

A Paradox of Participation: Nonwhites in White Sororities and Fraternities

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Although law prohibits race-based exclusion in college sororities and fraternities in the United States, racial segregation prevails. As a result, nonwhite membership in white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) is often hailed as a transformative step toward equality and unity. The bulk of work on such cross-racial membership centers on comparative-historical and survey data and treats integrated membership as the successful end, rather than a problematic beginning, of analysis. Drawing upon in-depth interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in three university campuses on the East Coast, I shift the focus from resource factors that either prevent or enable membership to the strategies of action that nonwhite members employ in their everyday lives in order to be perceived as full, belonging members. By drawing upon the insights of the sociology of culture, I argue that robust racialized schemas simultaneously enable and constrain inclusion. Rather than hide explicit racial-ethnic difference or accede to traditional expectations of Anglo conformity, I find that nonwhite members are enmeshed in a paradox of participation: their ability to frame themselves as equal and belonging Greek “brothers and sisters” remains tied to a patterned reproduction of their racial and ethnic identities as essentially different and inferior. Such a paradox emerges as an important theoretical and pragmatic dilemma with implications for an array of institutional contexts. Keywords: whiteness, identity, schema, segregation, fraternity, sorority.

On the heels of the presidential election of Barack Obama and more than half a century after the landmark legal case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), many now proclaim the United States has reached either a “post-racial” or “color-blind” era. Specifically, many argue that the country has progressed far beyond the *de jure* racial segregation of higher education, which resulted in decidedly different racialized worlds. On many college campuses, however, this post-racial society is not wholly apparent. Historical legacy, normative custom, racialized schemas, and unequal resources all yield separate worlds of racialized organizations and student groups, which often result in profoundly different interpretations of, and perspectives on, campus and community life. In the prominent historical account by Helen Horowitz (1987), white fraternities and sororities set the tenor of campus life and reproduce their own exclusive and elite status, a finding echoed by Hughey (2007), Mindy Stomblor and Irene Padavic (1997), Nicholas Syrett (2009), and Diana Turk (2004). Alongside their social and political dominance, a great deal of research indicates that white Greek-letter organizations (hereafter WGLOs) maintain a host of ethnocentric, prejudiced, and exclusionary practices (Morris 1991; Muir 1991; Schmitz and Forbes 1994; Sidanius et al. 2004; Torbenson and Gregory Parks 2009; Yeung and Stomblor 2000; Yeung, Stomblor, and Wharton 2006). “Fraternities and sororities (particularly historically white fraternities and sororities on historically white campuses . . .) through their structures and activities encourage homogeneity and discourage interactions across difference” (Laird 2005:373). In this vein, when a WGLO does accept nonwhite members, such actions often create a stir within the “Greek-letter” population, generally resulting in praise from university officials and subtle forms of stigmatization from other WGLOs (Chen 1998).

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Moreover, nonwhite members are haphazardly treated as complete and full members by their fraternal “brothers” and “sisters,” while they are also faced with “ostracism and criticism” from members of their own racial group who may “view their membership as a ‘sellout’” (Thompson 2000:7). Given this background, I examine how nonwhite members of WGLOs “do difference” (West and Fenstermaker 1995). That is, I understand racial identity as an ongoing accomplishment and social interactive process. Specifically I ask: How are shared strategies of action employed by nonwhite members to pursue an authentic belonging and identity, and which strategies become particularly salient toward these endeavors?

Several trends characterize the literature on WGLOs. First, the majority of research concerns substance abuse, sexual misconduct, and hazing, rather than the maintenance of segregated campuses and communities. Even within the focus on hazing, research centers on WGLOs to either the exclusion of black sororities and fraternities or with a cursory glance toward black Greek-letter organizations (BGLOs) with the assumption that they are little more than violent hazers and “educated gangs” (cf Hughey 2008a). Second, when research does account for race, much of the literature reflects a concern for how contact with “diversity” influences the cognitive, educational, and co-curricular outcomes of white WGLO members (Antonio 2004; Gurin 1998; Hurtado, Dey, and Treviño 1994). For example, Laird (2005) studied how white fraternity and sorority members’ enrollment in “diversity courses” increased the frequency of positive interactions with nonwhite peers and resulted in higher levels of self-confidence, agency, and critical thinking skills. Third, and as a bookend to the latter perspective, another strand of scholarship focuses on the factors that constrain and enable nonwhite members’ entry into the WGLO system (Fox, Hodge, and Ward 1987; Hughey 2006, 2007). However, a substantive portion of this work rests on an implicit assumption that conflates cross-racial membership with that of full integration and acceptance, argues that nonwhites must “assimilate” in order to achieve full acceptance, and centers on survey data and historical sources rather than in-depth interviews or ethnographic accounts. Fourth, the perspectives of nonwhite members who gain entry into WGLOs are often absent. The result is even greater marginalization of nonwhite voices. In sum, a substantive gap in the research on WGLOs remains the investigation of how nonwhite members actively navigate their place as simultaneous fraternal insider and racial outsider. I take up that task here.

Addressing a concern with the process of navigating the infamous “color line” (Du Bois [1903] 1999) rather than building a description of the color line via statistical generalization, means moving beyond a solitary focus on the world of WGLOs to a broader analysis of the contentious intersection of race and culture. That is, while there is no shortage of work on the connection between material resources and race (Hurst 2006; Marable 1999; Shapiro and Oliver 1996), the sociological literature tends to assume, rather than explain, how, why, and which particular resources become sources of social mobility, assimilation, and/or acceptance. Whereas some concern rests on the distribution of resources for the sake of building general statistical snapshots and propositions, such an emphasis is unwarranted without investigation of the processes and systems of meaning that underlie such stratification. Accordingly, I aim toward an empirical account of the interpretive understandings that nonwhite Greek actors employ to navigate the color line. These interpretations are grounded in the symbolic order; they are patterns of knowledge that guide and give meaning to action (Sewell 1992).

Entrance into the materially and symbolically enriched culture of WGLOs remains a potent instrument for nonwhite empowerment, especially given the structure’s ability to supply members with myriad advantages in college and beyond. Yet, such access is not a foregone conclusion and remains contingent on members’ performances as authentic and belonging brothers and sisters. Despite prior work on nonwhite entrance into WGLOs (Chen 1998; Hughey 2006, 2009; Matthews 2005) and the general assumption of a linear correlation between higher rates of acceptance and performances of Anglo conformity, I find that nonwhite members’ ability to frame themselves as equal and belonging Greek brothers and sisters remains paradoxically tied to the patterned reproduction of their racial identities as different

and inferior. How then does a nonwhite member navigate such a space when such performances are intimately and subtly, yet no less importantly, tied to racist and reactionary schemas? In what ways do nonwhites draw upon the shared culture of WGLOs either to attempt new racial identity projects or to submerge their perceived racial differences? Throughout this process, how are such deceptively rational and seemingly utilitarian trade-offs interpreted and managed? In answering these questions, I aim to advance the state of play in the current intersection of cultural sociology and the sociology of race and ethnicity. In particular, my goal is to demonstrate how nonwhite members employ shared strategies of action to pursue an authentic and belonging membership. In so doing, I show how subjective meanings, patterned repertoires, and distinctive practices profoundly shape experience in relation to future material success, life chances, and domination.

Background

Over recent years, scholars have raised important questions about the value of fraternities and sororities on college campuses. Critics of the Greek system refer to an array of dysfunctional behaviors: alcohol abuse (Wechsler, Kuh, and Davenport 1996); academic dishonesty and low levels of achievement (Blimling 1993; McCabe and Bowers 2009; Pike 2000); violent forms of hazing (Jones 2004; Nuwer 1990, 2001, 2004; Sweet 1999); homophobia and heterosexism (DeSantis and Coleman 2008; Yeung and Stomblor 2000; Yeung, Stomblor, and Wharton 2006); patriarchy, sexism, and sexual assault (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999; Copenhaver and Grauerholz 1991; Kalof 1993; Kalof and Cargill 1991; Nurius, et al. 1996; Scott 1965; Stomblor 1994); and class-based exclusionary practices (Kendall 2008; Syrett 2009; Turk 2004). Despite these broad critiques, and even given that a number of institutions wish to abolish the Greek system, WGLOs show no signs of waning (Syrett 2009). Scholars estimate that in 2002 at least 750,000 U.S. undergraduates—approximately 1 in 17—belonged to a WGLO (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 2002). Even though no more than 3 percent of the U.S. population has ever been a WGLO member, from 1900 to 2005, 63 percent of U.S. president cabinets have been fraternity or sorority members, over 85 percent of supreme court justices appointed since 1910 have been fraternity or sorority members, over 75 percent of U.S. senators are fraternity or sorority members, and all but two U.S. presidents since 1825 have been fraternity members (Curators of the University of Missouri 2010; NIC 2010; Plotkin 1993; Reese 1998). Also, of the nation's 50 largest corporations, 43 of the CEOs are fraternity members (Curators 2010). Research supports that WGLO membership increases the likelihood of graduation from college (Severtis and Christie-Mizell 2007). As of October 2009, there were over 750,000 undergraduate members in over 12,000 chapters on more than 800 campuses throughout North America (NIC 2010; NPC 2010; NPHC 2010).

It is surprising, given both the known critiques and reach of the WGLO system, that more attention is not afforded to WGLOs' role in racial segregation. From the 1776 founding of the first Greek-letter organization in Virginia (Phi Beta Kappa) until after World War II, U.S. Greek-letter societies reflected the dominant portion of the college population: white, male, Christian students of "proper breeding" pursuing the "Gentleman's C" (Syrett 2009). As the homogeneous demographic of colleges lessened, most WGLOs incorporated racially exclusionary policies into their constitutions, which became their "hallmarks" (Clawson 1989:11). In *Fraternities Without Brotherhood* (1995), one of the earliest sociological critiques of WGLOs, Alfred M. Lee wrote:

the chief defect in . . . the social fraternity . . . [can be] summed up as "Aryanism"—the acceptance and rejection of persons for membership on grounds of race, religion, and national origin. To the extent that Aryanism persists in them, social fraternities represent a basic threat to democracy in the United States (p. ix).

By the end of the 1960s, WGLOs eliminated official constitutional stipulations that prohibited race-based membership. Yet, as Lee (1955) earlier predicted, “the abolition of restrictive clauses is merely a first step; it ignores other means for maintaining restrictive practices. It may remove an obstacle; it does not promote integration” (p. 19). Some continue to level the charge that WGLOs are overtly racist organizations that informally discriminate. These charges rest on evidence of *de facto* segregation, parties with white supremacist overtones, mock “slave auctions,” and numerous accounts of white fraternity members dressing in “blackface” (Holguin 2002; Hughey 2009; Plotkin 1993). Joe Feagin, Hernan Vera, and Nikitah Imani (1996) write:

white fraternities sometimes play a negative role in racial relations on campus . . . there have been problems with a few white fraternities building homecoming floats with racist themes, holding racist skits, or staging parties with racist themes . . . Clearly, the Greek system is central to the physical and social space on many a college campus (pp. 78–79).

In that vein, when nonwhites do join WGLOs, it is a striking occurrence worthy of investigation. Yet, literature on the topic remains sparse. With notable exceptions (cf Chen 1998; Hughey 2006, 2009; Matthews 2005),¹ the bulk of the literature focuses on nonracial issues. Consideration turns to why students of color remain unwilling to join WGLOs (Stearns, Buchmann, and Bonneau 2009; Thompson 2000) or centers on the benefits afforded to whites when nonwhites join WGLOs (Antonio 2004; Laird 2005). Work of this ilk highlights the agency of white social actors to overcome prejudice via education and/or increased contact with “diversity.” Such analyses largely rely on conglomerates of rational-actor and functionalist paradigms. These paradigms oversimplify or dismiss the dominance of entrenched and shared pro-white systems of meaning, as well as the processes by which actors—particularly the students of color who traversed the fraternal color line—negotiate, interpret, reproduce, and/or contest those racist schemas. Given this background, this study’s value rests in the treatment of cultural schemas as equally important as access to material resources and legal entrée into traditionally exclusive networks. This perspective has not yet been applied to the study of Greek-letter organizations and race.

A Cultural View of Crossing the Color line

A cultural sociological approach is necessary in order to examine how students of color both interpret their placement in a WGLO, as well as how they engage in shared strategies of action toward convincing others of their authentic belonging. In specific, I draw from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), Anthony Giddens (1984), Sharon Hays (1994), and William Sewell (1992). Together these works approach culture as a structure in its own right, rather than a synonym for “agency” and an antonym for “structure.” “Culture is thus patterned and patterning; it is enabling as well as constraining; and it is observable in linguistic practices, institutional rules, and social rituals rather than existing only in people’s minds” (Polletta 1999:67). I emphasize the duality of culture—as both resources and schemas. *Resources* are material objects, skills, and assets that are controlled in unequal fields of power. *Schemas* are the deep generative patterns of knowledge and logic that guide and give meaning to action. Whereas landmark studies of race document the growing, albeit spotty, access to formerly

1. Chen (1998) examined how middle class Asian women accommodate and resist race, class, and gender hierarchies in WGLOs; Hughey (2006) examined the unique case of the first WGLO chapter on the historically black flagship campus of Howard University; Hughey (2009) gave a historical recount of notable color-line transgressions in Greek-letter organizations; and Matthews’ (2005) thesis examined black men’s racial identity development in white fraternities. In sum, while each of these works avoids both rational-choice frameworks and the romanticization of nonwhite agency and positioning in WGLOs, these works do not contribute to the central focus of this study: how Asians, blacks, and Latinos in various WGLOs across differing educational institutions navigate their uneasy position as simultaneous insider and outsider.

all-white institutions (Massey and Denton 1993; Shapiro and Oliver 1986; Wilson 1980), less work has emphasized the ways in which racialized schemas provide frameworks for how, why, and which resources are pursued, interpreted, and used upon institutional access. The trend is ironic given Michael Omi and Howard Winant's (1994) claim that "to recognize the racial dimension in social structure is to interpret the meaning of race" (p. 57). The insight is that schemas give meaning to resources while resources sustain schemas—the two cannot be separated (Sewell 1992:13). Together they remain crucial to the reproduction of power relations.

This approach is in conversation with Omi and Winant's (1994) understanding of "racial projects." A racial project is a link between the structural and the ideal as they "connect what race *means* in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially *organized*, based upon that meaning [emphasis in original]" (Omi and Winant 1994:56). Hence, in recognizing WGLOs as particular racial projects, their supposed color-blind access to resources, membership, and participation must be accompanied by an appreciation for the dominant schemas of race.

From here it is imperative not to reduce schemas to values and free-floating ideals in the Parsonian sense. Whereas schemata are not directly observable, they manifest in dominant narratives and practices (cf Franzosi 1998; Gerteis 2002; Griffin 1993; Somers 1994). More specifically, they are observable in the narratives and practices that define how to conduct oneself as a WGLO member. These schemata are seemingly nonracial, such as devotion to fictive bonds of kinship, participation in a hyper-drinking culture, engagement in violent and physically demanding hazing practices for fraternities, demonstration of a demure femininity associated with the proper "sorority girl," participation in Greek networking opportunities for social mobility, and a ritualized dedication to conducting "community service."

I focus on how WGLO members of color respond to the schematic expectations for competent and authentic WGLO membership. These expectations are present at the earliest stages of WGLO membership. Stephen Schmitz and Sean Forbes (1994) highlight how patterned behaviors and interpretations guide the reproduction of a racialized Greek-letter structure beyond individual agency:

the social structure of Greek segregation . . . is self-perpetuating. Although racial prejudice is a factor in the systemic exclusion of minorities, the root causes of racial separatism are systemic and endemic to the sorority recruitment process itself. Even those women who want to change the system are powerless in the face of a recruitment structure that subverts integration (p. 107).

Such cultural dynamics point to how certain accountabilities are neither constituted in the black box of the individual actor's mind, nor are wholly the product of "rational" choices. As Michael Schwalbe and associates (2000) argue:

To be held accountable . . . is to stand vulnerable to being ignored, discredited, or otherwise punished if one's behavior appears inconsistent with what is ideologically prescribed for members of a certain category . . . and how that accountability is manifested, in any given case, depends on the historical and cultural context . . . the power to hold others accountable in one setting depends upon relationships—that is, a larger *net of accountability*—with actors outside the setting (p. 442, emphasis in original).

In this sense, accountabilities are "a feature of social relationships . . . drawn from the institutional arena in which those relationships are enacted (West and Fenstermaker 1995:24). "Being Greek" requires certain accountabilities that relate to an important dialectic between the interactions of a particular context and to a larger domain of power grounded in both material resources and dominant schemas of racialized logic.

It is important to note that while I understand race and racism as a cultural system of meaning that organizes social life and serves as the "central axis of social relations" (Edles 2002; Omi and Winant 1994), I do not isolate race and the specific expectations of the Greek-

letter system from the broader social order. As W. E. B. Du Bois ([1903] 1999) observed over a century ago, the African American “ever feels his two-ness—An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts . . . two warring ideals in one dark body” (p. 7). This notion of “double consciousness” still holds resonance and extends to other people of color (cf Dawson 2001; Lewis 2001; Singh 2004). Nonwhite WGLO members constantly navigate both “Greek and gown”—the fraternal structure and the racialized climate of campus. Hence, boundary crossing necessitates the simultaneous negotiation of at least two differing cultural logics: WGLOs and nonwhite racial communities. Nonwhite members are not just crossing their color line with their racial identities wholly intact, but employ specific strategies of action that have repercussions for how their identities are understood and remade within the institutional spaces of both Greek and campus life. In this sense, it is prudent to underscore the “key mechanisms associated with the bridging, crossing, and dissolution of boundaries” (Lamont and Molnár 2002:187). The WGLO system provides a rich case study for how people “do difference” via the reconstruction of racial and fraternal boundaries (West and Fenstermaker 1995).

While some people of color are admitted membership to WGLOs, and may even obtain mid-level or even high-level leadership positions, we must also account for how they respond to—and even unintentionally reproduce—the essentialist and reactionary logics of racial difference. We must examine not only possible changes in nonwhite actors’ social positioning via the resources Greek membership provides, but also how people of color interpret those resources via racialized schemas (cf Bourdieu 1984; Giddens 1984; Hays 1994; Sewell 1992). For in so long as the dominant meanings of nonwhite actors’ identities hinge on the governing expectations of a Greek system—as a system of essentialized racial difference, selective superiority, and white supremacy—their ability to frame themselves as authentically belonging remains paradoxically tethered to reproducing an inferior and outsider status.

Data, Methodology, and Settings

This study consists of ethnographic fieldwork on three different East Coast college campuses from 2003-2006 and semistructured, in-depth interviews with 31 nonwhite members of WGLOs based on those three universities (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics). The average population of each institution was 12,000 students; two were public and one was private. At the time of interviews, all respondents held membership in their fraternity or sorority for at least one full semester. In total, the members possessed 63.5 years of experience in WGLOs. Eighteen members were women and 13 were men. The participants represented eight different nation-wide WGLOs. At the time of interviews, the average membership size of the organizations was 63 members, and there was an average of 2.4 nonwhite members per organization (3.8 percent). Of the nonwhite members I interviewed, 15 (48.4 percent) described their backgrounds as “middle class,” three (9.7 percent) as either “lower or working class,” and 13 (41.9 percent) as “upper class.” The Asian and black members reported growing up in majority white neighborhoods, whereas the Latino members reported growing up in either racially mixed or majority Latino areas. Fifteen (48.4 percent) of the participants were African American, eight (25.8 percent) were Latino/a (four identified simply as “nonwhite Hispanic,” two identified as Puerto Rican, one as Cuban American, and one as Mexican), and eight (25.8 percent) were Asian American (two reported being of Japanese descent, two of Chinese, one of Vietnamese, one of Korean, and the remaining two did not acknowledge a particular ancestry). The majority of the sample (27) reported a Christian affiliation (87.1 percent), with the remaining four identifying as either Jewish or as having no religious affiliation. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 24 with a mean and median age of 20. Out of the eight different Greek organizations with which I was granted access, I identified a total of 33 nonwhite members. Only two refused to participate in the study (6.1 percent). Participants were informed of their rights, the research method protocol, and all gave their informed consent.

Table 1 • Descriptive Statistics

Mean years active in WGLO (median, SD)	2.048 (2, 0.789)
Age range (mean, median, SD)	18–24 (20, 20, 1.414)
Gender distribution	female = 18, male = 13
<i>Racial identity</i>	
African American	15 (48.4%)
Latino/nonwhite Hispanic	8 (25.8%)
Asian American	8 (25.8%)
<i>Religion</i>	
Catholic	6 (19.4%)
Protestant	21 (67.7%)
Jewish	2 (6.5%)
No affiliation	2 (6.5%)
<i>Where primarily raised (geographic location)</i>	
Midwest	6 (19.4%)
North	5 (16.1%)
South	18 (58.1%)
West	2 (6.5%)
<i>Political orientation</i>	
Democrat	10 (32.3%)
Independent	13 (41.9%)
Republican	7 (22.6%)
No-affiliation	1 (3.2%)
<i>SES background status</i>	
Lower or working class	3 (9.7%)
Middle class	15 (18.4%)
Upper class	13 (41.9%)

Because my study was limited to the East Coast of the United States, it is important to note that worldviews about race, class, and gender are specific, contextual social constructions even as they remain immersed in dominant, overarching ideologies. Ethnographic and interview data collection was structured by Dorothy Smith's (1987, 2005) model of "institutional ethnography" and Michael Burawoy's (1998) "extended case method."² Accordingly, I approached all three WGLO campuses as "institutions." To specify, James A. Holstein (2006) writes:

In institutional ethnography, "institution" refers to coordinated and intersecting work processes and courses of action. "Ethnography" highlights concrete modes of inquiry used to discover and describe these activities. The researcher's goal in doing institutional ethnography is not to generalize about the people under study, but to identify and explain social processes that have generalizing effects (p. 293).

The guiding questions for an institutional ethnographer include: "How does this happen as it does? How are these relations organized?" (Campbell and Gregor 2002:7). In application of these questions to the nonwhite WGLO members I interviewed, I mapped their localized worldviews to discover larger similarities between them, or what Marjorie Devault (2006) calls "relevances produced elsewhere" (p. 294).

2. Burawoy (1998) writes of the similarity between models: "Smith's 'sociology of women' begins by debunking abstract, decontextualized, and universalistic sociology as the ideology of ruling men and turns to the concrete lived experience of women as point of departure. The microstructures of everyday life, which women direct, become the foundation and invisible premise for macrostructures controlled by men. This looks like the extended case method, but whereas Smith justifies it on the grounds of the 'standpoint of women,' I ground it in an alternative conception of science" (p. 6).

As I was concerned with nonwhite strategies of action, I did not interview white WGLO members. However, my fieldwork put me in contact with hundreds of white members. Many would approach me to ask about my background and my intentions. All were informed of their rights regarding informed consent and that I was a sociologist examining their organization. No white members refused to allow my ethnographic observations. The nonwhite respondents were eager to participate in the study and often spoke openly of their experiences. I informed respondents at the beginning of the interview of my own status as a white member of a black Greek-letter organization (BGLO), and this personal connection appeared to put them at ease as they began to read me as an “insider” within their experience.³ Although my racial and Greek status could have created a negative bias, I do not believe it did, as only two nonwhite members refused to participate in the study. In fact, my own status as a Greek-letter boundary crosser first introduced me to relevant field sites, as both African American and Latino/a WGLO members approached me after noticing my black fraternity paraphernalia (t-shirt, car license plate, tangential reference, etc.). Members took it upon themselves to share their experiences about their life on the color line and began to invite me to WGLO activities. From the fall of 2004 to the fall of 2005, I conducted intensive ethnographic observations. Some were made amidst the cigar-smoke-filled billiard rooms of fraternity houses, others while sipping tea out of china with southern bellesque sorority sisters in the vestibules of their white-pillared mansions. In so doing, I developed several key informants who were sure to invite me to all the “right” functions (such as formals, certain chapter meetings, interfraternity parties), and who were kind enough to key me into the expected dress and decorum that would have otherwise left me unable to engage in unobtrusive observations.

The formal interviews centered on three emergent areas of WGLO culture: community service, networking, and brother/sisterhood. This form of interviewing aims for a flexible yet systematic analysis; the reflexive movement between concept development, sampling, data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation together structured my approach. To assess intercoder reliability of theme accuracy and frequency, two research assistants read over a random sample of the interview transcripts and coded each paragraph (the unit of analysis). The two research assistants had no knowledge of my prior calculations. I calculated agreement percentages and reliability measures (see Table 2). Although the coding varies slightly by theme, the results suggest an overall strong reliability.

I created the sample through a three-tiered process. First, names and contact information of members were publicly available via university directories, fraternity/sorority Web sites, and informational meetings. Second, I e-mailed and telephoned fraternity and sorority members asking for participants in a study about Greek life, college experiences, and racial identity. Third, via a snowball sampling technique implemented at the conclusion of each interview, I asked the participant to refer me to another nonwhite member of a WGLO. Most interviews took place in person over the spring, summer, and fall semesters of the 2004–2005

3. There is only a modicum of research that addresses nonblack membership in BGLOs (cf Chen 1998; Hughey 2007, 2008b, 2009). The unique dynamic of my placement as a known white member of the BGLO Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (since 1996) served as a mechanism by which many nonwhite members of WGLOs expressed a desire to know more about BGLOs, especially my navigation of those dynamics as a white man. This is a rare and important dynamic as “Sometimes researchers are ‘blocked’ by participants who decide they are unworthy or not to be trusted with local ‘insider’ information. The political motives of the researcher can be questioned by research participants . . . who have reason to believe that the study will contribute little to the betterment of their emotional, social, political, or economic situation (McKinley, Brayboy, and Deyhle 2000:163). Upon noting the positive effect of my membership on subjects’ willingness to discuss aspects, I reflexively noted that the formerly taboo topics of (1) hazing/pledging/membership intake; (2) actual intimate bonds of brother-sisterhood (opposed to rehearsed talking points); and (3) sexualized encounters (even from among sorority women) were often freely shared. In this sense, interviews often took the tone of sessions in which trust was implicitly built from at least some sharing on my part. Still, I was mindful neither to divulge information that was officially held as secret nor to speak of specific names, places, or actions that might harm fellow BGLO members. In this vein, the reader might find interest in Gasman and Payton-Stewart’s (2006) treatment of the politics of white scholars studying BGLOs.

Table 2 • Intercoder (3) Reliability Measures

	<i>Community Service</i>	<i>Networking</i>	<i>Sisterhood and Brotherhood</i>
Avg pairwise percent agreement	88.84%	91.59%	94.06%
Pairwise agreement cols 1 & 3	.867391304	.904347826	.919565217
Pairwise agreement cols 1 & 2	.902173913	.919565217	.956521739
Pairwise agreement cols 2 & 3	.895652174	.923913043	.945652174
Fleiss' kappa (FK)	.758141059	.815257207	.864490727
FK observed agreement	.888405797	.915942029	.94057971
FK expected agreement	.538597984	.545	.561503886
Avg pairwise Cohen's kappa (CK)	.758014113	.815169457	.864415177
Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	.710676909	.787911812	.816031822
Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	.788915515	.824042676	.901077396
Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3	.774449915	.833553883	.876136315
Krippendorff's alpha (KA)	.758316319	.815391078	.864588922

academic year. Interviews were all tape-recorded and took place in private locations such as offices, dormitories, apartments, quiet corners of libraries, and fraternity and sorority houses. Interviews generally ran 50 to 80 minutes. I assured all participants of individual and organizational confidentiality; I do not refer or allude to the names of individual members, Greek-letter organizations, or campuses.

Findings

Community Service

Community service is one of the stated goals of WGLO life. WGLOs hold dances, contests, or parties at which the majority of the WGLO community donates money to a "good cause." I found this area of fraternity and sorority life implicitly racialized. Nonwhite members—especially black members—were commonly understood as "perfect fits" for community service-related activities, and were often cajoled into planning and implementing the chapter's philanthropic activities. One black woman I interviewed, the chair of the philanthropy committee for her particular sorority chapter, and one of two nonwhite members in her chapter, stated:

I joined to help out with things in the community you know? . . . I think because I know about these things, you know, most of the girls are really white and don't understand poverty, but because, well, because I'm black I think that helps me get it. [*Interviewer*: "Get what?"] Oh, you know, understand poverty, with my insight, and, well, how we can help and stuff . . . Because of that, I'm a better fit for that work than a lot of the other stuff in the sorority.

This member expressed how her black racial identity gave her "insight" into poverty and qualified her for being a "better fit" for community service aspects of the sorority, rather than many of the other activities. The schema linking blackness with servitude, according to many other respondents, was widely shared by white members of their respective chapters. Another member of a WGLO, a black man from an upper class background, spoke strongly of his desire to conduct community service, but felt that his fraternity's program did not contribute enough.

all we do once a year is go around and ask businesses if they would keep a jar on their desk and this stand with lollipops in it. People are supposed to contribute one dollar for a lollipop. Later we come around and collect the money and give it to the March of Dimes . . . there is nothing wrong with that, but I think there is something wrong with not doing more . . . They [his fraternity brothers] always tell me, because of my background and race, that I'm right for the job.

Like the member before him, this individual realized that his mostly white fraternity brothers understood his race as qualifying him for the domain of service work.

In addition, several African American members remarked that their decision to join a WGLO forced them to navigate a dual position of WGLO member and known black persona on their campus. In fact, every one of the black members in this study ($n = 15$) expressed their decision to join a WGLO as a stigmatizing choice in the context of their campus' "black community." As one black male WGLO member stated, "I mean, I didn't join a BGLO, so, people, I mean, other black people wonder, literally, 'what's wrong with him,' literally, you know?" Many of the black members reported that by emphasizing community service at a level akin to that of BGLOs, other black students were more likely to sympathize with their decision to cross the color line into a WGLO. As one black female WGLO member stated, "When I explain the amount of good I do in the sorority, especially in relation to service to the community and the poor, then other, you know, other black people, seem to give me an easier time about my choice [regarding joining a WGLO]."

Here we gain insight into the subtle, but no less important or robust, ways by which black fraternal organizing (whether by way of black members of WGLOs, or the BGLO system writ large) remains implicitly associated with service work. As historian David Roediger (2002) points out, by the late eighteenth century poor whites and blacks were, in terms of labor, "virtually interchangeable." Yet, by the mid-nineteenth century labor relations became defined along racial lines so that there existed an unspoken association between blackness, poverty, and activities associated with the underclass. Blacks were generally assumed, via religious, social, or political discourse, to possess a primordial connection to the lower rungs of the socioeconomic order. Whilst the presence of white poverty could have challenged this arrangement, poor whites were often framed as exceptions to the rule and as somehow racially deficient (cf Wray 2006). The current WGLO structure on three different campuses is propelled by that historical trajectory; black members and BGLOs are commonly understood as properly suited for serving the poor and helping those in need. So also, white WGLO members from lower socioeconomic standings were often framed as dangerously out of place in lower-income areas. As one black male member stated:

Some of the guys always give the white or Asian members a hard time about going if we have a service project in a rough area or something . . . They'll often say things like, "Yeah, watch it, you're too white to go into the hood" or "You know you don't belong down there" or something like that . . . To be honest, I mean, they are kinda right about it. I wouldn't want one of my [white] fraternity brothers who can't handle himself and who has never lived in a place like that to freak out. [Interviewer: "Have you ever lived in a place like that?"] No, but I'm black so folks in the hood don't give me a hard time, and I know how to handle myself. [Interviewer: "How did you learn how to do that?"] I don't know, it's just natural, that's all. I'm black like that . . . Besides, it's [community service] one of those leadership positions I just fell into and happen to have a little control in the fraternity . . . They listen to me.

This young black man's conflation of blackness with poverty, the lower class, and "the hood" is a telling example. Through his implicit acceptance of the racial coding of these areas and service work, he gains further acceptance in his fraternity, a bit of autonomy, and a leadership role. It is important to point out that nonwhite members did not often understand this dynamic as a conscious trade-off. The aforementioned black male does not frame the situation as an implicit acceptance of a racial stereotype for a less troubled membership in his fraternity. Rather, the acceptance of this arrangement is understood as the natural consequence of his commitment to the fraternity and just something he "fell into."

While some sociological paradigms might treat such an arrangement as a utilitarian trade-off by which actors are rationally conscious of their position and status, seeking to exchange one for what they perceive to be a more cost-beneficial arrangement, the data leads me to pursue a different approach. The above examples gesture toward how racial schemes and boundaries

of social categorization are culturally constructed through explicitly nonracial practices. They operate as a system of rules that guide interaction by defining legitimate social acts. In this sense, boundaries based on “moral, cultural, or socioeconomic status [are] increasingly used to euphemistically draw gender, race, or ethnic boundaries at a time when norms against boundary work based on ascribed characteristics are gaining greater legitimacy” (Lamont and Fournier 1992:14). Whiteness and blackness are partially distinguished from one another by their association with status and class—a product of different political and cultural practices in the United States that have their origins in processes of social control and domination (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Omi and Winant 1994). The important point is that cultural categories of worth and status inform how fraternity activities and participation become understood as authentic and belonging. Such symbolic boundary work involves the constant reconstruction of collective identity by differentiating oneself from others through drawing upon the reservoir of dominant racial meanings and normative WGLO practices.

Concurrently, it is important to note that not all the black members experienced such an arrangement as natural. Many of the black WGLO members were savvy and reflective of the hyperracialized Greek system. Some of the black members reported that their relationship to WGLO community service endeavors could backfire on them. In one particularly emotional account, a black female WGLO member told me of a conversation with her white roommate, also her sorority sister:

She sits down and says that she was a part of a conversation about me and why I joined. She said they were saying I was all “gung ho” about community service and were asking about why I didn’t just join a black sorority. They started saying that it was weird that I joined, cause that’s what the black sororities do—you know, lots of service. So evidently, in this conversation she had, they were questioning if I really belonged. What hurt is that I considered them my friends . . . And that she told me, that’s good I guess, but she kind of took their side. She kept saying, “You have to try to see it their way.” That hurt, because I wondered why she didn’t speak up for me . . .

So also, a black male member reported that his white fraternity brothers often asked him to serve on the philanthropy committee of his fraternity. Reporting that he was never that interested or “into that aspect of the fraternity,” this black male member recounted how his fraternity brothers told him he was not “really black”:

I can’t tell you how many times I heard that [expletive]. I’m really sick of it. What does that even mean, “I’m not really black?” What? Because I don’t wear baggy clothes or a baseball cap, or because I’m not really excited about going down to the soup kitchen where my frat brothers think the “real black people are” [using his fingers to denote air quotes around the phrase]. I feel like I have to constantly educate my frat brothers . . . but then, if I do, then they start distancing themselves from me . . . I was called “militant” once.

Because commitment to community service is coded as “black,” black WGLO members remain exposed to a double-sided framing process. On the one hand, they are understood as fraternal outsiders that do not authentically belong as full members in the (implicitly and explicitly coded) WGLO system. Rather, they are internally segregated into fraternal community service work—what one member called “the punishment jobs.” On the other hand, if black WGLO members do not express a desire for service, they are framed as a kind of exceptional and atypical African American who lacks both the perceived dysfunctions and authenticity related to the intersection of poverty and blackness. In either case, the strategies of action that blacks employ toward their acceptance in the WGLO system remains intimately tethered to the reproduction of racial hierarchies and racist systems of meaning.

While it remains possible for blacks to gain entry to WGLOs and even “climb the ranks” as leaders and gatekeepers of particular institutional activities (such as chairing philanthropic committees), it is clear that such material transformation does not equate with a change in the cultural logic of the institution. That is, black acceptance and mobility within the WGLO

system rests on a set of *a priori* assumptions regarding racial differences as essential, natural, and authentic. Greek fraternal life—a system that implicitly constructs the ideal and authentic membership through unmarked white and upper middle class practices—reproduces an understanding of the African American presence as the helpers of full (white) members and the fraternity mission.

It is important to also note the different ways in which Asian members fit into the realm of community service and how the nuances of their ongoing racialization (Dalal 2002) occur via this aspect of WGLO practice. Whilst black members and some Latino members were, by and large, understood as “perfect fits” for community service, Asian members were often framed within the popular “model minority” myth, or even seen as “outwhiting the whites” (e.g., Asianness was often correlated with more adept studying and test taking in relation to their white counterparts).⁴ Black, Latino, and Asian members often espoused the “superminority” discourse and/or implicitly lumped white and Asian members into the same category. Such racialization effectively removed Asian members from the onus of community service work. One Latino member remarked in passing, “We, and I guess, blacks too, we, I guess have a hard time of it [in WGLOs] sometimes, but I guess, whites and Asians don’t really think about it [race] too much . . . they don’t really think about helping others.” Black members were also quick to lump whites and Asians into the same category when speaking of community service. One black female member stated, “Whenever I try to garner support for a new philanthropy, I can count on white and Asian guys to be the last to help out . . . the Black Greeks, they generally are very supportive.” So also, many Asian members were quick to point out that their racial background provided no natural affinity with service-related activities. Rather, they commented on how their “culture” emphasized an independent, self-help philosophy, and that their “skill sets” should be better used elsewhere. As one Asian man stated:

I was taught to do for myself, because, well, no one else is going to help me . . . that’s part of Asian culture, you know? . . . I guess that’s why folks call us the “model minority”, I mean, I guess that’s kind of racist, you know? But, there’s some truth to it . . . We do work hard like whites.

An Asian female member remarked, “I mean, I don’t want to come off as though I’m better, but my family raised me with better skills that should, just, be put to better use elsewhere . . . our culture emphasizes intellectual capability.”

A crucial part of this discourse hinges on using “Asians” as evidence of the legitimacy of the Horatio Alger-tale of nonwhite immigration, assimilation, and upward mobility. This narrative remains a crucial building block of not only U.S. racial discourse, but the WGLO system that supposedly picks from the “best and brightest” to fill their ranks. Hence, Asians were often praised for their supposed positive traits that not only boosted the GPA of the WGLO but also provided, as one Asian member put it, “the illusion of inclusion.” Yet, Yehudi Webster (1992) warns of “the masked negativity of positive stereotypes” (p. 136). That is, the “model minority” discourse is often used to either blame blacks and Latinos as failures or to essentialize their traits as natural fits in lower-status service work in their “home” communities (Wu 2002).

Moreover, this discourse papers over the vast heterogeneity of the “Asian” diaspora, effectively washing out the huge variation in wealth, education, and causes of migration between the descendants of Chinese, Indian, or Japanese immigrants before the 1960s and the post-1960 immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.⁵ As over half the Asian members

4. See “Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites” (*Newsweek* 1971). Other mainstream news discourse preceded this story. These narratives laid the groundwork for today’s “model minority” discourse. Articles like “Success Story of One Minority in the U.S.” in *U.S. News & World Report* (1966) explained: “At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities, the nation’s 300,000 Chinese Americans are moving ahead on their own, with no help from anyone else.” Stories of this ilk would follow over the next few years, as *Fortune* (1986) later dubbed Asian Americans a “superminority.”

5. Approximately half the Asian population (specifically, Asian-Pacific Islander) are from highly educated immigrant families who arrived in the United States before 1960. Post-1960s refugees (many from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) differ markedly in their lower class standing. “Significantly, poverty rates among Southeast Asian Americans

interviewed claimed Chinese, Japanese, or Korean descent (one claimed Vietnamese and two did not identify with a specific national origin), many of these young college students were unaware of high poverty and underachievement rates through the larger Asian American population. Indeed, many Asian members drew upon the shared schema whereby Asians had strong “family values,” an engrained work ethic, and academic performances on par with, or greater than, whites; they had “made it” as several Asian respondents told me (Thrupkaew 2007:224-30). Yet, as Webster (1992) writes, “Asian Pacific Americans . . . have ‘made it’ only in the sense of consistently struggling to overcome residual indigenous fears of a yellow peril” (p. 138). The frequent use of the “model minority” narrative racialized both Asians and the task of community service. Both Asian racial identities and their “authentic” place as WGLO members effectively disallowed their engagement with service work.

Networking

Unlike BGLO culture, where most members view membership as a lifelong commitment, WGLO culture sees membership as a college-centered experience. An exception to this “college-years” emphasis is the role of WGLO-enabled networking. Tales abounded from members who recounted a brother or sister who obtained a job postgraduation through someone they knew. This “Greek nepotism” was evidenced not only in the folk narratives of members, but in the prominently displayed pictures of successful alumni who subsequently helped other “worthy” brothers and sisters. These photographs littered the walls of the fraternity and sorority houses in which I conducted many of the interviews, and served as constant visual reminders of the privileges of membership.

This section presents data in stark contrast to the previous section whereby African American and Asian WGLO members’ conformed to expectations concerning community service, simultaneously reproducing the logic of racial difference hand-in-hand with their authentic and niche belonging in their respective WGLO. Specifically, many of the Latino members ($n = 7$ of 8) did not adhere to the expectations of networking inherent to their WGLO. As a consequence, many of their fellow WGLO members, white and nonwhite alike, came to frame them as dysfunctional and out-of-place in both racial and organizational terms. For example, one Latina WGLO member stated:

I didn’t really join for that reason [networking]. Now, if someone wants to look me up through the sorority and evaluates me on who I am, that’s fine. But overall, I’m going to be that kind of member . . . The sorority has lots of parties for this reason, when alumni come back, and it’s like a big business card trade off, where everyone is collecting everyone’s card . . . My [white] roommate came into my room during one of these parties, and she had, I mean, I don’t know how many cards, 20, 30, but she fanned them all out in her hand, like a deck of cards when you have to “pick a card.” Then she started imitating those Spanish fan dances in front of me! I was like, “What are you doing?” So, she started laughing and said she was just joking . . . before she left the room she said that I needed to come down to the party and “assimilate,” she actually used that word . . . I’m pretty sure it was a race joke, based on the whole *abanico*, you know, fan.

Latino WGLO members reported many instances, filled with racial stereotypes and innuendoes, in which their lack of participation in networking events received a harsh rebuff. Several black and Asian respondents explained that Latino members seemed “disconnected,” “aloof,” and “lazy” when it came to networking opportunities.

were much higher than those of even the “nonmodel” minorities: 21 percent of African Americans and 23 percent of Latinos were poor” (Thrupkaew 2007:226). So also, even with an average Asian American household earning power higher than white households, the cause is not higher earnings due to a better work ethic, but because Asian Americans live in larger households with more working adults. In fact, a litany of work over the past 30 years has found that while Asian Americans are well-educated and hold high status occupations in comparison with whites, they are often paid less than whites (Barringer, Gardner, Levin 1993:266). This finding suggests not culturally “better” Asian American families, but white supremacist market discrimination.

In contrast, many of the black and Asian members ($n = 23$) interviewed indicated that such forms of Greek nepotism served as a reason for joining a WGLO. Both blacks and Asians expressed an understanding of BGLOs and their own racially based campus groups as disorganized, selfish, or insufficient in resources. This framing guided their selection of a WGLO. One Asian WGLO member told me, “No, I never even thought about joining a BGLO, and there’s no Asian fraternity or sorority on campus . . . besides, they are too small, no alumni, so they can’t help you anyway. I don’t want to sound too self-serving, but if I’m going to join and give my time and money, I should get something out of it.” A black male WGLO member echoed that sentiment:

My father was in a black fraternity . . . I think this [joining a WGLO] broke his heart a little, but like I told him, I’m not going to get anything out of it, I’ll put too much in with too little return. They don’t have a house, there’s no established alumni network, . . . I’m going to need a job when I get out of here . . . being [an individual], or pledging a black frat couldn’t have helped me network.

As these two members show, both non-Greek life and other Greek options (e.g., BGLOs) were beyond the pale because of their perceived inability to assist with networking during and after college. Moreover, both blacks and Asians possessed a shared understanding of white fraternities and sororities as the proper and normative conduits for post-college upward mobility that any “thinking” or “rational” person would choose. A black female WGLO member told me:

Of course I joined [my sorority]. Any rational person would choose [her sorority] or one like it. [Interviewer: “Like it’ how, exactly?”]. I mean, with all its resources and opportunities. [Interviewer: “Does it matter that it’s predominantly white?”]. I mean, yes and no. Color doesn’t matter, right? We’re all equal. But whites, I mean [long pause] . . . these white girls really know about pre-law, and pre-med, and quite a few have found really great boyfriends that a few have married, so I mean, they seem to just orient themselves differently . . . They are just more professional . . . They get it better than, I mean, I don’t want to say people of color, but I guess, really they do . . . College flies by quickly, and I want to have opportunities afterward, not have to sit around thinking about how great things *used to be* [said with a slow and drawn out emphasis] . . . why would I spend my time “stepping” when I can amass business contacts. Sure, I have fun, but I always remember the point . . . I’m not irrational about things.

An Asian male WGLO member stated, “Whites just have their stuff together . . . yeah, they can be a little prejudiced, but who isn’t? . . . Why shouldn’t I be a thinking person and use some of [the networking opportunities afforded by WGLOs]?” The aforementioned respondents illuminate how the logic of white supremacy—WGLOs as the normative, moral, and intelligent option—pervades and structures their understandings of the seemingly unracialized aspect of networking.

Such an interracial contrast certainly evokes an important question crucial to sociological analysis. What explains the racial variation in WGLO networking strategies? In answering this question, two paradigms readily emerge. First, proponents of exchange theory argue that actors consciously weigh the potential benefits and risks of pursuing resources, and that they choose actions based on the most advantageous path. Stemming from Alvin Gouldner’s (1960) “norm of reciprocity,” if one assumes actors are at base hedonistic and atomistic, hold freedom of choice, and are conscious of probability distributions, one may then theorize that when risks outweigh rewards, actors will abandon the relationship (cf Blau 1964; Thibaut and Kelley 1959). One could assume that black and Asian members’ decision to accept a surveilled and stigmatized WGLO membership is an exchange they are willing to make for WGLO network resources. However, how do we explain Latino members’ opposite choice? Of the Latino WGLO members who refused networking opportunities ($n = 7$), three hailed from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and the remaining four spoke of middle class backgrounds in which their family struggled to send them to college while “keeping up with the Joneses,” as one respondent put it. If an exchange model best fit the data, then these subjects would

demonstrate a willing trade of their shaky lower and middle class positioning for a nearly guaranteed six-figure job and the professional networks provided by fraternity and sorority alumni. Yet, Latinos' networking refusals stand them little to gain except the ire of their fellow WGLO members who code their refusals in racialized terms. As one Asian member said to me in passing, "He [referring to his Latino fraternity brother] never comes to any of the [alumni] dinners. It's just rude. [Interviewer: "Why do you think that is?"] I don't know, his priorities or values or something are in the wrong place."

This latter point evokes the second paradigm—a contemporary version of the infamous "culture of poverty" thesis (Lewis 1966). Turning away from the seemingly "rational" approach of "exchange theory," this paradigm assumes that sustained lack of resources and material disadvantage among the racial underclass generates "a set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices, and that this culture of poverty would tend to perpetuate itself over time, even if the structural conditions that originally gave rise to it were to change" (Small, Harding, and Lamont 2010:7). Hence, in application to the case of Latinos herein, one could argue that the "wrong" set of values leads Latino WGLO members to decide against their own material interests. In this vein, some Asian and black members spoke of Latinos as having incongruent values in relation to the WGLO system, especially in the context of the Latino member's words that "We just don't do that type of stuff [networking]." However, the "right" set of values or beliefs may actually undermine one's acceptance and mobility when exercised in a complicated and differing milieu (Smith 2007). Rather than Latino members expressing a set of hostile, countercultural, or oppositional values, they refrained from using networks because of a strong sense of individual, meritocratic uplift that dictated people should succeed based on their own efforts. One Latina WGLO member explained, "I would feel horribly guilty if I got a job because of someone I knew . . . I should earn it," while a Latino man told me, "I'm no charity case . . . I don't need to be hooked up with a job." Hence, the patterned decision to refrain from the available networking opportunities was not the result of "bad" values, or as one Asian respondent told me, because of the "inherent laziness of Latinos."

Rather than attempt to force the above findings into a reductionist account based on economic principles of cost and gain, or simplistic understandings of "culture" as little more than the possession of abstract values *qua* Protestant-ethic morality (cf Weber [1905] 2002; Nietzsche [1887] 1967), I offer an explanation based on the principles of racialization and the operation of cultural schema. While Asian and black members saw WGLO networks as advantageous, this interpretation was grounded in a comparison to nonwhite GLOs as racially deficient *ipso facto*. That is, nonwhite GLOs and other nonwhite groups were thought fundamentally incapable of providing networking opportunities for either graduate school or employment. Members across the color line implicitly accepted the proposition that WGLOs are both superior overall and more valuable for their individual future. The operation of white supremacist schematic frameworks supplied a robust interpretive framework for both the choice of GLOs and one's activities once initiated.

So also, I observed a mutual distrust between Latino and white members. Latinos reported feeling let down by promises from whites to introduce them to successful alumni (promises Latinos reported seeing fulfilled with Asians and Blacks). Asians and blacks often reported that Latinos were "lazy" and undeserving of networking opportunities (even as later, and in other contexts, they would comment negatively on Latinos' refusal to participate in networking activities). Moreover, Latino members told me they felt they would be further stereotyped and stigmatized if they attempted to use the networking resources of the WGLO. As one Latina member told me, "I'm already under a microscope and I'm no fool . . . I'm not going to give anyone the chance to say I didn't earn what I have." As these words exemplify, most Latino members relied on an individualized meritocratic strategy. Finding neither a robust culture of poverty nor a straightforward exchange dynamic, I discovered that Latino members interpret their decision to avoid networking through an array of contradictory narratives based on distrust, hyperindividualism, and perceptions of racism.

From my vantage point, I observed whites, blacks, and Asians implicitly passing over Latinos for networking opportunities while simultaneously characterizing them as lazy and undeserving, then demonizing them for failing to take advantage of the WGLO-supplied networking resources. Latino members, wary of being framed as taking fraternal “hand-outs” or as a stereotype of their race, embraced a bootstrap approach that forestalled their engagement in networking opportunities. This dynamic—one in which Latinos were attempting to shun racial stereotypes and embrace a form of mainstream, moral individualism—backfired on their framing as authentically belonging sorority and fraternity members. One Latina woman stated:

I was actually sat down by the sorority, they confronted me, like an intervention or something like that. I couldn't believe it, I kept thinking I was dreaming or that it was some kind of really, really bad joke . . . they told me I should be thankful for being let into the sorority, . . . that no one “like me” had ever been a member before and how they all were paying a cost for having me as a member . . . they told me I had better start taking care of the advantages they were so kindly giving me . . . I was so shocked and scared at the same time . . . Now, I can clearly see it as some dumb white paternalism.

A Latino male WGLO member told me that he overheard one of his white fraternity brothers telling another white member: “He probably won't come to the party. He's sleeping upstairs under his Mexican sombrero.” The dominant cultural logic of WGLOs, as manifest in the material practices of networking expectations, invites both competition for resources and the constant imperative of proving one's authentic belonging through adherence to the *de jure* and *de facto* rules of a particular WGLO.

As Sewell (2005:131) reminds us, these “rules” are pervasive in the “sense that they are present in a relatively wide range of institutional spheres, practices, and discourses” (Sewell 1992:22). Accordingly, the depth of these rules varies in relation to different practices of WGLO everyday life, such as the examples highlighted herein: community service, networking, and the performance of authentic sisterhood and brotherhood. While nonwhite members may obtain previously unattainable resources (such as membership in a selective group capable of altering one's life course), the schematic rules that guide and give meaning to the actions associated with those resources may linger. The cultural meanings of racial inferiority associated with nonwhites remain in latent form, even as nonwhite WGLO members try to explicitly engage in upward social mobility and distance themselves from their own racial identities. As a result, Latino identity was further racialized as lazy and undeserving, and Latino strategies to pursue a meritocratic and hardworking persona remained paradoxically tied to their status as inauthentic and out-of-place Greek “sisters and brothers.”

Sisterhood and Brotherhood

Fraternity scholar Ed Whipple (1998) wrote, “Greek letter organizations have prospered for many years, largely because of their capacity to unite students in friendship and shared purpose. Being affiliated with a fraternity [or sorority] means belonging to a group of ‘brothers’ [or ‘sisters’] who care about one another” (p. 1). Indeed, such claims attract diverse attention, from supporters and detractors alike, in that activities designed to create the fraternal bonds of friendship and unity are often hailed as significant factors in the development of students and campus culture (Shaffer and Kuh 1983). These bonds of organizational kinship are often formed and solidified through various ritual ceremonies and patterned activities that serve as both the private and public faces of WGLOs.

A collectively shared belief in sorority and fraternity “symbolic kinship” (Schneider 1984) or “relatedness” (Carsten 2000) labors to cement social activities as moral and familial undertakings, deserving of participants' extra time, energy, and money. Many of the nonwhite WGLO members reported a strong kinship bond with their mostly white brothers and sisters, and that they felt comfort in the possession of a family-like structure to which they could turn

in times of need. Fraternity members spoke positively of having either their brothers as potential “wingmen” when seeking romantic liaisons (cf Grazian 2007) or as a kind of “bodyguard squad” (as one member told me) if they were to face a physical altercation. Sorority members told me that they enjoyed the sorority house atmosphere and the knowledge that there was always another “sister” with whom they could talk to or go out for safety and camaraderie. All in all, members expressed how the Greek system allowed people from different areas, political orientations, and personalities to “come together as one.” In this sense, the ideal of sisterhood and brotherhood was an agreed-upon myth that enabled members to accomplish their ties of kinship.

Over the course of three years of on and off ethnographic fieldwork, the membership intake procedures, or “rush” as it is commonly called, were observed several times. It was here that “big and little” relationships were formed between members and prospective members. These rituals and activities are a critical part of the system of fictive kinship that sets GLOs aside from other non-Greek organizations.⁶ Importantly, while rush activities were implicitly racialized (see discussion below), “big and little” relationships did not seem to help reproduce the paradox of participation in which nonwhite WGLOs members were already engaged. Once accepted as members, “big and little” dynamics were not observed to play a substantial role. However, I would be remiss if I failed to mention that WGLOs did engage in a racially segregated selection processes that helps to recreate hypersegregation (cf Berkowitz and Padavic 1999; DeSantis and Coleman 2008; Hughey 2009; Kendall 2008; Lee 1955; Stomblor 1994; Stomblor and Padavic 1997; Syrett 2009; Turk 2004; Yeung and Stomblor 2000; Yeung, Stomblor, and Wharton 2006). It was rare that nonwhite prospective members approached, or were recruited by, any of the WGLOs.

Despite this dynamic, nonwhite members told me that their WGLO kinship bonds were more intimate and sincere than the friendships they held with non-Greek friendships, to the exclusion of members of their own race. One black female member stated, “In some ways, it’s like I have two sets of ‘sisters’.” In this sense, members reported a constant push-pull between their organization and members of their racial group, a tension that they felt demanded a great deal of attention. One Latino member told me, “I need to nurture both relationships . . . I’m not saying it’s a zero sum game, but well, it’s hard . . . I love my [fraternity] brothers [and] I love my people [Latinos].” The majority of respondents indicated that they felt genuinely accepted most of the time. Yet, simultaneously, most of the respondents were quick to point out that the strength and authenticity of the kinship bond was fragile. Racial tensions, as one respondent told me, “always lurked beneath the surface.”

In what follows, I examine some of the common activities and practices intimately associated with the performance of WGLO identities. Rather than highlight specialized and core activities and rituals (such as community service activities or networking expectations), this section centers on the mundane and everyday activities associated with the proper performance of WGLO brother- and sister-hood. Respondents demonstrate a pervasive logic of racial difference characterized by looming cultural contradictions. On one hand, nonwhite WGLO members report substantial pressure to perform their racial identities in muted, blunted, and anesthetized fashion. On the other, nonwhite WGLO members indicate that their fellow members also diverge from such patterns—the expectation to “act out” racial stereotypes are frequently placed on nonwhite members in concert with everyday WGLO activities designed to produce and strengthen the fraternal bonds of kinship. As a consequence, nonwhite WGLO members confront not only conflicting demands as they navigate a racially polarized campus and Greek system, but also conflicting ideas about how they are to behave within their specific WGLO.

6. “Big and little” refers to the big brother and little brother/big sister and little sister relationships that WGLOs form annually. These relationships endure past the period of pledging and are often evidenced in terms of affection in which members refer to one another as “my big” or “my little.”

Many respondents told me they felt uncomfortable with associating themselves with anything explicitly “racial” for fear they would be charged with “self-segregation.” One Latino male WGLO member stated:

last semester I got in a fight with one of the brothers . . . I couldn’t stand to be in the same room with him for a while after that . . . My family is from Puerto Rico, I identify as Boricuan . . . it’s not like I go around making it an issue, it’s just who I am . . . one night one of the brothers gets drunk and goes into my room . . . I had a Puerto Rican flag hanging in my room and he came in and ripped it down, saying it was “un-American” . . . we got in a fight about it. I want to hang it back up, but I just don’t want any trouble in the [fraternity] house . . . It’s just not worth the trouble.

A black male respondent told me:

When I’m with my fraternity brothers, and say, we go out to the bar, and I see some of my other black friends, so I go say hi, and after a few minutes, I feel them [his white fraternity brothers] looking at me. It’s like I have a racial time limit . . . There’s only so much “black time” I can have . . . One day, one of my [white] frat brothers says to me, “Hey, I know you were ‘brothers’ with them [black people] first, but now you’re brothers with us.” I didn’t know what to say . . . Some of my black friends came over to the frat house, we were drinking, hanging out, whatever. One of my white frat brothers comes into the room and says, all excited in his attempt at black vernacular: “Whoa! It’s like Soul Train up in here.” I was so embarrassed . . . They [my black friends] all just looked at me, like they were mad at me. I knew they were thinking: “What is he doing here with these white-ass racists?”

The above examples indicate a shared sense of living under racial-fraternal surveillance. Many respondents indicated that they internalized such a dynamic. For example, one sorority had two active Asian members and they both reported that they had to shun the other Asian member. One of the Asian respondents stated:

No, I don’t know the other Asian girl very well. I mean, should I have to? Just because we are Asian doesn’t mean we have a special bond. I’m a member like anyone else here in the sorority and I don’t have any problems. I am all for equal opportunity, that’s why I don’t think there should be any special racial cliques or provisions. It’s better here and now in the sorority than in a lot of other places. I mean there is racism, but I have plenty of opportunities. I don’t need to rely on other Asian members. Besides I really don’t want to be perceived as segregating myself from the white girls. That’s happened before, and that’s no fun, then I’m made to feel like the racist; it’s completely unfair. I know she [the other Asian member] was told not to hang out with me as much because it “looked bad” for the sorority . . . I kind of understand what they mean. We don’t want to seem like we are racially divided, especially to potential members.

Her defensiveness and contradictory statements regarding whether she was close with her Asian sorority sister is indicative of “color-blind” logic. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) demonstrates how such reasoning employs supposedly race neutral and seemingly egalitarian rationales (such as refraining from “racial cliques or provisions”), but which sustain white normativity, dominance, and segregation all the while legitimating nonwhite subordination. In implementing a color-blind cultural logic, WGLO members of color find themselves accountable to a racial double standard. White cliques and provisions (such as the WGLO system itself) are both idealized and normalized, so that deviations from this standard (such as two Asian members maintaining close bonds within the context of the sorority) are framed as self-segregating and divisive.

To further contextualize this point, I found that when nonwhite WGLO members attempted to confront this Janus-faced logic, they were accused of “playing the race card.” Respondents indicated that they felt indicted by white fraternity and sorority members for attributing racial and prejudiced dynamics to what whites perceived as raceless actions and intentions. For example, a Latina WGLO member described several instances of being labeled “unsisterly” and “focused on race” when she spoke about racial stereotypes. She stated:

I get nervous when the girls want me to go out, because they love to go to Mexican restaurants . . . if there’s anything going on even related to Latin culture, all of a sudden I am supposed to be the “translator” . . . it gets so tiring . . . and if I bring up any stereotypes then they say I am “taking things

too seriously," that I'm being "unsisterly," or that I'm "too focused on race." If I don't go along with it, then I'm the outsider. I'm already obviously different than all the white girls. [*Interviewer*: "What is your strategy for dealing with this dynamic?"] I guess I just put up with it. I'm tired of being accused of playing the race card and I hate being a spokesperson for everything Latin. The white sisters get tired of hearing me talk about race, one girl said that she feels "fatigued" when I talk about race. "Fatigued?" Really? She feels fatigued? Try my life.

Accusations of exaggeration or unfounded claims associated with "playing the race card" were common. Such instances demonstrate that nonwhite success in the WGLO system is intertwined with nonconfrontation of white supremacy and normativity. In fact, nonwhite members demonstrated a relative consent to the tacit reproduction of racist logic in order to become accepted in their organization and remain privy to its material resources.

On the other side of this coin, many nonwhite members reported several instances in which other WGLO members suddenly made their racial identities explicit. In particular, nonwhites' conformity to demeaning—and many times dangerous—racial stereotypes were intertwined with their agency to portray themselves as equal and belonging fraternity and sorority members. For example, many of the Latino and black respondents indicated that their racial identities were often highlighted in reference to key moments of semisecretive, yet incredibly common, activities such as under-age and excessive drinking and hazing. Many respondents were highly emotional when speaking to me of these stories, and the promise of anonymity, their perception of me as an "expert on race," and their expectations that I would sympathize with their stories transformed interviews into sessions punctuated by tears, laughter, and anger. For example, one young Latino man cried openly as he recounted his interactions with fellow fraternity members when they would sit in the fraternity house and drink:

Not just the white guys, but lots of folks, didn't matter, black, a Korean guy . . . I don't know what to do when it happens . . . it's not like it happens every time, but it happens enough. They always try to make me drink the craziest stuff. Someone got some grain alcohol, and they always want me to drink that stuff until I'm really sick. I mean, I like to drink, especially with my fraternity brothers, but I don't want to get crazy . . . So they say "He's got that Latin blood! . . . yeah, your blood will just burn that [expletive] liquor right out of your system." . . . I feel like, when we drink, like I'm a mascot. They say I've got a "Mexicano stomach" . . . I told you before my folks are from Puerto Rico . . . they stand around and cheer, making that dumb [expletive] stereotype "yayayaya" call like they do on TV . . . So, it's not racial, it's not just the white guys, it's everyone. They are just assholes sometimes. That's just life.

Black and darker-skinned Latino and Asian respondents reported similar expectations along the lines of dangerous behavior deemed "open secrets." Many said that their fellow members indicated that they somehow naturally knew how to handle stiff drinks and engage in physically demanding hazing rituals. Female respondents reported this trend less than their male counterparts, but the trend did not disappear among the nonwhite sorority women. One Asian woman stated:

When I was pledging, there was lots of stuff I had to do . . . I'm not going to get into all of it, I really can't tell you, but some of it was . . . physical . . . It got a little rough sometimes . . . Some of the girls used paddles . . . They had a paddle for me when I joined, it was a joke, but they wrote "Yellow Power" on it. They said I could put up with more stuff than the other [white] girls . . . I think they expect me to really dish it out to girls trying to join now, like I'm supposed to just know how to pledge girls harder.

Also, one black male respondent told me:

Black Greeks, they already have a reputation for being, well "harder" if you will, like what they have to go through, especially if you're a guy, go through so much of a rougher and harder process to become a member. I'd be lying if I didn't say that was something that made me rethink joining [a black fraternity] . . . still, they [his fraternity brothers] seem to approach me, I mean, it's nothing overt like "Hey, you're black, so you know how to pledge these new recruits," but it's like, I don't know—they always want me to do the roughest stuff to the new guys, like I'm supposed to be the bad guy . . . maybe it's just coincidence . . . I think it's just a personality thing.

Yet, the data from three different schools and eight different WGLOs indicate that such a framing was neither coincidental nor personality based. Seemingly natural connections between “rougher and harder” drinking and pledging/hazing practices were reported by 52 percent of the respondents ($n = 16$ of 31). Of those 16 respondents that reported such a connection, the majority were black ($n = 11$), indicating a robust retention of connotations of violence and hyperphysicality with blackness.

The data suggests that nonwhite participation in WGLOs is simultaneously constrained and enabled via dominant expectations of racial performativity that walks the razor’s edge between two forms of racial-ethnic difference. On the one hand, nonwhite members must perform a kind of temperate and safe *ethnic* difference that helps to contribute to the “multicultural capital” (Bryson 1996) and diversity of the WGLO. While on the other hand, nonwhite members are compelled to enact a form of potent yet bridled *racial* difference whereby they “naturally” belong within the domains of dirty and dangerous activities (e.g., hazing and drinking) designed to strengthen the everyday bonds of WGLO life—a supposedly color-blind and egalitarian kinship order.

Such dynamics drive home the dual character of social structures. The dialectic interplay of schemas and resources show that it is possible for a marginalized social actor, such as a person of color in the context of WGLOs, to gain entry and mobility within that structure without posing a substantive challenge to the negative meanings of inferiority associated with her or his identity. Moreover, the dual character of WGLOs is reproduced over time, solidified with each new pledge class, further mystified by seemingly progressive cases of token racial integration, and normalized via attitudes, stereotypes, folklore, assumptions, resentments, and racial schemas that accrue with the dominant “post-civil rights” worldview of equal opportunities.

Discussion

My analysis demonstrates a counterintuitive dynamic. An authentic and full acceptance of nonwhite WGLO members is not contingent on racial assimilation only, but rather on a precise performance of racialized schemas that function in the interests of WGLOs. These performances include carrying out dangerous and illegal activities that strengthen the bonds of Greek kinship (such as heavy drinking and violent hazing), or performing a safe and anemic form of ethnicity that brings white members in contact with a palatable form of cultural difference. This noted paradox invites several considerations.

First, recognition of the paradox of participation gestures toward the continued tension between the sociology of race and ethnicity and the “culture of poverty” thesis. Culture of poverty arguments hinge on the conflation of nonwhite culture with abstract values that specify “the *ends* toward which behavior is directed (as opposed to the means to achieve them, or the lens through which to interpret action)” (Small et al. 2010:14, emphasis in original). The central claim of this framework—that “values” can predict the behavior of the nonwhite underclass—has found little empirical support (cf Anderson 1999; Duneier 1999; Smith 2007). Yet, the paradigm is still applied implicitly by those that frame nonwhite actors as little more than either “cultural dupes” (Hall 1981) or victims of “false consciousness” (Marx 1971).

Moreover, access to resources coupled with the resilience of racist systems of meaning that accompany such access, suggest to some a relationship governed by conscious bartering. Exchange theories, underpinned as they are by rational-actor foundations, tempt one to explain racial boundary crossing and resource distribution by way of significant trade-offs. While social exchanges certainly occur in everyday life, such an explanation is reductionist. Any particular description for why racialized actors demand entry into, stay within, or leave any given context, must account for the established culture (both in terms of schemas and resources) that simultaneously constrain and enable one’s sense of social, political, and even existential belonging (Skrentny 2008). Parsing such factors from one another—so that some aspects of life become objective positives and negatives that may be traded—remains only an analytic distinction that

takes us farther from, rather than closer to, empirical reality. Culture is irreducible to either abstract values or utilitarian bargains. As an alterative (withstanding the cultural turn in sociology and the deconstruction of “post-racial” discourse amongst some sociologists) the findings herein encourage increased focus on interpretive processes in relation to material opportunities (Sewell 1992; Small et al. 2010). In disregarding a robust understanding of culture for a focus on empirically observable material resources, mainstream sociological literature tends to assume, rather than explain, *why*, *how*, and *which* particular rules, structures, and resources become sources of social mobility, assimilation, and/or acceptance over others.

The second insight afforded by my investigation of the paradox of participation is the continued prevalence of micro-level stratification and inequality in a supposedly “post-racial” era. Some may feel that the WGLO system is an unfortunate holdover from a bygone time of the pre-civil rights era. Such a view certainly finds resonance through WGLOs’ segregated structure and widespread employment of racial stereotypes and apparent tokenism. Given this interpretation, WGLOs remain a favorite whipping boy; the Greek system is often anointed as an unfortunate exception to the rule of a now color-blind and relatively equitable society. Such discourse highlights WGLOs as unique among professional associations. However, amidst an array of modern institutions and organizations, it is common to find socially marginalized actors effectively limited in their belonging and mobility. Assessing how nonwhite actors negotiate this sensitive subject of race pursuant to institutional integration remains a crucial analysis. This issue has parallels in other institutional contexts and amidst other historically marginalized actors.

For example, Sharon Collins (1989, 1993) found that black executives amidst the nations top corporations navigate a precarious position. Occupying positions created by civil rights pressure, black managers’ positions are interlaced with political motivations and race-conscious stereotypes that contribute to both intra-organizational segregation and fragility of those jobs when companies experience hard times. Jennifer Silva’s (2008) study of ROTC women found that their agency is limited by the expectation that they perform traditional gender roles. In order to maintain a coherent sense of self, ROTC women privilege traditionally feminine aspects of themselves because their identities as women are called into question in the military sphere. In so doing, they help to reproduce expectations of traditional femininity and patriarchy as both normal and moral. Returning to the Greek-letter system, Yeung and Stompler (2000) analyzed how a national gay fraternity created a paradoxical expectation: members had to perform a kind of hyperheterosexual fraternity identity while also performing an oppositional gay identity, ultimately facing some level of rejection from both worlds. In sum, those identities marked different from the normalized center of white, straight, middle class masculinity were heightened as they achieved access to, and upward mobility within, these various contexts. An important implication emerging from this data is that WGLOs, as both magnets for, and creators of, the U.S. upper class and its attendant social privileges, set in motion long-term socioeconomic trajectories for their members. When nonwhites are denied entrance or systematically marginalized from within, the effects of these seemingly subtle actions during college are vast when considering future repercussions.

A third consideration raised by my work is the continued acceptance, by actors of diverse racial identities, of the racial order as “common sense.” Ninety-four percent of the nonwhites in my sample ($n = 29$ of 31) defined their choice to join a WGLO via an explicit logic of racial hierarchy and inequality. They were quick to point out that systemic racial differences led to an unequal and segregated Greek system. In so doing, many understood WGLOs as a fundamentally better choice than a nonwhite fraternal organization.⁷ In comparison to nonwhite organizations, they interpreted WGLOs as better networked and more efficient, prestigious, and capable of providing an enhanced college and post-graduate experience. Yet, when they

7. Contra the belief that WGLOs are essentially better organizations for African Americans, a great deal of scholarship indicates that BGLO membership holds a significant positive effect on graduation rates and post-graduate opportunities (Hughey and Parks forthcoming; Kimbrough 2003; Kimbrough and Hutcheson 1998; Parks 2008). Also, Severtis and Christie-Mizell (2007) utilized a nationally representative sample of 3,712 Americans to find that Greek-letter membership increases the probability of college graduation more for African Americans than for European Americans.

faced the brunt of racial schemas (e.g., placed in positions in which doing community service, engaging in heavy drinking, or serving as token faces of diversity were all framed as “natural”), they were unwilling to frame these experiences as a consequence of this same racial system. Rather, they read these experiences as the result of either their own personal characteristics or that of the unfortunate personality quirks of others. Many tacitly accepted the notion that the United States has reached a kind of “post-racial” era. One nonwhite respondent stated, “not all of the racial problems, but most, by and large, have been resolved.”

In this sense, the racialized patterns and schemas remain hidden from view even as they reside in plain sight. The dominant practices of being a WGLO member are aligned with a white ideal that I call “hegemonic whiteness” (Hughey 2010). Because the meanings of a *belonging and authentic* membership are implicitly racialized as white, when nonwhites pursue that ideal they become marked either as inauthentic and out-of-place, or as possessing a “natural” inclination toward subordinate positions and performances of racial stereotypes. Nonwhite members find themselves in a paradox of participation—their ability to appear as equal and belonging members is intimately crocheted with the patterned reproduction of their racial identities as naturally different and inferior. Because these nonwhite members operate within racialized “nets of accountability” (Schwalbe et al. 2000) many of them appeared to tacitly accept these expectations in order to produce a consistent and unified sense of self.

Conclusion

Many scholars and popular commentators assume that racial boundary crossing—such as nonwhite membership in traditionally hostile and historically discriminatory organizations such as the white Greek-letter system—signifies a burgeoning racial egalitarianism. For example, Dinesh D’Souza (1995) asserts, “the country is entering a new era in which old racial categories are rapidly becoming obsolete, mostly because of intermarriage,” (p. 552), and Orlando Patterson (2000) argues “by the middle of the twenty-first century, America will have problems aplenty. But no racial problems whatsoever . . . the social virus of race will have gone the way of smallpox.” In contrast, by relying on the data presented, I demonstrate that when evaluating instances of racial “integration,” we must not only examine one’s access to resources or what one exchanges for that access. Rather, we must examine how robust white supremacist schema constrain and enable the interpretation of that access and those resources.

These findings generate directions for future inquiry. To supplement this work, interview and ethnographic research would do well to examine how white WGLO members interpret nonwhite membership. Also, to compare these findings, research should engage nonblack membership in BGLOs, as well as white membership in the growing multicultural Greek-letter movement. In addition to the aforementioned work of Collins (1989, 1993), Silva (2008), and Yeung and Stompler (2000), exploring how other “paradoxes of participation” structure marginalized actors, seems relevant. This is an imperative considering our current racial backlash that is coupled with a rising neoliberal economy. Given these currents, the ability of nonwhites to gain entrée to, and acceptance within, white-dominated institutions may continue to erode. Here, one must be careful not to assume a universal nonwhite desire for integration—future work should interrogate not only those that favor pursuit of WGLOs and other white-dominated institutions, but examine those who either abandon the quest or seek alternative resources (e.g., BGLOs, HBCUs, minority-owned businesses, nonwhite civic institutions, etc.). Lastly, I invite sociologists of race and ethnicity to increasingly study the linkage between schemas and resources. If race is a social construction—categories structured by unequal resources and “meaning in the service of power” (Bonilla-Silva 2003:25)—then we must continually interrogate the meanings of racial projects and inequalities in the midst of actions labeled progressive, transformational, and even “antiracist.”

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