Doing Multiculturalism: An Interactionist Analysis of the Practices of a Multicultural Sorority

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Abstract
Despite the many references to multiculturalism in academic works and media accounts, we know little about what it is like in practice. Drawing on data from interviews, ethnographic observations, and archival materials from a multicultural sorority chapter, this article highlights three main ways its members do multiculturalism: (1) recognizing and valuing differences, (2) teaching and learning about differences, and (3) bridging differences via personal friendships and organizational alliances. Broad racial ideologies and the culture of the university and the Greek system, however, created the conditions under which sorority members do multiculturalism, including their focus on some differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, and sexual identity) and neglect of others (i.e., class and gender). While the multicultural sorority sought to lessen racial divisions on campus and their approach opposed colorblind ideology, they presented little challenge to the hegemony of the campus Greek system. This study has implications for understanding Greek Letter Organizations, multiculturalism as a collective practice, and how countering colorblind ideology can reproduce other inequality-legitimating ideologies.

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Scholars studying multiculturalism as an ideology and movement (e.g., Andersen 2001; Brown 1997; Fine, Weis, and Powell 1997) and in settings such as workplaces, schools, and friendships (e.g., Herring 2009; Page 2007; Van Houtte and Stevens 2009) tend to conceive of it as static: a person, organization, or movement either is or is not multicultural. Consequently, we know little about the process of how multiculturalism “works.” Instead, as Bell and Hartmann (2007) note, efforts at diversity often constitute “happy talk” that fails to acknowledge group inequalities or social change possibilities. Taking an interactionist approach, this study shows how members of a multicultural sorority collectively constructed multiculturalism and how racial ideology and campus culture enabled and constrained its construction.

I use interviews, archival documents, and ethnographic observations to analyze how members of a self-described “multicultural sorority” enacted multiculturalism on a predominantly white campus. Sorority members practiced multiculturalism in three main ways: (1) recognizing and valuing difference, (2) teaching and learning through formal programs and informal interactions, and (3) linking diverse individuals and organizations through friendships and organizational alliances. Using a “nice” strategy (Jasper 2006) to further their goal of creating a more inclusive campus environment and Greek system, however, presented little challenge to the hegemony of the campus Greek system and preserved their own status as Greeks. Regardless of sorority members’ intentions, their multicultural practices affirmed the importance of some differences—such as race, religion, sexual orientation, and lifestyle—while neglecting others—namely class and gender—thereby buttressing the Greek system, which reproduces class and gender inequalities. Thus while members’ multicultural practices constituted more than mere “happy talk,” their work was limited and did not measure up to the most stringent ideals of radical social change. I conclude by discussing implications for understanding Greek Letter Organizations (GLOs), multiculturalism as a collective practice, and how countering some inequality-legitimating ideologies can simultaneously reproduce others.

An Interactionist Approach to Multiculturalism

Researchers have examined multiculturalism in two primary ways, neither of which focuses on multiculturalism as a practice. First, they have studied the
effects of being in diverse schools (e.g., Van Houtte and Stevens 2009), workplaces (e.g., Herring 2009), churches (e.g., Ammerman 2007), friendships (e.g., Fischer 2008), communities (e.g., DeFina and Hannon 2009), and societies (e.g., Kurien 2006). Second, researchers have examined multiculturalism as a movement within organizations, including schools, to be more inclusive in appreciating and teaching about the experiences of diverse groups (e.g., Andersen 2001; Brown 1997; Fine, Weis, and Powell 1997), with some explorations into the construction of a multicultural ideology by lay people (Bell and Hartmann 2007), university faculty (Bryson 2005), and theorists (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005). While these studies include evidence that multiculturalism is enacted—for example, highlighting teachers or administrators who altered the curriculum to reflect the views of multiple groups—its enactment has not been the focus of theoretical or empirical work.

My research draws on two particular strands of findings from this research. While most people extol the virtues of diversity in the abstract, such discussions avoid notions of racism, power, and privilege (Ahmed 2009; Bell and Hartmann 2007), and as O’Brien (2001, 41) puts it: “singing songs and eating food from different cultures [does] nothing to enlighten students about oppression, both past and present.” This tendency—referred to as “happy talk” by Bell and Hartmann (2007)—may be particularly relevant for members of “nice” (as opposed to “naughty”) social change organizations, such as a social severity, since “being nice” contradicts confrontational tactics and makes no “credible threats” to the status quo (Jasper 2006, 106). Furthermore, critics who claim that multiculturalism avoids racial inequality and social change tend to themselves overlook other forms of inequality, particularly those based on class and gender (e.g., Bell and Hartmann 2007).

The second strand of research my study draws on involves people with exceptional abilities to connect diverse individuals, such as a high school student who constructed a friendship group united by the members’ diverse backgrounds (Hemmings 2000) or the adult “multicultural navigators” who successfully “broker communications between school officials and low-income minority families” (Carter 2005, 152). This interesting and important literature overlooks organizational structures, however, and I seek to examine connections between organizations as well as between individuals.

Multiculturalism stands in contrast to the United States’ dominant racial ideology, which holds that because race no longer matters, seeing race is inherently wrong and we should disregard it. Critical race scholars show how this dominant colorblind ideology ignores privilege and inequalities, such as institutional and individual racism, and thus legitimizes and perpetuates them (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2006; Frankenberg 1993). Colorblindness can occur at the macro level when people ignore institutional racism, attributing it to personal
prejudice, and at the micro level when people deny the meaning of race (including whiteness) for individuals’ experiences (O’Brien 2001). The cultural dominance of colorblind ideology can contribute to the adjustment difficulties students of color face on predominantly white campuses. For example, white students may object to policies, such as Affirmative Action, to bring about campus diversity, thus implying that “minority students were unwelcome if they did not already have educational advantages equivalent to those of White students” (Morley 2007, 262). While overt racism occurs, racism also happens in more subtle ways.

At the same time that they hold colorblind or other racist beliefs, people, including those on college campuses, tend to form homophilous relationships—for example, associating with same-race others (e.g., McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). An investigation of first-year students’ friendships at an elite, predominantly-white university finds high proportions of homophilous friendships, particularly for white students, and concludes that “inter racial friendships will be formed only rarely without [educators’] interventions” (Stearns, Buchmann, and Bonneau 2009, 192). In contrast, at a “multicultural university,” minority students formed a variety of friendship configurations, from homophilous friendships to ethnically mixed ones (Grasmuck and Kim 2010). While they only examined friendship diversification, Grasmuck and Kim’s research points to the importance of studying students’ social change efforts. Overall, however, whether studying friendships or ideology, research treats multiculturalism as a descriptor rather than a practice.

An interactionist perspective guides this research. Interactionists focus on the interactional construction of shared meanings and understandings (Blumer 1969; Mead 1934). Terms such as multiculturalism do not have a static meaning to interactionists; people construct meaning through interaction. Scholars have taken interactionist approaches to studying inequality, showing that race, class, and gender are not only traits of individuals but are created and upheld interactionally. West and Fenstermaker (1995) highlighted how people accomplish “difference” in interactions with others and hold each other accountable for enactments of race, class, and gender. Others have criticized the “doing difference” approach for its inattention to structural forces (e.g., Collins 1995; Winant 1995). I extend the doing difference approach by attending to how students accomplish multiculturalism and how its accomplishment is tied to racial ideologies and the material conditions and culture under which they act.

**Exclusion and Inequalities in GLOs**

GLOs include women’s sororities and men’s fraternities, and on most campuses their members are “insiders,” at the center of college social life (Horowitz 1987).
Because GLOs arose from students' desires to bond with similar others (Torbenson 2005), students founded organizations based on race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and sexual identity. Race and ethnicity, however, have a particularly problematic history in GLOs (Kimbrough 2003; Lee 1955; Park 2008; Torbenson 2005), with some scholars documenting a "racist past" (Heidenreich 2006). The existence until the end of the 1960s of policies excluding non-white, non-Christian students from white GLO membership played a role in black, Latina/Latino, and Jewish students' formation of their own identity-based GLOs (Kimbrough 2003; Lee 1955; Torbenson 2005), and more recently, students formed Asian, Native American, multicultural, and gay GLOs.

Scholarly explorations of GLOs—including several published in this journal—have implicated GLOs in reproducing racial/ethnic, sexual identity, class, and gender inequalities through their practices and organizational structures (e.g., Berkowitz and Padavic 1999; Hughey 2008; Stomble and Martin 1994). Gay students strove for greater acceptance by forming a gay fraternity and modifying their public behavior, yet other GLOs still did not accept them (Yeung and Stomble 2000). GLOs also have a classist past (e.g., Hughey 2007); however, social class currently may matter more for determining which organization white students join than whether they join at all (Stuber 2006). Gender traditionalism also exists in sororities, including white sororities that focus on dating and heterosexual relationship milestones (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999), Asian American GLOs that "tolerate, if not actively promote, sexism" (Chen 2009, 100), and multicultural GLOs where "the balance of gender conceptions for sorority members weighted towards the traditional" (Wells and Dolan 2009, 175). And fraternities' institutional arrangements reproduce male privilege by creating a context where sexually objectifying women and treating them in coercive ways are normative (e.g., Stomble and Martin 1994), although fraternity men's perceptions of accountability influence the extent of their sexist practices (Boswell and Spade 1996; Ray and Rosow 2010).

While GLOs' primary goal is social—that is, they provide a peer group and "friendly" setting for undergraduates—they also engage in educational and community service activities (e.g., Berkowitz and Padavic 1999; Kelly 2009). For example, some minority GLOs teach members about the history of their racial or cultural group through formal programs, such as the "gay history" taught in a gay fraternity (Yeung and Stomble 2000) and the Hispanic culture and Spanish taught by Latina/Latino GLOs (Muñoz and Guardia 2009). These events, however, focus on the history of one group and only same-group members attend them.

Extensive literature searches turned up only one study of Multicultural GLOs (MGLOs; Wells and Dolan 2009).
Using websites and journalistic accounts, this study found that the 34 MGLOs resemble traditional GLOs in their adoption of colors, mottos, symbols, rituals, mascots, national philanthropies, hazing, partying, and tail-gating, and differ from them by constructing mission statements promoting multiculturalism, focusing on education, and promoting social change. Particular chapters engage in social change through efforts at “prejudice reduction,” including events reported in campus papers intended to reduce Greek homophobia and advance nonviolence (Wells and Dolan 2009, 168). Using multiple data sources, I investigate one chapter’s efforts at social change as part of how it enacts multiculturalism.

**Setting and Methods**

My data derive from a case study of a multicultural sorority chapter on a predominantly white university—which I refer to as “Midwest University” or “MU”—in a small Midwestern city. Approximately 85 percent of the 30,000 MU undergraduates were white, 4 percent black, 2 percent Latina/Latino, and 7 percent “other,” mostly Asian and International students. Midwest University had fifty-five GLOs, and about one in six students were GLO members, most in the forty predominantly white GLOs. As on other campuses, few MU students joined a GLO of a racial background different from their own (Hughey 2007). In my broader study of students in GLOs and other campus organizations (McCabe 2009), the multicultural sorority emerged as an anomaly in its efforts to unite different racial groups; therefore, I explored this organization in more depth using the extended case method design (Burawoy et al. 1991). I obtained IRB permission from MU and my university for this research.

I studied a local chapter (MCS) of a national MGLO founded in the mid-1990s with approximately thirty chapters nationwide. Seven women students—five black and two biracial—established the chapter in the mid-2000s. During 2004-2005, MCS had between six and nine active members. Since 2005, nineteen others joined the chapter: eight white, five black, three Asian, one Latina, and two biracial. Like “minority” GLOs, such as black, Latina/Latino, and Asian sororities and fraternities, the chapter was small and had no house on campus (e.g., Ray and Rosow 2010).

The group resembled minority GLOs in several other ways as well. Members highly valued community service, similar to black sororities (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999) and other MGLOs (Wells and Dolan 2009). Like some minority GLOs, which educate their members about the history of their racial/cultural group (e.g., Kelly 2009; Muñoz and Guardia 2009; Yeung and
Stombler 2000), MCS engaged in educational activities. Like black sororities (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999), MCS’s graduate chapters facilitated lifelong sisterhood.

Campus administrators did not initially support the chapter’s formation and encouraged the women to instead join an existing group. Nevertheless, MCS women were persistent, researching the process to establish a GLO at MU and visiting MGLOs on other campuses to find one that fit their desires for a “diverse sisterhood,” founded on multicultural ideals. The sorority they chose to affiliate with had colors, a motto, rituals, and a national philanthropy already established, traditions it shared with other multicultural and traditional GLOs (Wells and Dolan 2009). After witnessing MCS in action, the campus administration changed its stance and even welcomed MCS’s presence on campus, showering it with praise and awards.

Like other GLOs, the process of joining was intense, as initiates had to know information about the national organization, the MU chapter, and its members, and to explain their personal commitment to MCS’s multicultural goals. At recruitment events, members stressed the lack of physical or psychological hazing (like the gay fraternity studied by Yeung and Stombler [2000]). All mentioned their strong “sisterly” bonds, most of which remained after graduation; five years later, members discussed staying in touch online, on the telephone, and in person, including attending members’ weddings, national MCS conventions, MU events, and graduate chapter.

By forming a multicultural social sorority, MCS demanded recognition from the high-status GLO establishment, similar to the gay fraternity studied by Yeung and Stombler (2000). Deciding to become a GLO resonates with the “nice” form of social movement organizing mentioned above (Jasper 2006), and it shaped the three ways members did multiculturalism and the particular differences their multicultural practices focused on.

I gained access to MCS by contacting the chapter president, who invited me to the next chapter meeting to discuss my research plans. The women seemed to welcome me into their lives, perhaps because I appeared relatively young and interested in discussing cultural differences. For example, at that first chapter meeting, they invited me to help them lead a campuswide discussion about race. As a validity check, I shared earlier versions of this manuscript with two members.

Data include individual and focus-group interviews, ethnographic observations of the sorority’s activities during an eleven-month period (September 2004 to July 2005), and archival documents. I observed eighteen group events during the first year after the group established itself at MU, including campuswide programs, recruitment efforts, community service activities, social
events, and “study tables.” I wrote field notes based on observations and informal conversations with participants, including nonmembers.

I conducted formal individual interviews with four MCS members and a focus group including two additional members in 2004-2005, the first year after they established the chapter, and I interviewed all six women again in 2009, three to five years after they graduated. All interviews followed a semi-structured format discussing campus social and academic life, including their friendships and involvement in campus organizations. The 2004-2005 in-person interviews lasted more than two hours and the 2009 telephone interviews averaged slightly more than one hour. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Archival documents included newspaper articles, websites, and flyers from and about the national organization and the MU chapter and gave me insight into the organization’s philosophy and activities. During observations and interviews, I talked with the women about the words and images in these materials and used them to validate the insights from my observations and interviews, particularly the 2009 interviews when I had been out of the field for several years. Throughout this paper, I used pseudonyms instead of proper names and disguised identifying information to protect respondents’ confidentiality.

I used the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967) to analyze the interview transcripts, field notes, friendship networks, and archival documents. I used Atlas.ti to identify all discussions about MCS and looked for patterns. At first, I compared this multicultural group to the homogenous race-based groups—including a Latino fraternity and the Black Student Alliance—that I studied. However, as I reviewed literature on multiculturalism, this seemed to merely provide another comparison of diverse and homogenous entities to a literature filled with such examples. As I returned to the data, the interactional processes in the group and with nonmembers stood out. These data provided insights not found in research on multiculturalism, which led me to the interactionist framework and to conceptualizing multiculturalism as a collective practice. Focusing on MCS’s practices led me to also examine members’ friendship networks and compare them to other students’ networks. Based on all these analyses, I identified three primary ways MCS members enacted multiculturalism: (1) recognizing and valuing differences; (2) learning and teaching about differences; and (3) bridging individuals and organizations across racial/cultural lines.

**Doing Multiculturalism**

In the years leading to the founding of the multicultural sorority, MU launched diversity campaigns and recruited in geographic areas populated by students
of color, yet the non-white student body was not large and racial and ethnic groups on campus tended to "stay to themselves," as one non-MCS respondent put it. While I sat with another non-MCS respondent in the library, she gestured to the students nearby and said, "As you can see, African Americans hang out with African Americans. Whites hang out with whites. And then, you got your people in the middle who aren't either [black or white], [like] me." In my observations, I noted that racial/ethnic groups typically ate, walked, sat, joined clubs, and formed friendships with other same-group members.

The students above who commented on these separations, however, were exceptions. In line with the dominant colorblind ideology in the United States, most non-MCS students claimed to not notice these racial/ethnic separations. Students, particularly white students, seemed uncomfortable when I asked them to talk about race, whether it involved discussing such separations or naming the racial background of their friends. Often when I asked about the race of a non-white friend, white students would respond with comments like "She's, oh gee, I don't know," or "Uh [pause] not white. I really don't know." Students also tried to steer the discussion away from race into what they saw as safer forms of difference. Typical of others, a white man explained that the racial homogeneity in his friendship network is "just how it turned out. What is not asked on here that I think would make this look a lot more diverse would be religion...there's a lot of different diversity if you break down religion instead of race." During a focus group with ten white sorority members, participants collaboratively discussed diversity at MU and in their sorority for several minutes without mentioning race or ethnicity. Instead, they talked about "so much diversity" in terms of "a lot of cultures and nationalities," "different religions," "people from other states," and "people's backgrounds, just how they're brought up." These comments echo those of most non-MCS respondents who did not discuss race until I brought it up, and when I did, many became uncomfortable. In contrast, MCS students not only refused to ignore racial differences, they commented on them, educated about them, and interactively and organizationally bridged them.

Recognizing and Valuing Differences

Members of the multicultural sorority constantly noted racial differences at public events and in private conversations. When I asked Angela, a black member, why she worked to found the sorority, she said it was "awesome" that "I can have black sisters, I can have white sisters, I could have Jewish [sisters]—I can have every kind of sister I want to have." Other members' talk also enacted multiculturalism through recognizing and valuing difference. In a follow-up interview, Nadiya, another black member, told me, "We really,
really strive to be on the surface multicultural for people to see our diversity as soon as they walk up—"Wow! She’s Asian, she’s white, she’s this, she’s that"—and know that they have a place there." They also noted variations within racial groups, including among their black members with regard to where they grew up (e.g., urban/rural/suburban, Southern/Northern), hairstyles, skin tones, weight, body size, and experiences with racial discrimination. Interviewees were thus careful not to paint members who share racial backgrounds with one racialized brush.

While non-MCS respondents frequently told me that race did not matter to their experiences, their friendships, and the groups they joined, MCS members rarely made such comments. In fact, colorblind ideology only appeared during an individual interview with a black member who said: "I never really paid attention to race" and "My race has nothing to do with how I live my life." Nevertheless, she discussed MCS as important for raising awareness of racial separations on campus, countering stereotypes of blacks including that they "have lots of kids," and that she chose her current workplace because "I love the interracial or the different cultures that they have." I mention this exception to show how consistently MCS members countered the dominant ideology of colorblindness at both the institutional and individual levels.

Members discussed certain nonracial differences at length. They noted differences in members’ gender presentation, sexual identity, religion, and other cultural and lifestyle variations. Nadiya explained: "There’s so much more to culture than just race... You need different religions, you need different experiences growing up." At one recruitment event, Danae, a biracial member, discussed the value MCS members placed on gender-presentation differences:

Danae told how she never planned to join a sorority and how she had never clicked well with women and girls. She changed her mind when two MU students approached her at a summer camp where they were all volunteering. They wanted to know more about her and were not scared of her short hair and hairy legs. She was surprised they did not write her off, like most women her age, and decided she wanted to get to know them better. When they told her about the possible formation of a multicultural sorority on campus and that they were involved, Danae felt it was an opportunity she should not pass up.

Members did gender in a variety of ways—some wore makeup, carefully-crafted outfits, elaborate hairstyles, and high-heeled shoes while others wore jeans and t-shirts with no visible makeup and short, natural hair. Some spoke in soft voices and flowery prose, while others yelled and spoke bluntly (more
on this below). Others dressed and spoke using a combination of these "boyish" and "girlish" ways.

In the focus group, participants collaboratively noted other differences, which they referred to as "lifestyle" differences, among members:

Wendy: Just being multicultural, it's like you [Danae] being the hippie in our group and then Angela is, like, high maintenance and has to have her Ralph Lauren [designer] glasses. . . . It's just like this total range and people are like, you can't have that together. That's what people believe, that it is not possible to have—

Nadiya: And we come from different groups. They're like, "Why? Why are you, Nadiya, the athlete, hanging out with Wendy who's the poet?"

The group's multicultural practices included acknowledging multiple differences (e.g., black, white, Jewish, Southern, hippie, athlete). Multiculturalism is not just including multiple differences in the group, it is a process enacted through their recognition and appreciation.

Although the women occasionally recognized class differences, they were not as central to doing multiculturalism as other forms of difference discussed above because MCS members did not frequently embrace class differences in themselves (discussed below) or extend it to their other multicultural practices of education and bridging differences (discussed in the next sections). For example, in the focus group, Nadiya discussed class as a prejudice she overcame. Her first year in college, she described seeing "girls [who would say] 'Oh, my grandma sent me a hundred dollars today because I got an A last week.' . . . It just pissed me off. . . . That kind of caused a discrimination, but I've gotten over that now. . . . I just really did not like rich people." Danae noted that friendships across class are more difficult for her than across race because "I have a new car and I have a nice apartment. . . . It was never if I was going to college, it was where I was going to college . . . my black friends growing up in high school . . . went to Ivy League schools." Danae occasionally recognized her socioeconomic privilege and stressed the importance of "crossing this boundary," as she put it.

This practice also included personally acknowledging ways members differed from others by applying racial, cultural, and lifestyle labels to themselves. A white member, Abby, explained to me how she grew to embrace such a label after her sisters "called me the 'punk rock girl' and I never thought of myself that way. But everyone sort of thought of me that way." Punk rock was an
identity Abby claimed; others adopted identities as an athlete, poet, hippie, “girlish,” “boyish,” and “butch.” At events they organized, MCS members talked about themselves and the range of differences they embraced. For example, Danae often introduced herself as biracial, brown, an environmentalist, and a feminist; Abby introduced herself as white, Hungarian, and a martial artist. In contrast, the women never adopted class identities or discussed the lack of class variation in MCS. Multicultural sorority members were all middle class and, unlike many MU students of color,1 none had a “working class” or “poor” background, perhaps because of the substantial financial costs of joining MCS and paying yearly dues. In general, however, in private and public settings, the women practiced multiculturalism through personally embracing many—but not all—differences.

Practicing multiculturalism through embracing differences also involved acknowledging their impact on personal experiences. Rather than viewing her blackness as negative, Wendy recognized it as a valuable part of her identity:

[Being black] is such a core part of who I am. I have experience personally and family and friends of police brutality, of getting stares while walking into stores, what it means to be the only black female in chemistry class at MU… That's a part of who I am. So it's like when people say “I'm colorblind,” that can't be true for me because what I've gone through as a black female, right, that has to be acknowledged.

Like others, Wendy embraced even the negative experiences of police brutality and hostile stares as a “part of who I am.” Members’ recognition of racial/cultural differences and inequalities contrasts with a colorblind approach and plays a key role in how they did multiculturalism.

Surprisingly, this practice of valuing differences led to few group conflicts. Angela, who adopted an identity as “very girlish,” contrasted herself to her sorority sister Danae, whom Angela described as “very boyish” and “very earthy—eats a lot of granola bars, that's her own quote.” Angela described initially being taken aback by Danae’s appearance and lifestyle. Through acknowledging their differences and valuing their uniqueness, Angela felt that they “have definitely gotten really close.” Recognizing and appreciating, rather than ignoring or fearing, differences increased understanding and openness between them and reduced separations. Members’ practice of valuing differences—along with the group’s small size and the resistance it faced from nonmembers (discussed below)—seemed to quell potential group conflicts.
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In sum, while most non-MCS respondents bristled at my questions about differences, MCS members embraced them. Members enacted multiculturalism through recognizing and valuing racial/ethnic differences, differences within racial/ethnic categories, and others associated with culture, religion, sexual identity, and lifestyle, but not those associated with class and gender. The act of recognizing race countered colorblindness, but recognizing race along with other differences, such as lifestyle, facilitated members’ connections to students who internalized colorblind ideology.

**Learning and Teaching about Differences**

Multicultural sorority members also did multiculturalism by educating themselves and others about differences. Because educating depends on recognizing differences, this practice contrasted with the dominant ideology. If you are colorblind, then there is no need to educate yourself or others about differences. Multicultural sorority members lamented the lack of campus discussion about race or other differences. Danae explained, “I feel a lot of times that issues of race or of different cultures aren’t actually addressed. They’re brushed off. I understand we attempt to live in a more politically correct climate, but they’re not doing it in what I see as the best way, but more of like ‘Let’s not talk about it.’” Members discussed how other student organizations, including OLOs, fail to host events where “you just sit there and discuss with the person next to you” and how the student newspaper could educate people about cultural differences but instead covered stories only when a “conflict” arose, such as anti-Semitic graffiti or police’s racial profiling. Unlike these other campus organizations, MCS sought to create opportunities for enlightening discussions about racial/ethnic and cultural issues.

To teach and learn about others, MCS women believed you first must reflect inward and engage in “unlearning.” Wendy described this reflection: “You learn a lot about yourself and about your family... I was privileged in this or I wasn’t privileged in this.” All members described a similar process, often using the term unlearning, which involves combating earlier socialization that promoted group stereotypes (such as “gay people are bad” or “respect them but don’t hang out with them”) and returning to the source (often parents) to explain the problems with stereotyping.

Learning and teaching about racial/ethnic and cultural differences occurred in formal programs and through informal interactions. Abby explained the latter: “I like learning about where other people come from... So it’s great for me to be involved with all these girls who want to know where other people
are coming from. They like to hear about me and my family experiences and I like to hear about them and their family experiences." Abby contrasted the usual reaction she got to coming from a small town and having Hungarian ancestry, which "boggles most people's minds," with the actions of her sorority sisters:

They want to know Hungarian costume, Hungarian food, Hungarian anything. Plus it's cool for me because that's all I've really known is the Hungarian part and they [my sorority sisters] are so different and then I get to learn about other people's cultural experiences with their lives. I love it. It's a lot of fun for me.

Through informal interactions, MCS women practiced multiculturalism by sharing their cultures.

This practice included both learning and teaching, as illustrated by Abby's interest in teaching others about her background and learning about others' backgrounds. When students showed interest in joining the sorority, members encouraged them to deepen their understanding of their own culture(s) and share that knowledge, as Abby did. This encouragement extended even to me. They asked me questions about my ethnic background, which I knew little about. This prompted me to talk with my parents and grandparents and then share some of these stories with MCS. I saw potential members go through similar experiences. "Sharing the passion for diversity, for learning about other people," as Wendy put it, bonded MCS members as multicultural "sisters."

Members' commitment to cultural education extended beyond their membership. Being in a sorority allowed them to "reach more people," according to Nadiya. Although other GLOs theoretically could educate beyond their membership, past research does not document learning that extends beyond organizational boundaries. In contrast, MCS events focused on learning about the community—both the campus and wider community—and providing opportunities for the community to learn about MCS members. Members exchanged strategies to get people to open up about differences, strategies some learned from formal training in other settings. At a campuswide discussion about race, which they asked me to help moderate, I quickly realized they were quite skilled and did not need my assistance. Each sorority member introduced herself and told her story, and many nonmembers also told about their cultural backgrounds. One nonmember said she was black and often surprised people when she identified herself as from the suburbs. Members structured the discussion around anonymous questions from attendees and
around the words associated with “stereotypes” that they asked each attendee to share. A nonmember initiated a lively discussion about why some women of color used skin lighteners; many women contributed to this conversation about colorism, discussing why Asian, black, and Latina women spend time, money, and effort to lighten their complexions. Their events were cultural exchanges, where both learning and teaching occurred and extended to nonmembers, and they required everyone’s (including my) participation.

Their activities involved the wider (non-campus) community, including a multicultural talent show, attended by several hundred people, and a weekly mentoring program at a local high school, focused on understanding and meeting girls’ needs. Members learned about their mentees and shared personal experiences on topics ranging from college applications to dating. Jaamine explained that when some mentees expressed interest in not attending college, MCS expanded their focus to “talk to them about other opportunities like trade schools” and hosting guest speakers. Through community service and campus events, MCS women practiced multiculturalism by creating spaces where they could learn about and teach each other.

To work within the high-status Greek system, MCS targeted GLOs for teaching and learning, Abby explained, “We put on a potluck dinner for all the multicultural Greek organizations [governed by the Multicultural Greek Council], so we got to try all this new stuff and that was really cool because there’s one Asian fraternity, one Asian sorority and us and then the rest are Latino and Latina.” With a black sorority, they coorganized a forum—involving discussion, debate, and skits—related to experiences of racial oppression among Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and blacks. They also supported a yearly “slumber party” where sororities watched and discussed popular movies starring people of different races to facilitate discussion of racial issues. Rather than erasing race, as would a colorblind approach, MCS did multiculturalism by educating about diversity in their chapter, the wider community, and GLOs.

Multicultural sorority members delighted in breaking racial and cultural stereotypes, but always with a “nice” overlay. When the black nonmember (mentioned above) announced she was from the suburbs, MCS members gave her verbal affirmations. Members privately and publicly discussed common stereotypes. At a campuswide discussion of race, Danae said, “If I say something stupid, you’re going to be like ‘Oh, you’re here because of affirmative action’” and Jasmine chimed in to encourage people to “break the stereotypes. . . . Why do you have to go along with it?” They spoke often about having to contend with the stereotype of the “mad black woman,” or Sapphire, especially when they got angry about campus injustices. At a different race
forum, members expressed their disgust at the aggressive stereotypes of Native Americans in history books and educated nonmembers through a discussion of the "Trail of Tears." With the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) student center, they held a mock same-sex wedding to raise awareness of sexuality-based discrimination. Their practice of teaching and learning served to counter stereotypes and also fit with their "nice" strategy. The GLO structure also shaped this practice. Many GLOs, particularly "minority" ones, organized educational events; however, they designed these events either for members of that organization or the broader racial or cultural group. The multicultural sorority built on this structure by setting up educational events but expanding their audience—to include more than one racial/cultural group—and the topics—to include discussion of more than one racial/cultural group.

In sum, the second practice consisted of exchanging information about group histories, current experiences, and cultural traditions, such as food and dance. However, it also involved less cheery elements, such as inequalities, stereotypes, and discrimination. Rather than protesting or picketing, MCS members did multiculturalism through education. The "nice" (sorority) form and common language of educational programs shared by other "minority" GLOs facilitated this practice, although MCS did this activity in four ways not documented in previous studies: (1) it occurred not only through formal educational programs but also in social events and informal interactions; (2) it was a two-way exchange, centering on learning and teaching; (3) it extended beyond group boundaries to teaching and learning about nonmembers and people from multiple ethnic groups; and (4) cultural teaching and learning was a principal, not peripheral, group activity. Members recognized and addressed racism and ethnic prejudice but in an informational way, focused on discussion rather than via confrontational tactics. Their teaching and learning focused on race, ethnicity, and culture and mostly overlooked class and gender inequality. Throughout this practice, multiculturalism was not a static occurrence but an interactional process.

**Bridging Interactions and Alliances across Racial/Cultural Lines**

The final multicultural practice involved bridging diverse individuals and organizations. In a follow-up interview, Wendy explained multiculturalism as "not only acknowledging and knowing other cultures, but being able to interact with them. [By this] I mean not being around the same person or same people that
you are all the time." Like the previous practice, this one relied on recognizing and valuing differences.

**Friendships and romantic relationships.** Members broke norms of homophobia by modeling friendships and romantic relationships across racial and cultural lines. MCS women frequently spoke of their friends' diverse backgrounds and interests. Although many non-MCS respondents asserted that their friendships were "diverse," MCS women substantiated these claims with examples confirmed by my observations of their interactions. Wendy, for example, described her friends: "Melissa is really political and like 'F the police.' . . . I love Melissa for that. And then Alice is like really artsy." Wendy went on to discuss other differences among her friends, including their race/ethnicity, majors, and memberships in campus organizations.

Multicultural sorority members had far more racially diverse friendship networks than students in my larger study, which included egocentric network data from sixty-eight students: thirty-five white, nineteen black, eleven Latino, and three Asian. While MU students averaged 25 percent friends of a different racial/ethnic group and predominantly white sorority members only 8 percent, MCS members averaged 55 percent. (Substantial variations existed in the larger sample between white students who had 17 percent different-race friends, black students with 24 percent, and Latinos with 40 percent.) Wendy, the MCS woman with the least diverse network, had 44 percent different-race friends while another black woman, Angela, had the most diverse network, with 71 percent different-race friends (including white, Asian, Latino, and biracial friends). Angela described the formation of her network as a conscious strategy: "Oh, they're different than me, so let me go talk to them." I did not systematically collect data on students' friends so that I could measure homophobia across nonracial differences.

Members' romantic relationships also frequently crossed racial lines. In 2009, all three married or engaged women were in interracial relationships. During college, I observed MCS members in interracial romantic relationships and discussing interracial relationships in public and private settings. They practiced multiculturalism not just through collecting diverse friends or partners, which would provide a snapshot or static view of diversity, but through their interactions.

**Interactions with sorority sisters.** In general, MU students rarely interacted across racial/ethnic and cultural lines, and so by publicly interacting with their "sisters," MCS women broke norms of homophobia. In the focus group, members collectively identified the "challenge" these interactions posed to other students:
Danae: Being multicultural also takes being able to step back and be like, yeah, there is definitely a problem with cliques going on here. And a lot of people don’t like us being like “Hey, you guys need to stop just hanging out with yourselves.” They’re like “What’s wrong with that? Who made you mom to say that we have to play with other kids?”

Nadiya: Right, they don’t like that challenge. . . . Because everybody feels like they’re already doing this [interacting across racial/cultural lines].

In this and other examples, members asserted that their peers supported multiculturalism in theory but not in practice.

Sorority members described confrontations that arose because they interacted across racial and cultural lines, subverting the norms of homophily. One such example concerns a group of white male students who heckled Abby (white MCS member) about walking with black MCS members as they left the Black Cultural Center:

These three guys out of nowhere just yelled at us as a group. They were like “Hey! What’s she [Abby] doing with them [the black women]?” They were pointing at me so it was pretty clear what they meant: Why was this one white girl with three black girls?

Such confrontations demonstrate that—as with “doing difference”—people “do multiculturalism” at the risk of assessment.

How members handled such confrontation also demonstrate their multicultural practices. After the aforementioned example, Abby said the four women “just tried to define the situation,” attempting to engage him and his friends in a discussion and suppressing the urge to yell. She explained, “You have to act more by example. I think it would have been a very poor example if we reacted harshly and gotten back in their face. So I tried. . . . to act more positively than negatively.” Their “example” comprised modeling relationships across differences and doing so “positively,” even when confronted. This fits with MCS’s “nice” organizational strategy.

Community residents also called members to account for their multicultural practices off-campus. During the focus group, they collaboratively discussed several such experiences, including the following:

Nadiya: We would come and chill with each other and walking around [town] people would be like, “What are you—why are you guys
together?” Like they come blunt out and ask us, “Why are you guys
together?”
Wendy: Oh my gosh, they did! [laughs]
Nadiya: “Why are you doing this? What is your purpose? You have to
be doing something.” . . . Why can’t we just hang out? . . .
Wendy: Hey, that’s what we had with [restaurant] that one time.
Nadiya: And even before that, we went to [video store], we were chilling.
Wendy: Dang! That is so true! I didn’t even think about that, but
people, when they see us, they’re just like, “Are you guys in a
group or something?”
Jasmine: Yeah, they always asked us if we were in a group. No, we are
our group. . . . If you see a large group of ten women coming at you
and they’re all different races, you might be suspicious and be like,
what’s going on?
Nadiya: . . . Some of us are the same race but we just look different.

By merely being seen together, MCS members broke campus and com-
munity norms of homophily. Campus and community residents held MCS mem-
bers accountable for their interactional presentations. Members responded in
“friendly” ways, corresponding with their “nice” organizational strategy. These
examples present multiculturalism not as just the static existence of different
groups; it comprised interacting across boundaries, being called to account for
these interactions, and responding in a “nice” manner. These accounts also
highlight how race was far more salient than class and gender in how students
did multiculturalism.

Organizational alliances. Members also practiced multiculturalism by align-
ing with other marginalized organizations. Unlike other GLOs, MCS bridged
organizations by coorganizing and attending events with a range of racial/
ethnic and culture-based organizations, including GLOs. By starting their own
GLO, they inserted themselves and their multicultural ideology into the larger
community of high-status GLOs. As Danae explained: “Student life revolves
fairly heavily around Greek life. And being a Greek [Letter] Organization
gives us an automatic in. It gives us a common currency, a cultural currency,
to discuss things.” Abby detailed MCS’s alliances: “[We’re] involved with
pretty much anything you can think of, almost any group that involves some
different lifestyle. . . . We’ve done activities with different religious groups,
different cultural groups, racial groups . . . [and] the GLBT center.” Nadiya
described their “work with . . . other Greek [Letter] Organizations, the GLBT
community, and the cultural centers, like the Latino Cultural Center, the Black
Cultural Center, the Black Student Alliance, the Asian Cultural Center, [and]
the International Cultural Center." Angela explained why they practice multiculturalism in this way: "I want to be there to show people how diverse our organization is, like, we go to the Diwali [Indian festival of lights], we go to the Indian Student Alliance, we go to the Latino Cultural Center, we go to black stuff, we go to Hillel [Jewish student organization], we can do everything." They organized one such event with several organizations, including the Asian Cultural Center, to raise awareness about racial prejudice. Angela explained:

There was this big thing on [online social-networking site] about Asian Americans. It had a lot of stereotypes about Asian Americans at MU. And we [MCS] got together with the Asian Cultural Center [and other campus groups] and we spoke about it, about what that means—just because you're putting something [online] you don't think it has any harm—and how that can really affect people.

At this coorganized event they discussed the power of racism and racist stereotypes, including that Asians are bad drivers. Through engaging with a wide range of cultural organizations for this event and others, they collectively enacted multiculturalism.

Many of these events specifically targeted GLOs, which typically coordinate and attend activities only with same-race organizations. In a follow-up interview, Danae explained that an "objective in our national [MGLO] constitution is to create bridges between established Greek communities. And it's hard to do. It's definitely something that's a challenge." The multicultural sorority worked to create alliances and interactions among GLOs of different racial backgrounds. Nadiya discussed one such yearly event, cosponsored with several campus organizations, including "sororities and fraternities from all different councils [races]," intended to bring individuals together "to discuss life and how it relates to your culture and where you came from... the stigmas, the stereotypes—it was an amazing time." The strategic decision MCS made to establish itself as a GLO, firmly rooting itself in the high-status Greek world, fostered connections with other GLOs.

Although MCS organized and participated in many social events, "mixers" were an exception. Their multicultural practices inhibited their participation in events organized around heterosexual coupling. Organizing a mixer would involve only one racial/ethnic group (i.e., a black, Latino, or Asian fraternity) since no multicultural fraternities existed on campus and their sorority's size matched that of only a single "minority" fraternity. Moreover, not all women in MCS identified as heterosexual, so a fraternity mixer would be
exclusionary on sexual identity and race, thus violating their practice of valuing those differences.

Members did not seek to replace racial/ethnic and cultural-based groups with multicultural groups. As Nadiya explained, "Individual racial groups, you always want to support those. ... We never want people to lose their own culture. ... Both [racial and multicultural groups] are needed." They themselves belonged to many campus organizations. For example, Wendy held membership in a Christian organization, black poetry club, and Black Student Alliance. Danae belonged to environmental and feminist clubs. Others belonged to other cultural, athletic, academic, and musical groups. These memberships helped MCS women practice multiculturalism through crafting and strengthening ties with multiple organizations, which they used to build organizational alliances.

Two notable exceptions—class and gender—exist to their organizational alliances. The lack of student organizations explicitly based on socioeconomic class, along with a history of class-based exclusion in GLOs, created the conditions under which the group neglected class. MU had no self-identified class-based organizations with which they could align. While gender-based organizations existed, gender segregation within the Greek system (i.e., fraternities and sororities) and male privilege in fraternities went unnoticed, which enabled MCS's lack of attention to gender inequality. Although they differed from other GLOs in terms of race/ethnicity, gender presentation, and sexual preference inclusivity, they failed to challenge the class-based exclusion in GLOs and the fraternity system that reproduces male privilege.

While their practice of bridging organizations is admirable, it does not transform these other organizations. Nadiya explained that when campus administrators told them to join an existing sorority, they responded:

Why would we change what their forefathers and founders have made this out to be? Why would a whole bunch of different people join and be like, we're changing it. It's multicultural now. We don't know their founders. We don't want to go up to them and be like, "Okay, we're changing your sorority, just to let you know. We're going to make it multicultural now." It just didn't sit well with us.

While their lack of interest in transforming organizations may have limited the changes they made on campus, it also aided their work with organizations that would have been resistant if they had approached them seeking radical change. This fits into their "nice" strategy.
Despite the progress that members felt they made, they saw the need for more outreach to bridge cultural groups. During the focus group, I asked them for suggestions to positively change MU. Nadiya stated the group’s goal: “I wish we could build our own house for... all different races and cultures... for everybody.” Like how multicultural groups should supplement—not replace—cultural groups, a multicultural house would not replace the various cultural centers members saw as serving important needs. However, members felt limited by existing spaces, such as the Black or Latino Cultural Center, in their ability to bridge organizations due to people’s unwillingness to attend or co-host events in spaces tied to a racial/cultural group other than their own. The multicultural sorority hopes that working with the administration to secure their own multicultural space will improve their ability to bridge cultural organizations.

In sum, MCS members practiced multiculturalism by aligning with other organizations and modeling diverse interactions with friends, romantic partners, and their sorority “sisters” when they hosted events and during their day-to-day activities. In line with past research, others held them accountable for doing multiculturalism, and they responded in a positive, or “friendly,” manner. While they bridged a diverse range of differences—racial/ethnic, religious, cultural, and sexual identities—their personal and organizational alliances did not emphasize class or gender.

Conclusion

The women who founded and joined the multicultural sorority believed in the importance of making multiculturalism part of what they did in their everyday lives. They put multiculturalism into action by acknowledging and valuing a range of racial/ethnic, cultural, and lifestyle differences among themselves and others. They also did multiculturalism through learning and teaching about differences within the sorority and extending to the broader community, including other GLOs. And they interacted across perceived differences in their friendships, romantic relationships, bonds with sorority sisters, and organizational alliances. In addition to having different groups present, members wanted recognition of, teaching and learning about, and interaction across these differences. Becoming a GLO intentionally thrust the multicultural sorority into the social center of campus life, providing members with status and connections. And members’ multicultural practices drew on tools from other GLOs, such as educational programs and alliances with other student organizations. Racial ideology and the culture of the university, Greek system, and other organizations enabled and constrained their multicultural practices, including
the differences they focused on (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual identity, lifestyle) and those they overlooked (i.e., class and gender).

Whereas many scholars and lay people view multiculturalism as a static trait of a group or individual, my analysis suggests that multiculturalism should also be considered a collective practice. Viewing multiculturalism interactionally supports prior research and extends it in more nuanced ways. Addressing criticisms that interactionist approaches provide inadequate attention to structural forces (e.g., Collins 1995; Winant 1995), I identify how broad racial ideology and local culture shaped how MCS members did multiculturalism. While others have pointed to some exceptional people who bring diverse individuals together (Carter 2005; Hemmings 2000), my analysis shows that enacting multiculturalism may also take the form of bringing organizations together. MCS members created organizational alliances as they coorganized events with a range of other racial/ethnic and cultural groups and attended others' events. Their multicultural practices thus linked both diverse individuals and diverse organizations.

By interacting with diverse individuals—through friendships, romantic relationships, and sorority bonds—MCS broke norms of homophily. When MCS members did multiculturalism in this way, others could—and sometimes did—challenge them. In other words, people's reactions to their diverse interactions demonstrate West and Fenstermaker's (1995) claim that people “do difference” at the risk of assessment from others. While others sometimes challenged their multicultural practices, MCS members responded cheerfully—rather than confrontationally—an approach aligned with their “nice” strategy.

In contrast to critics of multiculturalism who claim that the ideology ignores inequality (Andersen 2001; Bell and Hartmann 2007; O'Brien 2001), I show how MCS's multicultural practices include discussions of privilege and inequality. Members acknowledged racism in their lives (e.g., discussing how others treated them in classrooms and stores) and in the lives of others (e.g., conversations about women of color’s use of skin lighteners) and worked to reduce racism on campus (e.g., coorganizing a program to address anti-Asian stereotypes). I illustrate how discussions of privilege and inequality are compatible with—although not always at the center of—multiculturalism as practiced by this GLO. Nevertheless, members' practices did not focus on all differences. Scholars often criticize multiculturalism for not grappling with racism but neglect the way the ideology reproduces class and gender (e.g., Bell and Hartmann 2007). MCS's multicultural practices of recognizing differences, educating about them, and bridging them focused on race/ethnicity and overlooked class and gender inequalities. While MCS's practices were
more than mere "happy talk," they did not center on inequality or tackle all its dimensions.

These multicultural practices, including limited discussions of privilege and inequality, connect to MCS's "nice" rather than "naughty" strategy of social change (Jasper 2006). This approach enabled them to maintain status within the campus culture, particularly GLOs. Their "nice" strategy of resistance also countered the dominant ideology of colorblindness, which white-washes differences (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Frankenberg 1993), by focusing on race along with many other differences. Their peers seemed less resistant to discussions of race when paired with other differences—such as lifestyles—and forms—such as education and organizational alliances—that MCS adapted from those used by other GLOs. Being "nice," however, comes with costs. The multicultural sorority may have helped unite some groups, but it did not transform other organizations or engage in direct confrontations to injustices on or off campus. Being "nice" makes it difficult to generate "credible threats" to the status quo (Jasper 2006, 106), facilitating the ability of those in power to ignore them.

These findings are based on the practices of one group of women on one campus and are not meant to be generalized to all multicultural groups. Whether research finds other groups enact multiculturalism similarly is an empirical question. Two research paths seem particularly fruitful. First, researchers could investigate multicultural practices on more and less diverse campuses or other settings, such as workplaces. Because local context enables and constrains multicultural practices, these practices likely vary by setting. Such an investigation would merge insights on compositional diversity (e.g., Herring 2009; Van Houtte and Stevens 2009) with a dynamic view of multiculturalism, presented here. The second path would involve studying multiculturalism within more activist-oriented groups, particularly those with more confrontational tactics, taking more of a "naughty" rather than "nice" strategy (Jasper 2006). How might multiculturalism differ in relation to organizations' strategies, compositional diversity, and context? And how might it influence organizations' effectiveness?

The sorority's multicultural practices fracture the Greek system's exclusionary boundaries in terms of sexual identity, gender presentations, and race/ethnicity. Not all MCS members identify as heterosexual, and they attend and collaborate on programs with GLBT organizations. Like some black sororities, they do not emphasize heterosexual coupling through fraternity "mixers" and private rituals (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999). They include a range of gender presentations (e.g., "feminine" and "boyish") among members, unlike that noted in research on Asian American (Chen 2009), white (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999), and multicultural GLOs (Wells and Dolan 2009). They also
break from the racial/ethnic exclusivity of most GLOs in terms of members, educational programs, and organizational alliances.

The multicultural sorority resembles most GLOs, however, in reproducing other inequalities, namely those of social class and gender. Members were all middle-class and did not recognize, educate about, or form alliances across social class lines. The financial costs of membership as well as university culture, specifically the lack of self-identified class-based clubs with which MCS could align, created the conditions under which class homogeneity occurs. While class-based student clubs are rare, they exist on a few campuses—such as the University of Wisconsin and Mount Holyoke College—and appear to be growing (Schmidt 2010). While class homogeneity may exist unintentionally, the national organization’s rules mandated gender exclusion. The organization does not allow men to become members. In addition, MCS members did not recognize or educate about gender inequality as frequently as other differences and never discussed rape culture and misogyny within the Greek system. Research shows that male privilege is less pervasive when institutional arrangements are such that fraternity men perceive greater accountability (Boswell and Spade 1996; Ray and Rosow 2010). MCS members thus passed up an opportunity to create a more inclusive campus environment by not featuring gender inequality in their multicultural practices along with race/ethnicity, sexual identity, religion, lifestyle, and other cultural differences. Participating in the Greek system yet failing to address gender inequalities within GLOs left MCS members unable to challenge the fraternity practices implicated in the reproduction of campus gender inequalities.

By establishing another type of GLO, MCS also maintained the exclusive, hegemonic Greek system. Although forming the group as a sorority provided increased visibility on campus and disrupted the common racial classifications of GLOs, MCS failed to challenge the structures of power. On the contrary, the group benefited from these privileges and may have contributed to Greek dominance. The accolades MCS received for its multicultural work may have even helped divert attention from the alcohol-infused partying, racism, homophobia, and sexual assaults that have soiled many GLOs’ reputations. Therefore, while enacting multiculturalism enabled MCS members to subvert some inequality-legitimating ideologies (e.g., colorblindness), the group simultaneously reproduced others. Enacting multiculturalism, like other social acts, may thus be fraught with contradiction.

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Notes
1. Approximately 50 percent of my sample of twenty-three black and fifteen Latina/Latino students self-reported their family’s socioeconomic background as “working class” or “poor.” MU does not disclose information about students’ social class background.

2. Black and White GLOs were not included because they belong to separate councils—not the Multicultural Greek Council.

References


Bio

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