WRIS)

An altered 23-item White Racial Identity Scale (WRIS) was used to measure participant perception of whiteness as ontological expansiveness. Miller (2017) created the WRIS to include "traditional attitudinal measures of white racial identity, but expands these previous measures by including questions that ask whites about their behaviors and cultural preferences" (p. 93). Miller (2017) argued expanding examination to include racial identities on culture and attitude offers "a more complete picture of how whites perform their identities and the kinds of racialized norms that underlie institutional and interactive process on college campuses, whether or not whites are aware that these behaviors and cultural practices are racialized" (p. 93). Weaker scores on the WRIS indicate the participants have more frequent cross-racial contact and have more flexibility and awareness of white racial identity (Miller, 2017).

The WRIS original instrument contained 37 items "that measure the behavioral and cultural components of white racial identity as well as the white racial attitudes to provide a more holistic picture of how white racial identities are constructed and performed in social interaction" (p. 96). After exploratory factor analysis, Miller (2017) administered 24 items to 221 white American

college students and revealed eight subcomponents of white racial identity that included such factors as American, cross-racial, ethnic, intimate, racial attitudes, institutional, music, and food. Most of the eight factors had alpha reliabilities of 0.7. Still, any that did not meet the suggested statistical strength "were retained due to the fact that Cronbach's alphas are underestimated for factors with three or less items" (Miller, 2017, p. 101).

An altered 23-item WRIS was used in a larger survey as a subscale for this current study. The question *I never like black music more than white music* was removed due to feedback from the pilot study participants regarding how the question was poorly worded and did not define what was considered white music or black music. The current study also changed the response options from the original 5-item Likert scale to a 6-item Likert scale to maintain congruence between the larger instrument subscales.

The purpose of the WRIS subscale in this study was to understand the attitudinal measures of white racial identity among the participants. Additionally, the WRIS strived to understand how white American males perceived and performed their identities on their college campus as it assesses multiple factors attributed to racial identity. For example, with questions like, *I feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't mix* and *I prefer going to social gatherings and parties where most of the people are white,* the WRIS helped determine white American male perceptions of whiteness as ontological expansiveness.

Results

The participants in this study self-identified as white American males currently enrolled at either Tulip University or Magnolia University during the fall 2019 semester. Study participants ranged from first-year, sophomore, junior, and senior students at Tulip and Magnolia universities. Table 1 details the overall exploratory data analysis at each research setting.

Table 1

Exploratory Data Analysis for the Research Setting and Sample

	Total Population	Sample Size	Total Male	Sample Size	Total White Male	Sample Size
Tulip	37,689	0.50%	18,837	1.07%	4,402	4.58%
Magnolia	51,625	1.35%	27,515	2.53%	16,135	4.31%
Total	89,314	1.00%	46,352	1.93%	20,537	4.37%

Note. Tulip University n = 202 (Institutional Research, 2019); Magnolia University n = 697 (Data & Research Services, 2019).
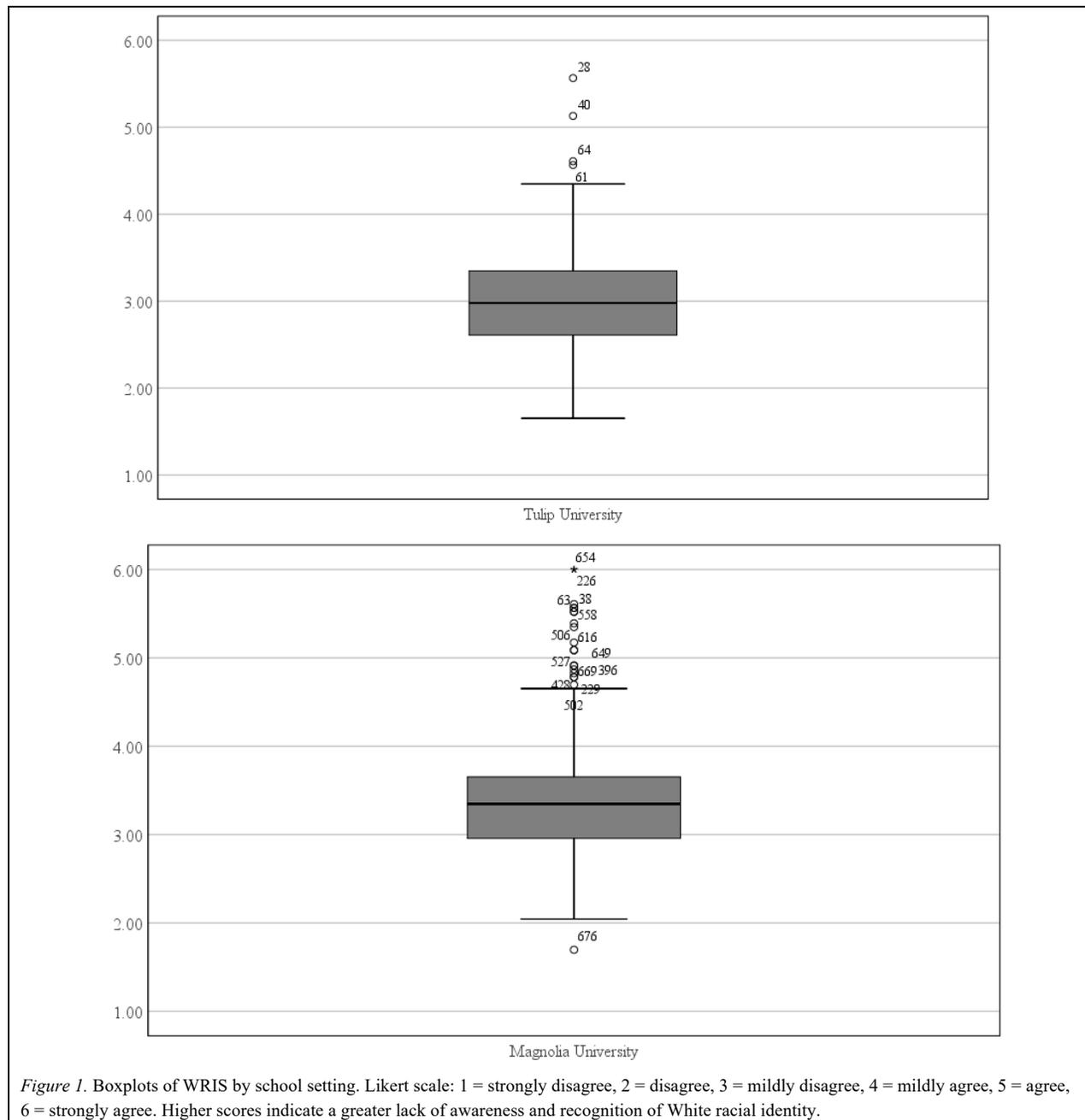
Initially, 1,014 principal participants completed most of the 23-item instrument. Any respondents not answering all 23-scale principal items were discarded for consistency and clarity. Additionally, a respondent was discarded if they failed to answer demographic questions referring to which school they attended, their gender, or their ethnicity since the initial survey had to be distributed to all undergraduate students at both universities, based on the research settings and the research protocols.

In this study, 87% of all participants were retained as usable cases to analyze the study data. Tulip University participants account for 202 or 22.5% of the study's final sample of 899 participants, while Magnolia University accounts for the remaining 697 or 77.5% of participants. However, when observed in terms of sample size percentage of each school's total viable White American male participants, Tulip University's study sample constitutes 4.58%, and Magnolia University's is 4.31%. This means that white American male participation at Tulip University was higher than at Magnolia University, even though Tulip's percentage of total sample participants is much lower than Magnolia's because of significantly different total numbers of white American male students at each of the two universities.

Graphical exploratory data analysis highlighted the differences between the two research settings on the WRIS. Figure 1 shows the boxplots used to further examine the differences in response frequency distribution between the two schools on the WRIS and reveal any outliers. Figure 1 shows the slight difference in the 75th percentile of participants' overall means. However, both Tulip and Magnolia Universities have normal distributions, with median and mean values of 2.97 and 3.03 at Tulip, plus median and mean values of 3.34 and 3.37 values at Magnolia. Participants at both schools had relatively the same range in distribution of response means, and there were outliers. However, the ranges spurn from 1.00 of strongly disagree to a 4.00 of mildly agree at Tulip University and 2.00 of agree to a 4.00 of mildly agree at Magnolia. Further of note, Magnolia University has more means closer to mildly agree than Tulip University, which has mean averages more clustered towards mildly disagree.

Figure 1

Figure 1. Boxplots of WRIS by school setting. Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = mildly disagree, 4 = mildly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a greater lack of awareness and recognition of White racial identity.
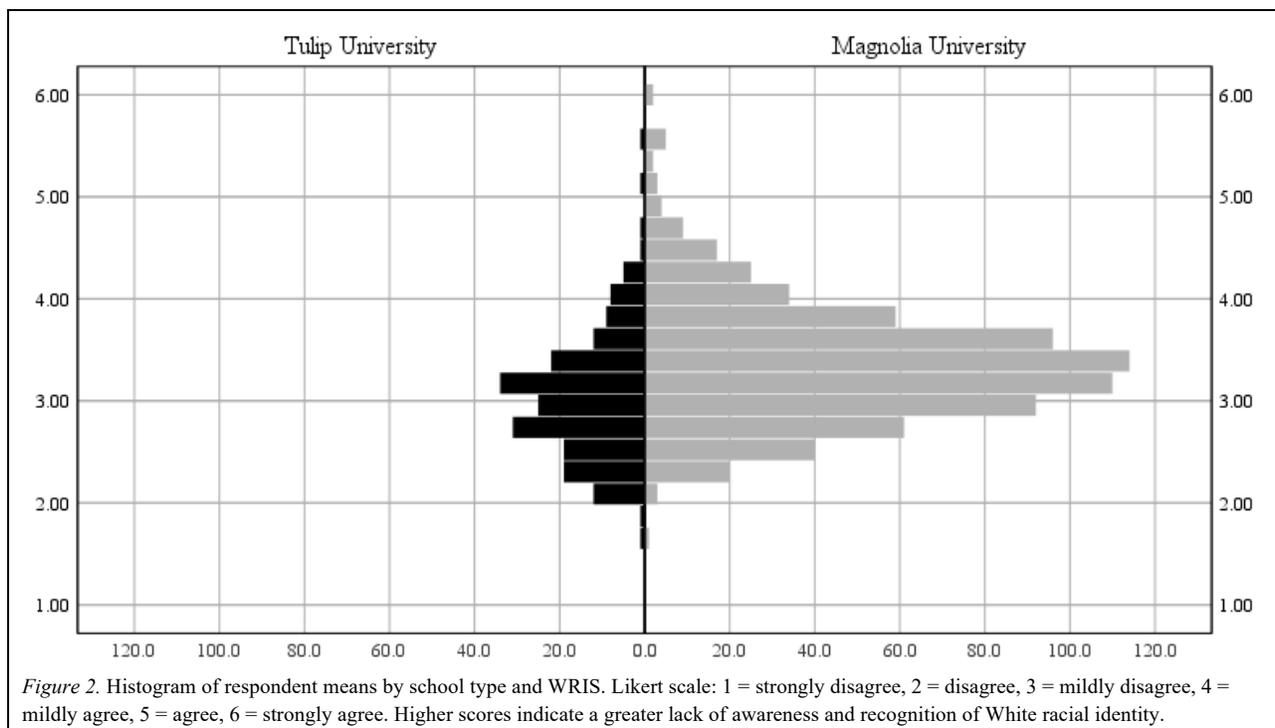
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A descriptive histogram further validated this analysis. Figure 2 shows the histogram to further visually triangulate illustrations of the difference between the distribution of responses at the two schools and determine whether there was any skew. The slightly lower means of Tulip University compared to the slightly higher means of Magnolia University align with the graphical visual analysis results of the stem-and-leaf and box plots.

Figure 2

Figure 2. Histogram of respondent means by school type and WRIS. Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = mildly disagree, 4 = mildly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a greater lack of awareness and recognition of White racial identity.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of WRIS by School

	n	*Mode*	*Median*	*Mean*	*SD*
Tulip University	202	3.2	2.97	3.03	.61
Magnolia University	697	3.4	3.34	3.37	.60
Total	899	3.2	3.26	3.29	.62

Note. Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = mildly disagree, 4 = mildly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a greater lack of awareness and recognition of white racial identity.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the sample size, frequency, and variance distribution of the mode, median, mean, and standard deviation on the WRIS for each school setting. Tulip University, with n = 202, had a lower mode, median, and mean than Magnolia University, with an n = 697. Overall, in this study, the participants (n = 899) had a mode of 3.2, median of 3.26, mean of 3.29, and standard deviation of .62. This supports the graphical exploratory analysis and supports the use of the parametric t-test to determine the significance of the difference between participant perceptions collected at the two study settings. The effect size for the WRIS was .22. This indicates a low medium effect size and strengthens the significance of the findings (Field, 2018).

Table 3

Factor Reliabilities of WRIS by Study

Study	American	Cross racial	Ethnic	Intimate	Racial attitudes	Institutional	Music	Food
Original	.74	.69	.75	.67	.77	.69	.62	.58
Current	.82	.81	.75	.55	.88	.42	-	.62

Note. For the current study, music did not meet the threshold to produce a Cronbach alpha.

The internal consistency of each WRIS factor (American, cross-racial, ethnic, intimate, racial attitudes, institutional, and food), except music, both in the original instrument author's study and in this current study, had a Cronbach alpha ranging between .42 to .88. According to Field (2018), acceptable alphas range from above .70. In the current study, music only had one item contributing to that factor due to a removed question. Cohen et al. (2018) stated there must be two or more items to conduct reliability analysis. Therefore, the music does not have an alpha for this study. Miller (2017) had similar factor alphas and stated, "although some of these alpha reliabilities did not meet the suggested statistical strength of 0.7, they were retained since Cronbach's alphas are underestimated for factors with three or less items" (p. 101). This study's reliability coefficient was compared to that of the original authors to ensure that this study's reliability coefficients were either similar or close to those of the original authors. Table 3 shows the alpha reliabilities of the original study and this current study.

Table 4

Independent Samples t-test for WRIS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	*Mean Difference*	*Std. Error Difference*	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.699	.404	-6.951	897	.000	-.33710	.04850	-.43228	-.24192
Equal variances not assumed			-6.868	320.867	.000	-.33710	.04908	-.43367	-.24053

Note. p < .05.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences in white American male perception of whiteness as ontological expansiveness as assessed by the WRIS when responses from Magnolia University are compared to those from Tulip University (Table 4). Tulip University males (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .61) perceived white racial identity and comprehended it greater than Magnolia University males with a statistically significant difference, *MD* = 0.33, 95% CI, *t* (897) = -6.868, *p* = .000. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected since there is a statistically significant difference between participant responses from the two universities on their white American male's perception of whiteness as ontological expansiveness.

Discussion

The results of this analysis indicated a statistically significant difference (*MD = 0.33, 95% CI t (897) = -6.868, p = .000*) between participants at Tulip University (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .61) and Magnolia University (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = .60) on the WRIS and their ontologically expansive attitudes. These findings indicate white American male students' awareness and understanding of white racial identity and its relationship with physical and metaphorical space are greater in surroundings that have more diverse populations, adding to the importance of diverse environments to previous findings (Hikido & Murray, 2015; Lo et al., 2017; Miller, 2017). Researchers have highlighted the benefits of white American students being exposed to and

engaged with multicultural organizations and diversity programs and its profound impact on their social justice consciousness development (Bowman & Park, 2014; Cabrera, 2012; Lo et al., 2017). Hikido and Murray (2015) added, "while a racially diverse environment and a pro-diversity ethos may open up channels for interracial collaboration and inclusion, these factors alone do not ensure that individuals will be able to critically think about race and their racial identities" (p. 408).

Many white Americans believe "the pendulum has now swung beyond equality in the direction of anti-white discrimination" (Norton & Sommers, 2011, p. 217). Exemplified by challenges to teaching critical race theory and notions of reverse-racism on college campuses, Norton and Sommers (2011) speculated, "whites may fear that minorities' imposition of their cultural values represent an attack on white cultural values and norms, as evidenced by whites' resentment of norms of political correctness" (Norton & Sommers, 2011, p. 217). In reality, whiteness and white racial identity not only "enable white students to live in racial bliss, it also enables them to feel entitled to move throughout any component of the campus" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 71). People of color are aware that physical, cultural, linguistic, etc., spaces are not always as open to them on college campuses, which further normalizes whiteness (Cabrera et al., 2016).

In this study, medium-low means on the WRIS from each university suggests whiteness is still normalized on these campuses. Whiteness as ontological expansiveness increases the more whiteness is normalized, and the responses to the WRIS from Magnolia University participants echo those findings when the majority demographic and structural diversity of the institution is centered on white Americans and their ideals (Sullivan, 2006). However, participants from the diversity-rich environment were more racially and culturally aware of how they perform in their physical and metaphorical space, which should motivate scholars and practitioners to continue providing multicultural opportunities and experiences inside and outside the classroom. It can be concluded that minority-serving institutions (MSIs) promote greater awareness and recognition of white racial identity in their white American males and may allow for more racially cognizant spaces. Miller (2017) stated, "college campuses are a key place where white racial identities are created and contested" (p. 92). With the varied environments that minority-serving and metropolitan higher education institutions provide, these environments are ripe for challenging ontologically expansive attitudes and contesting whiteness.

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