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Jodi L. Linley

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Racism Here, Racism There, Racism Everywhere: The Racial Realities of Minoritized Peer Socialization Agents at a Historically White Institution

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I critically examined the ways racially minoritized college students who served as peer socialization agents (i.e., orientation leaders, tour guides) experienced their campus climate in relation to their racial identities and student ambassador positions. Framed by critical race theory, the counternarratives of 11 racially minoritized peer socialization agents at a historically White institution illuminated the ways racially minoritized student leaders experienced pervasive racism despite their prestigious status at the institution. The results of this study suggest implications for practice and future research.

Many racially minoritized students serve as collegiate peer socialization agents (PSAs), such as campus tour guides and orientation leaders, at historically White institutions (HWIs). As ambassadors of the institution, PSAs educate prospective and new students about the institution's "academic life, culture, traditions, history, people" (Mack, 2010, p. 5). The influence of peers has long been established in college impact research (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); in fact, Chickering (1969) stated, "A student's most important teacher is another student" (p. 253). Knowing the profound influence of peers, it makes sense that student affairs professionals use undergraduates as facilitators of socialization initiatives. No doubt, socialization coordinators seek to hire student staff who represent the diversity of their student body (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Pretty, 2004). Seeing diversity among a socialization program's student staff allows prospective and new students to see themselves as belonging at the institution. Given the influence of sense of belonging on enrollment, persistence, and student success (Capps & Miller, 2006; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Rode, 2000; Strayhorn, 2012), hiring a diverse student staff is a sensible strategy toward increasing prospective and new students' sense of belonging.

At the same time, experiences of marginalization for Students of Color at HWIs are well documented in the higher education literature (see Harper, 2013; Harper & Hurtado, 2011; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011). Research about the experiences of student leaders of color has further illuminated marginalizing experiences (see Arminio et al., 2000; Harper, 2013; Harper et al., 2011). This literature suggests that racially minoritized PSAs likely experience incongruities between the dominant institutional narrative about diversity they are trained to promote and their own lived experiences on campus as People of Color.

PSAs are often touted as the most prestigious and integrated student leaders on campus (Abraham, Nesbit, & Ward-Roof, 2003; Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Pretty, 2004). PSAs carry a considerable responsibility for socializing prospective and new students. As institutions look to PSAs to educate prospective and new students, it would benefit higher education leaders to understand the ways racially minoritized PSAs experience

Jodi Linley is Assistant Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies at The University of Iowa.

the campus themselves. Thus, the research question I sought to answer was: How do racially minoritized PSAs experience their campus climate in relation to their racial identities and socialization agent positions?

CONTEXT

Harper et al. (2011) conducted focus groups with 52 Black men who served as resident assistants (RAs) at 6 HWIs. RAs facilitate formal socialization (Weidman, 1989), an important part of a student's process in matriculating to a higher education institution. Participants in that study described racial microaggressions, presumptive and negative stereotyping, underrepresentation, tokenization, and scrutiny. What about the racially minoritized PSAs who facilitate anticipatory socialization (Weidman, 1989), giving prospective and admitted students a glimpse into the realities of campus life as students consider enrolling at the institution?

To my knowledge, only one study has specifically examined anticipatory socialization and the role of racially minoritized PSAs, albeit indirectly. In Harper's (2013) study of collegiate racial socialization, male Black students who participated in a college bridge program for Students of Color described their PSAs—all current Black undergraduates—as educating them about the racial climate at the institution. According to these participants, their Black PSAs:

> advised program participants on how best to respond to racial issues that would inevitably emerge; shared lists of faculty and staff advocates they should seek out when confronted with racism; insisted that these incoming students use resources in campus counseling centers, as well as in Black/multicultural centers; touted the benefits of membership in ethnic student organizations; explained the necessity of solidarity among minoritized students; and volunteered to engage in longer-term success partnerships with program participants. (p. 203)

These upper-level undergraduates communicated to new Black students the racial realities of campus, including racism, counterspaces, and sources of support.

With limited literature about racially minoritized PSAs, I sought to expand on the important research discussed here. This study is contextualized within literature about campus racial climate and the impact of climate on students' well-being. Woven together, these bodies of literature make a clarion call for this study, in which I sought to understand the ways racially minoritized PSAs experience campus climate.

Campus Climate

I anticipate that racially minoritized PSAs experience discrepancies and tensions between their institution's dominant narrative about diversity and students' own lived experiences. I have formed this assumption based on nearly three decades of campus climate literature and research about racially minoritized students' experiences of marginalization. Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of research on "the sources and outcomes of campus racial climate" (p. 281) and constructed a framework for understanding campus climate that delineated external and internal forces. The resulting report, "Enacting Diverse Learning Environments: Improving the Climate for Racial-Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education" (Hurtado et al., 1999), remains a widely accepted framework for understanding campus climate (e.g., Harper & Hurtado, 2011; Yosso & Lopez, 2010).

External forces fall into two domains: government initiatives (e.g., financial aid, state affirmative action policy) and sociohistorical forces (e.g., Supreme Court decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, Black Lives Matter

movement; Hurtado et al., 1998). Internal, or institutional, forces are organized into four interrelated but distinct dimensions of campus climate: (a) historical legacy of exclusion or inclusion, (b) structural diversity, (c) psychological dimension, and (d) behavioral dimension (Hurtado et al., 1998). In this section, I use the internal forces of the Framework for Understanding Campus Climate to organize and discuss literature about campus climate and racially minoritized student leaders.

Institutional Legacy. For the first 200 years of US higher education, the only people involved in teaching or attending college were White men (Geiger, 2005; Thelin, 2011). Most HWIs have a history of exclusion (Thelin, 2011), and that legacy influences "the prevailing climate" and practices at any given HWI (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 283). According to Hurtado et al. (1998), campus desegregation plans are a defining factor of campus racial climates at HWIs. Some leaders of postsecondary institutions, aware of the legacy of racial discrimination in higher education, advance espoused values of diversity in an effort to change the landscape from exclusion to inclusion. For example, in a content analysis of 48 viewbooks from US 4-year institutions, Hartley and Morphew (2008) found "the prevailing message . . . was simply that students of all races, creeds and incomes are welcome. Diversity is frequently 'celebrated,' but ill defined" (p. 686). Yosso and Lopez (2010) noted, "Certainly recruitment brochures would not advertise the fact that many universities foster a campus climate wherein Whites enjoy a sense of entitlement while racial minorities face charges that they are unqualified" (p. 84). Adopting a new paradigm can be more challenging in practice than it is in theory, especially when an institution's espoused theory does not align with its theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

Structural Diversity. Structural diversity, the second dimension of campus climate, refers to the demographics of student enrollment. Many higher education leaders have put considerable effort in this domain as it relates to racial demographics, especially given research that has documented cognitive, psychosocial, and interpersonal benefits of a racially diverse campus (e.g., Bowman, 2013; Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Pike & Kuh, 2006). Yet, institutions that pay attention to only this dimension of campus climate are participating in what critical race theorist Derrick Bell (1980) coined *interest-convergence*. Increasing racial diversity in enrollment serves the interests of People of Color by increasing access to higher education in response to historical exclusion, while racially diverse enrollments serve the interests of White people by preparing White students for citizenship in a multicultural society. Pursuing interest convergence goals without considering all of the dimensions of campus climate results in problems for racially minoritized students, such as tokenism (Bell, 1980; Hurtado et al., 1998). Potential negative consequences of focusing only on structural diversity lead to the next dimension of campus climate, the psychological dimension.

Psychological Dimension. The third dimension of campus climate, the psychological dimension, has been well documented in research about experiences of marginalization and identity-related stress. For example, research has shown that Students of Color experience isolation, discrimination, and an unwelcoming environment at HWIs (Allen, 1992; Bennett & Okinaka, 1990; Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Harper, 2013; Ortiz, 2004; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Turner, 1994; Yosso & Lopez, 2010; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). African American students at an HWI in one study "felt personally diminished by nonverbal

microaggressions perpetrated by their White counterparts" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 67). In a recent critical quantitative study of the impact of positive and negative interactions with diverse peers on students' psychological well-being, Kilgo, Linley, and Bennett (2016) found that positive diversity interactions benefitted only White students' psychological well-being. Further, these authors found that negative diversity interactions contributed to the accrued stress Students of Color face in higher education.

Literature about the impact of marginalization on minoritized students' psychological well-being often refers to Meyer's (2003) *minority stress theory*, advanced "to distinguish the excess stress to which individuals from stigmatized social categories are exposed as a result of their social, often a minority, position" (p. 675). Minority stress theory connects individuals' minoritized identities to their health. Several studies have explored identity-related stress for Students of Color (see Saldaña, 1994; Smedley et al., 1993; Smith et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2010).

For individuals with racially minoritized identities, minority stress might include intergroup relations (e.g., difficulties with peers from whom one is different), intragroup conflict (e.g., feeling rejected among same or similar-identity peers), achievement stress (e.g., feeling less capable than others), and explicit experiences of discrimination (e.g., racism; Meyer, 2003; Smedley et al., 1993; Wei et al., 2010). Smith et al. (2011) extended this concept to what they coined *racial battle fatigue* for racially minoritized individuals in predominantly White environments "replete with gendered racism, blocked opportunities, and mundane, extreme, environmental stress" (p. 64). "Fatigue" references the additional energy required to cope with racism, energy that one must redirect "from more positive life fulfilling desires" (p. 67). No doubt, racially minoritized collegians experience the fatigue of minority stress as described in this section.

While student leadership engagement may generally contribute to students' persistence and success in college (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993), leadership does not mitigate racially minoritized student leaders' experiences of racism. Predating Harper and colleagues' research discussed earlier, a qualitative study of student leaders of color by Arminio et al. (2000) shed important light on the racialized experiences Students of Color serving in leadership roles faced. Arminio and colleagues interviewed 106 Students of Color in various leadership positions at two institutions. Students in that study rejected the label of "leader" because it often indicated to their same-race peers that they were "selling out" to the system that oppressed them. Students discussed loss of relationships as one of several collateral damages to serving as a leader; students also described losing privacy, feeling as though their every move was watched and noted by the institution. By and large, students with racially minoritized identities experience racism on HWI campuses, and it negatively impacts their psychological well-being.

Behavioral Dimension. The fourth dimension of campus climate, the behavioral dimension, is about the ways students interact with each other. The overwhelming and enduring view of intergroup relations on HWI campuses is one of racial and ethnic clustering (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991; Villalpando, 2003). Research about racial clustering at HWIs has established that for Students of Color, clustering is a form of cultural support within a larger environment that is perceived as unsupportive (Loo & Rolison, 1986; Solórzano et al., 2000; Yosso & Lopez, 2010). For racially minoritized students, racial clustering may provide reprieve and empowerment with peers who understand the fatigue of persistent racism. "Counter-spaces

serve as sites where deficit notions of People of Color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 70). Loo and Rolison (1986) emphasized that Students of Color can feel a sense of belonging among their racial or ethnic subculture while simultaneously feeling alienated from the larger institutional environment.

In addition to the literature about racial clustering and counter-spaces, literature about racial microaggressions illustrates the ways students interact with each other across racial differences. Social psychologists have documented the ways racism has evolved in recent decades, from public, conscious displays of overt racial bigotry to subtle, covert forms that are more difficult to identify as racism (see Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). Aversive racism manifests as *racial microaggressions*, which are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Sue and colleagues (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007) delineated three distinct forms of racial microaggressions: microinvalidations, microinsults, and microassaults.

Microinvalidations "exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a Person of Color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). On HWI campuses, microinvalidations would include a White student telling a Student of Color that the Student of Color is overly sensitive when the Student of Color describes a racist experience; and a White student telling a peer of color that the White student does not "see" race. Microinsults "convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Examples of microinsults at HWIs include a White student asking a Student of Color if he or she was admitted to the college on a diversity scholarship; and a White campus administrator leading a search process and saying the most qualified person should be hired, regardless of race. Microassaults are more explicit than the other two forms, communicating a "verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). At an HWI, examples of microassaults would include a White student writing a racial epithet on the residence hall door of a Student of Color; and a server at the campus café serving a White student before a Student of Color.

Together, these bodies of literature led me to believe that racially minoritized PSAs likely experience discrepancies between their institution's dominant narrative about diversity and inclusion they are trained to promote and students' own lived experiences on campus.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical race theory (CRT) provides the framework for this study. Legal scholars developed CRT in the 1970s, and it has since evolved as a theoretical framework for social science research. Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives across history, women's studies, ethnic studies, sociology, education, and law, CRT advances a set of defining tenets that illuminate systemic racial inequities in the United States (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Three tenets of CRT framed this study.

First, CRT scholars acknowledge racism is a form of power (Solórzano et al., 2000) so engrained in US society that it is ordinary and permanent (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Assumptions of White supremacy are so common that they are difficult for Whites

to recognize (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Taylor, 2009). In this study, acknowledging the pervasiveness of racism informed the analysis of the data. Rather than asking, "*Do* racially minoritized PSAs experience racism on campus?" I approached the data asking, "*In what ways* do racially minoritized PSAs experience racism on campus?"

Second, CRT unveils dominant ideology (Bell, 1980; Yosso et al., 2009) by exposing *interest convergence*, Bell's (1980) theory that articulates that progress toward racial equity happens only when the interests of People of Color converge with the interests of Whites. For example, many higher education leaders who support affirmative action policies, which benefit People of Color, simultaneously argue the benefits of a racially diverse student body for White college students (Gurin et al., 2002). This tenet informed the larger study from which the data were originally collected. Specifically, this tenet facilitated the illumination of the perspectiveless dominant narrative promoted by socialization programs at the study site. This tenet further informed the practical implications of the study.

Third, CRT values racially minoritized individuals' narratives as legitimate and authoritative knowledge (Bell, 1992; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) that can "redirect the dominant gaze, to make it see from a new point of view what has been there all along" (Taylor, 2009, p. 8). Counter to the dominant narrative, counternarratives problematize supposed race neutrality (Solórzano, 1997), notions of merit (Taylor, 2009), and racial preconceptions and myths (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This tenet guided data collection for my study (narrative inquiry) and the write-up of the findings, amplifying students' voices to illustrate their racial realities. The dominant narrative about PSAs is that they are some of the most integrated student leaders on any campus. This tenet of CRT problematized that narrative by guiding me to centralize the campus experiences of racially minoritized PSAs in their own voices.

CRT can help higher education practitioners and scholars "recognize patterns, practices, and policies of racial inequality" such that they can be dismantled (Villalpando, 2004, p. 42). In a different article about the minoritized PSAs in this study, I described the dominant institutional narrative PSAs were expected to promote as one of racial unity (Linley, 2017). Recognizing the dominant narrative as perpetuating White supremacy (Bell, 1980; Solórzano, 1997; Yosso et al., 2009), I sought to give voice to the ways racially minoritized PSAs experience their campus climate in relation to their racial identities and socialization agent positions. Counternarratives of racially minoritized PSAs convey the racial realities of campus in the voices of those marginalized on campus (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), thus challenging the narrative of racial unity while providing first-hand knowledge of racial discrimination faced by racially minoritized PSAs whose counternarratives also serve to end the silence and onlyness faced by racially minoritized collegiate leaders at HWIs by naming their racialized experiences while revealing that other racially minoritized student leaders have similar experiences.

METHOD

The data for this analysis are from a broader study of the ways minoritized PSAs (Students of Color, LGBQ students, trans* students, students with disabilities, students from low-income backgrounds, and first-generation college students) make meaning of their collegiate contexts. I used a critical constructivist methodology, that is, a qualitative process that centers interpretation and joint construction of knowledge while critiquing and challenging

power structures (Kincheloe, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Grounded by CRT, I used narrative inquiry methods to invite minoritized PSAs to share their counternarratives about their collegiate experiences and their PSA positions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Site Selection: Midwest University

The study site is a large, predominantly and historically White, Midwestern, research university. I refer to the institution as Midwest University (MU) and the mascot as the Bulldogs. MU's enrollment was more than 30,000 students, with approximately 22,000 undergraduates. People of Color composed 19% of the student body.

Participants

The study sample was recruited from minoritized PSAs who facilitate anticipatory socialization initiatives, including recruitment, summer orientation, welcome week, and a 4-day institute for entering Students of Color and first-generation students. I conducted criterion (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and snowball (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2011) sampling in search of rich, thick descriptions of counternarratives from minoritized PSAs. All student affairs professionals who coordinate socialization initiatives at MU forwarded an invitation to participate in the study to their respective socialization teams. Initially, 5 PSAs expressed interest to participate within the first week of advertising the study, and the remaining participants resulted from snowball sampling. Ultimately, 16 PSAs expressed interest and 13 PSAs met the selection criteria. This article details the narratives of the 11 participants who identify as People of Color.

The racially minoritized PSAs who participated in this study (see Table 1) selected pseudonyms and gave informed consent. As a strategy to maintain students' confidentiality, I refrain from reporting the socialization

TABLE 1.
Racially Minoritized Peer Socialization Agents

Pseudonym	Status at MU	Gender	Minoritized Identity(ies)
Danielle	Third year	Woman	African American
Emma	Third year	Woman	Biracial (Mexican and Japanese)
Jennifer	Third year	Woman	Multiracial (White and Filipino)
Kelly	Third year	Woman	African American, first-generation student
Logan	Fourth year	Genderqueer	Latinx, gay, genderqueer, student with a disability
Maria	Third year	Woman	Latinx, low-income background, first-generation student
Miss Green	Fourth year	Woman	Black
Mitochondria	Third year	Woman	Black
Sharon	Graduate 2014	Woman	African American, first-generation student, low-income background
Zac	Fifth year	Man	Latinx, gay, low-income background, first-generation student
Zora	Third year	Woman	African American

initiatives that individual students served. Together, racially minoritized PSAs in this study represented PSA positions for recruitment (tour guides), summer orientation, welcome week, and a 4-day institute for entering Students of Color and first-generation students.

Data Collection and Analysis

Each participant completed two semi-structured interviews (Glesne, 2011), and each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. After the second interview, I sent each participant a $15 gift card. All participants agreed to be audio recorded. After verbatim transcription, I uploaded transcripts to a qualitative research application and used the constant comparative method of data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Trustworthiness

I established trustworthiness by engaging participants in member-checking and engaging peers in debriefing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I invited participants to give feedback on their initial interview transcripts and in response to my initial write-up of the findings. Two peers who direct anticipatory socialization programs at different Midwestern HWIs read and provided written and verbal feedback on the findings and implications of the study.

LIMITATIONS

Foremost, my positionality was a potential barrier in the study. For racially minoritized PSAs who experience discrepancies between their institutional culture and lived experiences, my privileged White identity may have represented the structures that oppress them, creating an obstacle to participate or to be fully open with me about their experiences. Some of my roles represent differences in power and also could be barriers. For example, as a faculty member, I have power over undergraduate students and PSAs may perceive that power as negating their agency to participate or be critical. Throughout this study, I reflected on my privileged identities continuously and worked to minimize their effects on the study and on the participants. In practice, this included conducting interviews in spaces selected by participants instead of my office, spending time before and after each interview developing rapport, and communicating my own critique of the institution's dominant narrative of supposed inclusion. Further, as I journaled after each interview, I challenged myself to be aware of my Whiteness and how it influenced my perspectives and interpretations of the interviews. As I analyzed data, I centered participants' narratives as true and authoritative by using participants' words and quotes to identify themes to describe the ways racially minoritized PSAs experience their campus climate in relation to their racial identities and socialization agent positions.

DISCUSSION

> I never knew what people expected me to say when parents of color would come up to me and ask me, "What's it like being a young, Black female on campus? Do you feel safe? Do you feel supported?" It was really important for me to be honest with people, because I don't want to say one thing, and then they come here and they're students, and that's obviously not the reality. I would try to be as honest as possible, but also knowing I have to paint the university in a good light. (Danielle, third-year African American woman)

Danielle's quote illustrates the complex tension between "being honest" and "painting the university in a good light." Most racially minoritized PSAs similarly identified incongruence between the institutional dominant narrative about diversity and their own lived experiences on campus as People of Color.

The dominant narrative MU wanted PSAs to promote was one of inclusion and unity, ignoring the institution's historical legacy of exclusion. As Miss Green recalled from her PSA training, her supervisors drilled into the PSA staff that, "No matter where you're from or what race you are, you're a [Bulldog] when you get here." This supposedly neutral narrative, while well-intentioned to promote an inclusive environment, perpetuates the experiences of White students as the standard college experience (Yosso & Lopez, 2010) and disregards that Students of Color are minoritized by that narrative.

The research question I sought to answer was: How do racially minoritized PSAs experience their campus climate in relation to their racial identities and socialization agent positions? Three themes from the counternarratives of racially minoritized PSAs emerged about the behavioral dimension of campus climate and the effects of those experiences on the psychological dimension. Their stories illustrate their everyday experiences with microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations, contrary to the "we are all Bulldogs" dominant narrative.

"Other People Didn't See Me"—Racial Realities When the PSA Polo Is Off

For many racially minoritized PSAs, microaggressions were a regular part of their lives when they were not engaged in their PSA work, especially in students' primary academic spaces: classrooms. Several African American PSAs described a common experience of White students avoiding them in the classroom. As Kelly said: "If I'm sitting here, and there's two seats in between, then there's a White student sitting there, a student will always sit next to the White student. Every single time." Similarly, Zora described: "You walk into a [class]room and, I don't know, I could just be reading too much into it, but just nonverbals from people. They don't want, really, anything to do with you. Like, 'Who are you?'" Sharon described White students talking around her in class, as though she did not exist: "In a sense, I wasn't even there, so those moments where I felt like I—I don't know, like other people didn't see me." These examples of racism could be felt by racially minoritized PSAs as microassaults in which White students avoided interracial interactions or as microinvalidations in which White students aversively communicated to racially minoritized PSAs that they should not be in their classes or at the university.

Racially minoritized PSAs also experienced microinsults in their classrooms. Danielle recalled when first starting classes on campus: "People were like, 'You're the first Black person I've ever talked to in real life.'" Sharon described being tokenized by instructors and classmates:

> From "Oh, how do you all get your hair to go like this?" or things about the Civil Rights Movement or just anything where it was a minority, I was the spokesperson. Everyone in class looked to me to answer the questions, so it came to a point where I felt like I was no longer educating people, but that I was—It felt like I was doing the work for them.

Similarly, Emma said about her classroom experiences: "When we would talk about culture, I felt like I had to be the spokeswoman, because I have the most—I'm most familiar with it." These racial snubs may have been unknown to the perpetrators but communicated an insulting message to the racially minoritized PSAs (Sue et al., 2007). These classroom microaggressions, which are elements of the behavioral component of campus climate, communicated an unwelcoming climate to racially minoritized PSAs.

These experiences also influenced participants' psychological dimension of campus climate. Regularly experiencing microaggressions in the classroom created an unwanted burden for

racially minoritized PSAs. Danielle described:

> It was the burden of—which I guess is, now that I think about it, it's weird—being my best self so that Black people as a whole could be thought of well, I guess. Knowing that other people—whether you wanted to or not—other people did see you as representative of all Black people.

Racist classroom experiences placed an unwanted burden on racially minoritized PSAs to unfairly represent their race and contributed to participants' identity-related stress (Saldaña, 1994; Smedley et al., 1993; Wei et al., 2010). Whether slighted by White peers overlooking them or by instructors tokenizing them, racially minoritized PSAs described microaggressions as a regular classroom experience.

This theme of racist classroom experiences is consistent with the findings of Solórzano et al. (2000) in their study of microaggressions and campus racial climate for African American students. Much like the racially minoritized PSAs in my study, African American students in the study by Solórzano et al. described classroom verbal and nonverbal microaggressions from White peers and instructors as influencing students' perceptions of campus climate; participants in both studies described racist classroom experiences as contributing to their understanding of campus climate as racially splintered.

"Don't Try to Fool These Students"—Racist PSA Experiences

Racial microaggressions also pervaded the student leadership positions with socialization programs held by racially minoritized PSAs. For example, Sharon reflected:

> One time I was not on a panel. Three of my peers, they were all White—two males, one female. A parent asked a question about the cultural centers. None of them on the panel knew about the cultural centers besides the fact that there were four, and they were on the [campus region]. They didn't really know different activities that went on inside the cultural centers. After the panel was over, one of the guys, who is really a close friend of mine, he came up to me, he said, "[Sharon], you should have been on that panel to answer that question." He didn't know that that was offensive to me.

In that microinsult, Sharon's White, male PSA coworker communicated to Sharon that it was her responsibility, not his, to answer questions about the cultural centers.

Kelly had a similar experience, though in her situation, her PSA coworker brought a Black student to Kelly to talk about the African American cultural center on campus. In sharing this story with me, Kelly said: "Apparently it's irrelevant to you unless it happens to you. It was kinda like, 'I don't know what to do, let me find someone who can relate.'" The space where racially minoritized PSAs engaged in important socialization work on behalf of their university was riddled with microaggressions, further demonstrating the depth of a racist campus climate at the institution.

Microaggressions led some racially minoritized PSAs to question their value on their socialization teams. For example, Sharon reflected on feeling "used" by her supervisors:

> Many times we received e-mails asking if we were free for "special visits," which means a certain culture who would be coming to campus and we would be the ones on the panel or leading them around campus or having lunch with them. I remember vividly all of us, we received an e-mail about . . . some high school coming. While we wanted to be there for those students, at the same time we wanted to teach the admission staff a lesson of why—don't try to fool these students—why do we have to be the ones to lead the group or have lunch with them or sit on a panel? It was eight or nine of us

> in the e-mail. None of us responded. We know that in a sense we're being used—it's come to a point where you reach enough of your identity being used to make the university seem so diverse.

Sharon felt slighted by the admissions office's request. This is an example of a micro-invalidation; Sharon felt like a second-class citizen whose value was only to recruit other People of Color. Despite her negative experiences in the psychological and behavioral dimensions of campus climate, MU expected her to help improve the institution's structural diversity.

Further, Sharon's example illuminates interest convergence. To benefit Whites, higher education leaders desire racially diverse campuses and pressure admissions staff to recruit Students of Color. At MU, recruiting Students of Color often means recruiting out-of-state students who pay a higher price tag for tuition, thus benefitting the institution financially as well as socially. As a strategy to foster prospective Students of Color seeing themselves at the institution, socialization program coordinators hire racially diverse PSA staff. This benefits the racially minoritized students in PSA roles, creating a pathway for students to gain social and cultural capital by earning money for on-campus work while also gaining positional legitimacy and access to an institutional network of leaders. Racially minoritized PSAs are aware their identities are valued as contributing to the diversity of a PSA team as visual demonstration of the university's racial composition, but in the situation described by Sharon, she and her racially minoritized PSA coworkers believed the university was exploiting them in an effort to recruit prospective Students of Color. Although the admissions request did not explicitly ask Sharon and her peers to falsely represent the university, the discrepancies between the dominant narrative and students' lived experiences led Sharon and her peers to assume they were being asked to lie about MU. The result for Sharon was tension between feeling valued and feeling used. Racially minoritized PSAs experienced regular microaggressions across campus, including their classrooms and their socialization initiatives. Moreover, participants experienced racism in the surrounding off-campus community.

"They're Ignoring Your Humanity"—Explicit, Deliberate Racial Attacks

Racism was a regular part of racially minoritized PSAs' daily lives on campus, and participants did not find reprieve in the local off-campus community. When racially minoritized PSAs left campus to engage in their local community, they faced a variety of microaggressions. For example, early in her first semester, Miss Green was with a small group of African American women waiting for the city bus when a White man drove by and yelled "niggers" at them: "He didn't know who we were, we didn't know who he was. It was just, that experience was—'How could you be so offensive? We're just a bunch of 18-year-olds coming back from Wal-Mart.'" This was an explicit, deliberate racist attack. What makes it a microassault is that the perpetrator retained anonymity in the individual-level attack, meaning he felt safe to demonstrate his belief of racial inferiority by shouting the racial slur as he drove off without consequence (Sue et al., 2007). This example illustrates how frightening the behavioral climate can be for racially minoritized PSAs in the local community.

Other racially minoritized PSAs also felt unsafe, like Danielle:

> There are few things more scary for an African American woman than being around or near a group of straight White males who have been drinking. Because things get said or are done. People feel like they can touch you. People feel like

> they can—I don't know. It's almost like they're ignoring your humanity, that you're a person.

Kelly has had similar experiences:

> I was out and I was at the bars just walking around. There's a lot of White men. When they're intoxicated, they just say a lot of racist or sexual slang that is not appropriate. That just makes you feel really uncomfortable with who you are because it's like, "You would not—I'm like any other woman—you would not treat other women like this, so you shouldn't be saying it to me."

These examples demonstrate that racially minoritized PSAs, specifically Black women, faced macro-level environmental microaggressions, in addition to the micro-level racism described. Danielle's and Kelly's descriptions of being hypersexualized by White men were simultaneously invalidating, insulting, and assaulting. The off-campus racist experiences of racially minoritized PSAs also point to the importance of the external influences on campus climate. Racism is a persistent ailment in US society and the cities where HWIs are situated are certainly not immune.

Despite being prestigious student leaders who are highly engaged and successful, racially minoritized PSAs experienced the campus climate as incongruent with the diversity narrative MU tried to promote through its socialization initiatives. Consistent with other study results (Saldaña, 1994; Smedley et al., 1993; Smith et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2010), racially minoritized PSAs in this study reported their existence at MU came at a psychological price.

IMPLICATIONS

These counternarratives of racially minoritized PSAs illustrate that even collegiate ambassadors experience a racist campus climate. They further illustrate that the university's dominant narrative about diversity and inclusion did not represent students' lived experiences on campus as People of Color.

Implications for Practice

These narratives of racially minoritized PSAs about racism in classrooms suggest an opportunity for instructor development. Academic instructors, including faculty, adjunct and contingent instructors, and teaching assistants, have and should wield the power to shape their classroom environments. Instructors should raise their awareness about racism in the classroom and take steps to eradicate it. One step instructors can take is to participate in formal learning opportunities, including those offered by their campus faculty development or teaching and learning staff and those offered by national networks, such as the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. While instructors often attend conferences within their academic disciplines, instructors may also benefit from attending the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, an interdisciplinary meeting focused on institutional change for improved campus racial climates. Instructors can also take steps on their own to increase their awareness and consider their role in creating antiracist classroom environments. In a recent publication for the academy, Harper and Davis (2016) recommended eight steps instructors can take, from remediating their racial illiteracy to integrating diverse people and perspectives into the curriculum. Instructors hold significant power to influence campus climate and move their institution toward their espoused values of diversity and inclusion.

Racism permeated the campus sites where racially minoritized PSAs championed their institutions and the socialization initiatives themselves. Student affairs educators

who coordinate socialization initiatives must acknowledge that the narrative of unity and inclusion they promote for their campus is not always consistent with racially minoritized students' lived experiences; indeed, the dominant narrative further minoritizes Students of Color by centering Whiteness and ignoring the institution's historical legacy of exclusion. Socialization coordinators have the potential to improve the campus racial climate through anticipatory socialization. Rather than promoting a narrative that only advances the institution's espoused values, socialization programs can educate prospective and new students about the actual campus climate. As critical scholars contend, perspectiveless programs that adopt supposed neutrality actually perpetuate power, privilege, and oppression (Crenshaw, 1988). Rather than perpetuating perspectivelessness with a "we are all Bulldogs" narrative, socialization coordinators should reimagine anticipatory socialization using the framework for campus climate from Hurtado et al. (1999). Socialization coordinators should educate themselves and their PSA staff about the institution's legacy of exclusion and inclusion, the institution's structural diversity, the psychological dimension of campus climate, and the behavioral dimension of campus climate (Hurtado et al., 1999). While a perspectiveless campus tour protocol might include stops at the student union, a science building, the campus library, and the recreation center, a campus tour protocol designed to decenter Whiteness might include stops at the institution's cultural centers and the multicultural affairs office. Socialization coordinators should further raise among themselves and their PSA staff the awareness of external dimensions of campus climate, such as the Black Lives Matter movement. By educating themselves, and subsequently prospective and new students, about all dimensions of campus climate, anticipatory socialization program leaders may foster a campus environment that promotes open dialogue and awareness about racism.

Further, recruiting (and supporting and retaining) Students of Color is a central task of working toward a positive racial climate (Hurtado et al., 1998; Solórzano et al., 2000). The counternarratives of racially minoritized PSAs in this study demonstrate the ways participants felt tokenized by socialization program coordinators. It is essential that program coordinators understand their racially minoritized PSAs want to feel valued, not used. Racially minoritized PSAs serve in PSA positions because they feel connected to their institution and want to help prospective and new Students of Color succeed at the institution (Linley, 2017). Racially minoritized PSAs are already managing conflicting notions of diversity on campus and it behooves socialization coordinators to invite, hear, and value the honest counternarratives of their racially minoritized PSAs who are complex meaning-makers (Linley, 2017) and deserve the trust of their supervisors to present counternarratives to prospective and new students that simultaneously express their sense of belonging and racial realities on campus.

Implications for Research

Further research is necessary to better understand the collegiate experiences of racially minoritized PSAs. PSA hiring and training should be further explored to better understand the strategies socialization coordinators use to prepare PSAs to foster prospective and new students' sense of belonging. Another line of inquiry is to explore the "peer pedagogies" of racially minoritized PSAs (Harper, 2013). How and what do racially minoritized PSAs communicate to prospective and new Students of Color and their families? How did Danielle answer the common question she received

from Black parents? I am further interested in the conceptions racially minoritized PSAs have of the PSA role. Do racially minoritized PSAs view themselves as shapers of campus climate? Do they feel personally responsible for prospective and new Students of Color? These additional studies can build on existing research to explore the potential for anticipatory socialization practices to shift campus climate by centering the voices of the racially minoritized students doing this important work on behalf of the institution.

CONCLUSION

As institutions of higher education strive to enact espoused values of diversity and inclusion, higher education leaders must first understand the racial realities of racially minoritized students in the broader context of collegiate climates. Given the ways PSAs are touted as prestigious institutional ambassadors, I sought to give voice to the racial realities of the minoritized peer socialization agents charged with socializing prospective and newly admitted students at a historically White university. Through this study, the counternarratives of racially minoritized PSAs illustrate the pervasiveness of racism across campus spaces, including classroom and socialization sites, and off-campus spaces. Racially minoritized PSAs named the ways their racial realities stood in stark contrast to the "we are all Bulldogs" narrative PSAs were trained to promote. Armed with this awareness, higher education leaders can begin to dismantle the dominant narrative so the campus climate can be changed.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jodi Linley, Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, University of Iowa, N491 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA, 52242; jodi-linley@uiowa.edu

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