Original Research

Hierarchical Microaggressive Intersectionalities: Small Stories of Women of Color in Higher Education

Kathryn Young[1] and Myron Anderson[2]

[1] School of Education, Metropolitan State University of Denver, [2] Office of Inclusive Excellence, University of Texas San Antonio

Abstract

This article uses methods from narrative analysis to consider how the macro-level experiences of racism and sexism appear in micro-level small stories about hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities (HMI) in higher education. Small stories shared by university faculty and administrators reveal that microaggressions were simultaneously experienced along the lines of race, gender and role in the institution. Themes emerge that link deprofessionalization, invisibility, and fatigue to these small stories. On a nuanced level, the narratives in this paper demonstrate how broader societal notions of women's and women of color's roles in institutions translate into a negative campus climate for those who experience HMI.

Keywords: campus climate, equity, diversity, cultural competence higher education, race, gender, microaggressions, institutional development

Introduction

> Nobody in their right mind is going to call me the N-word. …, because true racism is being able to have power over somebody else. So that doesn't happen to me that way. It shows up for me if I'm in a boardroom or situations where I'm the only woman or I'm the only African American person within a hundred mile radius. I can see in the energy of the people there, they don't sense that I should be holding one of those seats. I can sense that. But I can never tell. Is it racism? Is it sexism?
> —Oprah Winfrey

This quote exemplifies a phenomenon experienced through living in a stratified society – receiving racial and gender microaggressions in the workplace. Even though there are women in positions of power in organizations, there remain moments in their work-lives where their race or gender or both are called into question in relation to the role they hold. This becomes even more problematic when it is difficult for the person experiencing the microaggression to name the form of discrimination being experienced due to its nuance, like in Oprah's quote above.

Researchers have exposed the multiple marginalities experienced by women of color on institutional campuses (e.g. Turner, 2002). This paper dives into a specific way that these multiple marginalities manifest as hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities. Hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities (HMI) are those everyday slights found in higher education that communicate systemic valuing (or devaluing) of a person due to the interplay between their institutional role and their other identity categories like race and class. Hierarchical indicates how the position held at an institution indicates value for those who work in the institution, microaggressive indicates the impact of discriminatory experiences, and intersectionalities indicates how the women do not just experience microaggressions with one aspect of their identity, but often through many aspects of their identity simultaneously. The goal of this study is to answer the question: What can be learned about campus climate from how women in higher education explain hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities against them? This paper problematizes the ways in which important aspects of institutional actors' personal and professional identities intertwine in the use of their small stories. It also theorizes the role HMI play in campus climate in order to better understand how multiple systems of oppression (Collins, 2000) intersect and interact for women in higher education.

Literature Review

Research into microaggressions is situated in the larger body of research into campus climate and informs a discrete, yet pervasive, experience of women (of color) in higher education, that of feeling unwelcome, devalued, and under-acknowledged because of their role and their race and their gender (e.g. Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). A negative climate impacts recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and administrators from historically marginalized groups (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wong, 2011). They report unequal treatment in "hiring, work expectations, and promotion and tenure resulting in increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, and attrition" (Lutz, Hassouneh, Akeroyd, & Beckett, 2013, p. 129). Additionally, women of color in higher education experience the intersection of racism and sexism resulting in increased marginalization and isolation (Ahmed, 2012; Sulé, 2011; Turner, González, & Wong, 2011).

This study builds from microaggression, hierarchical microaggression, and intersectionality research. The term microaggression is used to describe, "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Pierce, Carew, Perce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007, p. 271). This microaggression definition has expanded to include not just racial slights, but slights against other identity markers like gender identity, sexual identity, disability, etc. (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2013; Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Huntt, 2013; Nadal, 2013; Torres-Harding, Andrade, & Romero Diaz, 2012). Early microaggression researchers examined the effects of "differentials in power and privilege" (Hurtado, Arellano, Griffin, & Cuellar, 2008, p. 217) between students from dominant racial backgrounds and those historically underrepresented at institutions, yet there is limited examination of how employees, who spend even more time on university campuses than students, experience microaggressions (Christensen-Mandel, 2019; Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015).

A few studies represent faculty experiences with microaggressions (Boysen, 2012; Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Pittman, 2012), and others show the experiences of microaggressions of university administrators (Alabi, 2014; Garvey & Drezner, 2013; Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015). Employees, much like students, experience varying degrees of power and privilege on college campuses; their powers and privileges often relate to their professional roles. Some roles are thought of as more or less significant, with higher or lower importance (Ingram, 2006). In many ways the importance of the role impacts the importance of the person who holds that role (Hirt, 2006). Importance translates into a value judgment on the person who holds that role, with people in less-valued roles treated as less-valued people (Fuller, 2003). Role often becomes the defining identity at institutions since higher education organizes employees into three main groups: faculty, staff, and administrators, each representing different

aspects within the academic hierarchy (Christensen-Mandel, 2019). Slights in the university context impact employees emotionally and physically, and reflect the goals and values reflected through campus climate (Hurtado, Arellano, Griffin, & Cuellar, 2008). Nixon (2017) shares stories of female chief diversity officers (CDO) who must navigate microaggressions as part of their role at their universities and how they must balance competing expectations related to their identity and role. She notes how these CDO's experiences parallel other values on campuses.

Young, Anderson, and Stewart (2015) point to the unique type of microaggressions found on university campuses - hierarchical microaggressions - to represent the everyday slights found in higher education that communicate systemic (de)valuing of an employee because of the institutional role held by that person. Findings from this study indicate four main types of hierarchical microaggressions: (1) valuing/devaluing based on role/credential, (2) changing accepted behavior based on role, (3) actions (ignoring/excluding/surprise/interrupting) related to role, and (4) terminology related to work position.

One aspect missing from the microaggression literature and that of hierarchical microaggressions is the intersection between genres of microaggressions. How do race and gender microaggressions overlap, interact, and weigh on each other? How does the literature explain microaggressions that engage with more than one identity category simultaneously? The literature on intersectionality addresses these intersections and overlaps. Intersectionality theorists examine the interactions of co-occurring systems of oppression (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is not just about examining personal identities, but also about examining the institutions that use identities to exclude, include, and privilege (Crenshaw, 2015). Researchers have examined the relationship between social identities and personal identities (Jones, 1997; Shields, 2008). Other researchers examine race and social class (Liebow 2002; Sung 2013), disability and race (Hill 1994; Stuart 1992), disability and gender (Thomas 1999; Thomson 1997; Wendell 1996), gender and race (Collins 2000; hooks 1994), disability and sexuality (Meyer 2002), and intersectionality and higher education (Dill, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Critical race feminists examine how race, ethnicity, nationality, and other identities shape how gender is experienced in higher education and in other organizations (Cho, 1997; Gilmore, 2003; Montoya, 2003). These researchers all highlight the importance of not assuming that people of any given category have similar experiences, although they do recognize the need to be "strategically essentialist—to speak as a group (as Asian women, for example) when it is politically necessary to do so" (Ropers-Huilman, & Winters, 2011, p. 669). Examining multiple oppressions simultaneously explains how similar experiences on the surface can be more or less oppressive depending on salient identities in context, like having a student call a professor by their first name can be a sign of a strong relationship or a sign of disrespect (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011).

Critics of microaggression research, most notably Lilienfeld (2017), have asked about the imprecise nature of microaggressions and have queried the psychological nature of these claims – why should we believe how someone feels about their interactions when they may be wrong. Lileinfeld notes that people might disagree about naming an experience as a microaggression. He concludes that this disagreement indicates a lack of nuance in the research to tease out definitively if something is or is not a microaggression. Researchers have responded to these sorts of critiques (e.g. McClure & Rini, 2019; Sue, 2018). McClure and Rini (2019) explain how theoretical investigations often fall into three types of investigations: psychological, experiential, and structural. Critiques, like those of Lilienfeld (2017), ignore the structural aspects of microaggressions. Examining microaggressions from a structural perspective explains not just how someone "feels" about the microaggression, but also places the microaggression as a structural component of racism or sexism. A structural analysis of microaggressions reveals that people who experience microaggressions are also often from groups who are hired less, promoted less, have higher levels of stress once in academic, etc (e.g. Solórzano, 2018). Microaggressions are psychological and structural.

Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano (2006) hint at an intersectional analysis of microaggressions when they define microaggressions in part as "layered insults based on race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname" (pg. 300). Pérez, Huber, and Solórzano (2015) have also interrogated this idea through their taxonomy of microaggressions. Layered insults evoke the same image of piling up of co-occurring oppressions as argued by Collins (2000). Watson (2007) similarly explains how "individuals have a range of identities with different ones acquiring salience in different contexts" (pg. 372). Watson points to the fluidity of identity categories, another aspect of intersectionality. Holling (2019) actively describes intersections of race, gender, and institutional roles as she examines her experiences with being labeled "intimidating" in the academy. She notes that, "Power derives not only from primary identity categories but also from institutional role, rank, and/or status" (p. 107). This study extends analysis like that of Holling (2019) and adds to it through examination of HMI. Three ways that HMI indicate structural disadvantage for women and women of color are deprofessionalization, (racial battle and gender) fatigue, and invisibility.

Deprofessionalization

Women, and women of color, in higher education have shared their stories and been the focus of research about what it means to not be treated like a professional when one's role is to be a professional (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, Harris, & Gonzalez, 2012). Black faculty are racially stereotyped at work and are expected to entertain their colleagues in ways not expected of their white counterparts (McGee & Kazembe, 2015). Professors who study issues related to race are assumed to be less credible, less serious, and less rigorous than colleagues who study other research areas; this is especially true for African American professors who study

race (Thompson & Louque, 2005). Faculty of color and female faculty do, and are expected to do, a disproportionate amount of service work like mentoring and advising students and junior faculty, serving as a faculty advisor for campus clubs, and being on committees (Nicol & Yee, 2017; Nixon, 2017). In courses, students are less likely to take female faculty of color seriously as academics as they do not fit traditional expectations of what a professor should be (i.e., White and male). Students, not seeing female faculty of color as professionals, are more likely to challenge course content (Ford, 2011). Faculty of color, administrators of color, and women of various backgrounds face students, other faculty, and administrators who assume a lack of qualification for or capability of faculty work or administrative work, and then must hide their feelings of frustration and annoyance that result from being treated as less than a professional over and over in the workday. The message these women receive is that they do not belong and cannot do the work – they are not professionals.

Fatigue

Women in higher education are professionally exhausted. Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is described as "social-psychological stress responses (e.g., frustration, anger, exhaustion, physical avoidance, psychological or emotional withdrawal, escapism, acceptance of racist attributions)" (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007, p. 552) associated with being a person of color and the repeated target of racism. Constant race-based discrimination can produce emotional, psychological, and physiological distress and cover up the consequences of discrimination on the material realities of marginalized faculty. RBF is the cumulative effect of being "on guard" and having to continually be prepared to respond to insults, both subtle and covert. Faculty from marginalized groups often discuss having an "arsenal of responses" as tools of self-protection from racial macro and microaggressions (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2008). Gender fatigue is the fatigue of trying to mentally construct workplaces as gender neutral despite the continued evidence of gender discrimination and the powerlessness to change these structures of reproduction (Kelan, 2009).

Invisibility

Faculty of color, women of color, and other women, have all pointed to their invisibility in higher education (Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Ford, 2011). This invisibility is often enacted by others seeing or not seeing marginalized groups (Ford, 2011). Taylor states, "Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, 1992, p. 25). Nonrecognition or misrecognition relates to the power and privilege of the person who does not

see another. Invalidating personhood through nonrecognition or misrecognition is argued to restrict faculty of color's influence on their schools and on their school culture (Hassouneh, Akeroyd, Lutz, & Beckett, 2012).

Researcher Positionality

I am a White, female, middle class, professor. I have not held a position of leadership like chair of a department. As narrative research is interpretive, my background and biases must be clarified (Merriam, 2009). I have certainly received HMI related to my age, gender, and role, but not related to my race. I personally know the feeling of wondering, "Did that really just happen?" "Am I going to be supported in reporting such a 'small' transgression?" Given that I have many non-marginalized identities, identities that are associated with privilege and power at an institution, I can go many days without experiencing a microaggression. I cannot say the same for many of my colleagues of color.

I am a black, male, middle class, administrator and professor. I have held leadership positions like Vice President for Inclusive Excellence, Associate Chair of the Teacher Education Department and Professor within the School of Education. As narrative research is interpretive, my background and biases must be clarified (Merriam, 2009). I have certainly received HMI related to my age, gender, race, and role. I have experienced the feelings of wondering, "Wow, that really just happened" and "Is this action a one-time thing or is this who they really are and I will have to deal with these negative slights throughout the relationship?" Although there are very few spaces where my marginalized identities may be minimized, there is almost never a day that goes by where I do not experience microaggressions.

Methods

In order to answer what can be learned about campus climate from how women in higher education explain hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities against them we used a purposeful sample and analyzed small stories from the sample using critical discourse analysis.

Research Context

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU) is an urban, land-grant university in a mountainous region of the United States. This university leads the state in enrolling a diverse student body and employing a diverse faculty. MSU Denver has about 20,000 students, 95% of whom are in-state. 46% of undergraduates are students of color, 56% are the first in their family to go to college, nearly 80% of students work full or part time, and nearly one-half are Pell-eligible. The institution was designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2019. The demographics of MSU Denver's full-time faculty population is made up of 74% White, 10%

Hispanic or Latinx, 5% African American, 8% Asian, 2% Bi- or Multi-racial, <1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 1% other. 52% of full-time faculty identify as female and 48% identify as male (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The demographics of MSU Denver's administrative staff population identifies as 67% White, 17% Hispanic or Latinx, 5% African American, 6% Asian, 3% Bi- or Multi-racial, <1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 1% Other. 62% of administrators identify as female and 38% identify as male (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Data sources

Although limited in scope, this exploratory study grew out of a case study of cultural competence trainings for supervisors. In the original study a total of 191 examples of microaggressions were gathered from phrases written on butcher paper (Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015). In the original study the researchers used Sue et al. (2007) microaggression theoretical framework to examine data from the cultural competence trainings. Unfortunately, this data came in the form of phrases written on butcher paper. Many of the phrases did not provide enough detail to examine race, gender, and role simultaneously.

The authors extend the original data sources by collecting a purposeful sample and invited known female faculty and administrators to share personal examples of microaggressions. Each of these women had participated in a cultural competence learning community for staff, administrators, and faculty with the researcher. Nine of the ten had been participants in the supervisor trainings as well. They were chosen because they already knew about the concept of microaggressions and would be able to provide examples if they had any of microaggressions at work. They were individually emailed and asked: "If you have 5 minutes, can you jot down an example of a microaggression that has happened to you or someone you know related to role intersecting with an identity characteristic and send it to me." All ten people who were asked responded with small stories within ten minutes.

Participants

Ten women participated in this research. Seven self-identify as people of color and three self-identify as White. Three hold the role of faculty, four hold the role of administrator, and three are both faculty and administrators as they are department chairs.

Table 1. Participants

Race	Gender	Role
Person of Color	Woman	Faculty
White	Woman	Administrator/ Faculty
White	Woman	Administrator/ Faculty
Person of Color	Woman	Faculty
Person of Color	Woman	Administrator
Person of Color	Woman	Administrator
Person of Color	Woman	Administrator
Person of Color	Woman	Faculty
Person of Color	Woman	Administrator
White	Woman	Administrator/ Faculty

Data Analysis

The authors employ a narrative approach to understand the types of microaggressions experienced by women in higher education related to the role they hold at the institution. In this study narrative analysis through the lens of small stories helps explain the value in using emails as a source of data. Narrative researchers connect the lives and stories of individuals to social phenomena and to dominant discourses (Watson, 2007). These language practices help the teller to (re)construct their identity in their current social, cultural, and historical contexts (Gover, 2003). Stories are constructed by a narrator who chooses from their experiences and orders the events in a meaningful way, an order that considers her own interpretation of those experiences. Narrative can be thought of as an interpretation of reality rather than a direct reflection of that reality (Dyer and Keller-Cohen, 2000). The use of (counter) story telling is also a key component of critical race theory (CRT) and critical race feminism (CRF) because these counter-stories challenge the silence of "race-neutral" storytelling. These small stories help faculty and administrators from marginalized groups discuss the race-related and gender-related stress they experience at institutions. These narratives give voice to the marginalizing experiences and oppressions that can occur at the intersections of race, class, gender, role, and sexual orientation in higher education. These narratives start to capture the complex components of individuals' experiences related to their personal and professional identities.

Small stories come from a need to share what just happened and to use that sharing to construct a sense of who someone is in the moment (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). The immediacy of email works for the ability to share in the moment. Small stories act as sites of identity work because they exist between fine grained microanalysis and macro accounts of events in

narratives (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Small stories play an important role in professional identity development (Grossi and Gurney, 2019).

The small stories in this study were evaluated using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a methodology that focuses on the constructions of identity and marginality and works well to help explain faculty's and administrators' small stories in the larger context of what the stories have to do with campus climate (Dey & Associates, 2010). CDA researchers argue that language is a form of social practice in relation to how power, inequality, and dominance are maintained or resisted in talk and in text (Janks, 1997; van Dijk, 2008). The authors use critical discourse analysis with an intersectional lens to understand how small stories uncover institutional inequality through discourse (Fairclough, 1993, 2013; Gee, 2000).

Analysis begins with determining if each of the emails fits the qualifications of a small story and all did (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Inductive thematic analysis was then applied to the small stories to let themes rise to the surface (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The authors then returned to microaggression, hierarchical microaggression, and intersectionality literature and mapped the themes in the stories back to themes in the literature using deductive analysis. The deductive themes that occurred across the data and in the literature became the robust themes presented in this paper (Charmaz, 2006, Glaser & Strauss, 1976). The themes of invisibility, (racial battle and gender) fatigue, and deprofessionalization were found.

The next step was to reconstitute the stories and examine the interplay between invisibility, fatigue, and deprofessionalization within each small story. Returning to the small story as complete pieces for analysis situates the individual's lived experience in its larger institutional location, something which the themes alone cannot do (Jones, Kim, & Skendall, 2012).

Findings

The purposeful sample's small stories elicited three main themes: (a) deprofessionalization, (b) fatigue, and (c) invisibility. Seven of the ten stories evoked fatigue, five of the ten small stories evoked deprofessionalization, and five evoked invisibility/ erasure. Six of the ten stories reflected two themes and two of the ten reflected all three themes. The participant's race was not an important factor in the number of themes reflected in each small story.

An example of deprofessionalization:

> In giving my opinion how we needed to improve the services for Freshmen students of diverse backgrounds…a highly seasoned Dr. person, stated "you only have a masters in higher education right"? because the research says people of color fail due to …" .I don't know, remember the rest. I felt mad.

This person indicates how someone denigrated her level of education in the exchange. Her quality of work and perhaps even her intellect was called into question. This exchange provoked an emotional response that made the respondent forget the end of the conversation.

An example of fatigue:

> Consequently, whenever I met with this committee, I always had to overly prepare and anticipate the potential "picking" at me.

This person indicates how she always must overprepare when meeting with a specific committee. She must emotionally steel herself to be potentially picked on in the committee. It is exhausting to have to be more prepared than others and to enter meetings steeled against being treated badly.

An example of invisibility:

> A colleague comes to talk about departmental issues and every issue is about a female colleague. And I am a female in leadership.

This person remarks how the other colleague sees her only as her position of leadership. They do not even question how sharing issues related to gender repeatedly might reflect on the gender of the person in leadership as well. Her gender is invisible to the colleague.

The themes were helpful in dissecting shared experiences across this group of women and in demonstrating how these experiences are microaggressive. However, until the themes are reconstituted back into small stories, they cannot show HMI experiences for the individuals. In the next section, we use one small story to demonstrate the interplay of these themes.

Below, a women faculty of color shares her small story and through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) we can see evidence of deprofessionalization, racial battle fatigue and invisibility. The authors used underlining and notations with a key to note deprofessionalization and invisibility in this small story.

This faculty member wrote:

> Students and fellow faculty refusing (1) to refer to me as Dr. Anton (name changed) even when they refer to others with their full titles (2).....choosing instead to call me "Miss Anton" or just "Anton" even after I have corrected them several times. Being absolutely invisible to some faculty (3a). Nearly bumping right into me (3b) or speaking to everyone else in the room EXCEPT me in polite conversation (3c). Even

standing at the bathroom sink and not speaking to me at all (3d) when they work with me on a daily basis - not faculty that I don't know very well, no, faculty that I work with every day (4). Or walking up to someone that I am currently speaking to and starting up a conversation with the same person that I was speaking to WITHOUT even saying "excuse me" or "could I butt in for just a moment" (5).....just completely acting like I don't exist or like they don't see me when I am a big, round, brown woman in the room who is probably wearing a bright color like turquoise or purple or orange or yellow (6). There is NO WAY that you just didn't "see" me unless you were trying to ignore me. (7)

(1) active verbs on the part of the microaggressor: refusing, choosing, bumping, speaking, standing, walking, saying, acting, trying – indicating fatigue at always having to maneuver around others so actively trying to exclude her.
(2) not using the formal address given to other faculty, even after correction – deprofessionalization
(3a) stated invisibility
(3b) example of invisibility
(3c) example of invisibility
(3d) example of invisibility
(4) implied disrespect because it is known colleagues ignoring her – deprofessionalization
(5) stated invisibility in two quick phrases
(6) explaining how not seeing her would be impossible – invisibility
(7) stated invisibility and implied deprofessionalization through showing that the faculty is not worth talking to.

In only 196 words, this faculty member demonstrated how often she actively becomes deprofessionalized by students and faculty who are not willing to call her "Dr." (Ford, 2011; Gutiérrez y Muhs et. al., 2012) and how she becomes invisible – remarking eight times in this short excerpt how people willfully ignore her physical presence; she is experiencing "intersectional invisibility" (Crenshaw, 1991). She later says, "I could go on and on" indicating the fatigue she experiences from many similar interactions. Further, the fact that she could go on and on demonstrates that this story is a form of generic or habitual small story, which communicates how common this type of interaction is for Anton (Georgakopoulou, 2008).

Limitations

Although a purposeful sample expedites data collection, pulls from a population that is easily accessible, and provides information-rich data related to the phenomenon of interest, purposeful sampling does not offer a robust enough method to generalize from the findings. This technique

also allows for the introduction of sampling and researcher bias as the sample often does not reach a broad enough participant base (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). As this is an exploratory study using a purposeful sample, future studies will be needed to increase the trustworthiness through "prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation" of these findings. For this study, transparency of the analysis and not extending the results to the global population is necessary.

The small sample size of small stories in this study results in our lack of ability to speak to certain theoretically important considerations. For example, there was no variation in race/ethnicity relative to participant role in the themes of the small stories in this study. Given the literature in this area, one would expect variation and a larger sample size would be better able to tease out this relationship.

Discussion

Workers prefer for their identities to not matter for interactions at work (Winkle-Wagner, 2009). This exploratory study however, shows how workplace interactions can be fraught with HMI, negative slights related to intersectional identities and the roles these women hold, when they are just trying to get their work done.

This and other small stories evidence fatigue, invisibility, and deprofessionalization in interaction with these women's professional roles. Although others may not intend to ignore Anton, the impact on Anton by repeatedly being ignored and not treated like a professional impacts how she feels as a professional. If small stories are a way to create a sense of who someone is in their professional sphere, then Anton's professional sense of self is deeply, negatively impacted through these experiences (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008). She is tired and disrespected. There is no doubt that the campus climate for Anton is not a uniformly positive experience. She might not know if she is being disrespected for being a woman, a woman of color, a faculty of color, or some combination of these, and spending time trying to figure out why she is not treated as a professional by students and her peers keeps her from focusing on being productive in other ways (Mahtani, 2004; Sue, 2010; Sue et. al., 2007; Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2013). This not knowing why she receives such treatment is a key component of microaggressions. She also does not know exactly how her role, gender, and race intersect for her to receive such unprofessional behaviors from others that force her to question her role at the university –a strong example of hierarchical microaggressive intersectionality.

In Nixon (2017), the researcher shares an anecdote from a woman of color, faculty member:

> Melissa shared the frustration she feels when her ideas receive less credibility
> from her senior colleagues, and she wonders if that has to do with her race, her
> gender, her lack of faculty standing, or the ideas themselves (p. 310).

Melissa, just like Oprah in the introduction, wonders what aspect of her personal or professional identity is provoking a microaggression from her colleagues. She questions her "lack of faculty standing" – hierarchy; her race and gender – intersectionality; and even the ideas themselves –a key component of microaggressions – the uncertainty related to all these identities (Sue et. al., 2007; Sue, 2010; Wong et. al., 2014), But really, for Melissa, all her identities are being questioned simultaneously. Anton shares an example that evokes her blackness and her womanliness at the end of her small story of invisibility and deprofessionalization as a further example of how identity intertwines with deprofessionalization, fatigue, and invisibility. These quotes from Oprah, Anton and Melissa all provide examples of HMI.

These themes map onto role, gender, and race that together may render the microaggressee with a variety of stress responses like "frustration, anger, exhaustion, physical avoidance, psychological or emotional withdrawal, escapism, acceptance of racist attributions" (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007, p. 552). Understanding these experiences is critical to understanding how to move forward with supporting equity and inclusion in higher education. Women, and women of color who experience deprofessionalization, fatigue, and invisibility, might begin to disengage or look elsewhere for work, somewhere that does a better job of supporting their whole selves at work.

The small story in the findings section demonstrates how one experience by a woman of color, who is also a faculty member, experiences her various identities attacked simultaneously, not only because of her race, gender, or role, but through all at the same time (Watson, 2007). Being called by a first name might not be an issue for another faculty member who feels his/her role is more stable, more accepted at a university (Ford, 2011; Harlow, 2003). In fact, informality could show comradery and be a way to be inclusive. Given the historical and current experiences of faculty of color, and women of color at institutions, lack of professional naming acts as a slight (Harlow, 2003). Repeatedly marginalizing this female faculty of color on a seemingly individual level overlaps with reduction of women of color on campus and relates to power relation on who is "naturally" seen and unseen in professional institutions. It becomes a cumulative burden.

This data, through analysis of small stories, shows that women faculty and administrators of color experience the overlapping negative themes of deprofessionalization, invisibility, and fatigue in their professional lives. The research did not question frequency of these experiences, but two of the women of color, one faculty and one administrator, indicated they could go "on

and on" about these sorts of microaggressions, which is consistent with other research on women of color in higher education (Lutz et. al., 2013).

This paper adds to the microaggression literature by demonstrating how HMI are similar to and different from other microaggressions and how HMI evidence deprofessionalization, fatigue, and invisibility of women of color on campus. This study broadens and deepens our understanding of the complexities of postsecondary education today as the experience of females and people of color and females of color in university leadership continue to struggle with bringing and sharing their full identities in the workplace. This small study is one step towards the call from Smedley and Faye Hutchinson (2012, p. 2) that argues: "Despite the difficulty, scholars must continue to struggle with making sense of the messiness of the "daily lived experiences of racism and the subtleties of the racial worldview as they impact on individuals" … "these are the kinds of realities that we MUST talk about."

The value of this project lies in the explanatory depth and specifics the small stories provide; for it is perception of the experience that matters for experiences on campus as negative or positive, "the perception has real, lived consequences as WOC (women of color) navigate race, gender, and power" (Ford, 2011, p.473).

Implications

Using narrative to examine microaggressions demonstrates how these small stories move respondents "actively between private and public, personal and cultural, past and present" (Gover, 2003, abstract) where the HMI they experience takes on a particular hue where the role a person holds, and the hierarchical position of that role, has value tied into the very idea of a university (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Walker-Canton, 2013). HMI are set against the backdrop of a lack of proportional representation on university campuses and higher education institutions and can make people from marginalized backgrounds feel like outsiders. Discrimination creates even more stress and anxiety and amplifies feelings of alienation in a space that is already not representational of people's identities (Cokley et. al., 2017). Campus environments can feel unsupportive and racially hostile, these feelings then lead to alienation, dissatisfaction, disidentification as part of the academy, and disengagement.

What can be learned about campus climate from how women in higher education explain microaggressions against them? This article, and others like it, share counter-stories so that campus climates become places rooted in empathy, "on the powerful impulse to usher both justice and humanity into everyday social transactions" (Runyowa, 2015, para 11) and become places that make structural changes to bring justice and humanity into university-based social interactions. Hierarchical microaggressive intersectionalities manifest differently depending on identity contingencies which makes them difficult to address through a "one-size-fits-all" policy

approach, but there are many policy implications that can be considered, many coming from women and women of color in higher education themselves.

Researchers can focus their inquiry on accounts of lived experiences of people of color and other marginalized groups in professional roles at higher education institutions. We can work to maintain the true and complicated nature of individual and group identities within the research process (Carter-Sowell & Zimmerman, 2015). We can examine the interplay between which identities are more salient in which higher education environments in interactions with systems of power and privilege at higher education institutions. We can, through our research, rend transparent the power in interconnected structures of inequality as a precursor to dismantling the structures (Jones, Kim, & Skendall, 2012).

Institutions can put at the center of strategic plans and implementation of those plans the experiences and expertise of marginalized groups. They can recruit more women of color simultaneously to alleviate isolation and tokenization (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Jones, Wilder, & Osborne-Lapkin, 2015; Ong, 2005; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008). They can provide "structural and financial support for professional organizations that serve women and people of color" (Ford, 2011, p. 475; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). They can engage task forces to closely examine interactional patterns between different groups and institutional policies and procedures that reinforce, inadvertently or purposefully, social exclusion, like the work being done at the University of Michigan (Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2011; Sanchez-Parkinson, Grim, Chavous, & Ting, 2018). They can further work to reduce HMI by creating proactive and reactive educative spaces that transform policies, processes, programs, and value systems (Young & Anderson, 2018).

Ford (2011) reminds us:

> In order to be effective, change must occur on both the micro- (e.g., intergroup interactions; campus climate) and macro- (e.g., strategic reform to biased incidents; inclusive hiring, retention, and promotion practices) levels. Our challenge is to no longer participate in reproducing hegemonic narratives of difference that limit the professional experiences of WOC faculty; instead, we must continue to support counter-hegemonic narratives of resistance and institutional transformation" (p. 475).

As institutions strive to reflect the growing diversity of their students with proportional diversity of staff, faculty, and administrators, they must also invest systemically in the supports and policies needed so that no faculty, no administrator, no staff member, no student from an historically marginalized group has to say "I could go on and on" about the microaggressions they experience in higher education.

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