Invaluable, Invisible, and Not Invincible: Perceived Experiences of Marginalization for Faculty Women of Color in the Academic Workplace

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Thanks so much!
Overview & Outline

• Faculty Women of Color are at a greater risk of experiencing ostracism – being ignored or excluded – in general by others in the academic workplace.

• This rejecting behavior results in negative consequences which are resistant to positive interventions at the interpersonal and intergroup levels.
Overview & Outline

- Why is there such a high risk?
  - Consider the role of intersectional identities

- Who are the sources workplace ostracism?
  - Consider negative treatment from peers, administrators, staff, students, parents, alumni, visitors, and community residents

- What are the effects of workplace ostracism?
  - Negative encounters influence the target’s psychological well-being, mood, job satisfaction, and behaviors

- Research on organizational interventions
  - Focuses on outcomes of integrated representation, organizational support, and mentoring programs
Women in Academia

- Women’s representation among university faculty has increased over time
- The gender ratio of faculty members is becoming more equal in general

**Gender of Post-Secondary Faculty in 2012**
Women in Academia

- Despite the major gains in gender equality across academia, Women of Color make up a very small proportion of faculty members especially at certain types of institutions.

Demographics in Doctoral-Granting Institutions

IPEDS Data Center, U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.
Faculty Women of Color on Campus

• In 2011, Women of Color represented less than 6% of faculty at doctoral-granting universities
Tokenism & Intersectional Invisibility

- Because of their unique position at the intersection of two marginalized identities, Women of Color may be at particular risk for stigmatization and social exclusion by others.
  - "Tokens" – Increased perceptions of ostracism and isolation (Kanter, 1977)
  - **Intersectional invisibility** (Purdie-Vaughs & Eibach, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010)
    - Contributions misattributed to others
    - Faces less likely to be remembered
Invisibility in the Workplace

Can occur as...

• **Workplace ostracism**
  - Can be intentional or unintentional
  - Can involve multiple and single subordinate group identities
  - Can vary in form

• **Out of the loop** (Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, 2009)
  - Being unaware of information that others know
Invisibility in the Workplace

Can occur as...

- Chronic experiences of being ignored or excluded by individuals and/or groups (Carter-Sowell & Williams, 2010)

- Organizational shunning (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008)
  - Deliberate exclusion of a person who was once included in organizational activities
The Chilly Climate

• In academia, women report a ‘chilly climate’ involving:
  ▫ Exclusion at academic conferences  (Settles & O’Connor, 2014)
  ▫ Omission from informal activities and networks  (Maranto & Griffin, 2011)
  ▫ Having overwhelming workloads and inadequate institutional support  (Hult, Callister, & Sullivan, 2005; Maranto & Griffin, 2011)

• Being invisible is a form of ostracism – being ignored and excluded  (Williams, 2007)
The Chilly Climate

• Targets of ostracism are not invincible to the simultaneously detrimental effects on states of psychological well-being, moods, and behaviors
Faculty Research Work-in-Progress

- Climate surveys were distributed in 2013 to all tenured or tenure-track faculty members at Texas A&M University.

- Data collection in 2013, yielded a 45% response rate:
  - 1206 Faculty participants total
    - 789 (65%) men responded
    - 413 (34%) women responded
    - 4 (.3%) transgender responded
Faculty Research Work-in-Progress

- Results from the first wave of data collection suggests that belonging to devalued group increases risk and frequency of ostracism.
- While the frequency of workplace ostracism is higher for women than for men, this also depends on ethnicity.
- Less than 25% of Caucasian women reported high (v. low) levels of workplace ostracism.
- In comparison, more Faculty Women of Color reported high levels of workplace ostracism, reaching up to 50% of respondents.
Faculty Women of Color on Campus

• Research suggests that belonging to a devalued group increases risk and frequency of social exclusion (Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, & Xu, in prep)

• This result suggests that Faculty Women of Color are at particular risk for being ignored and excluded by others.
Work-in-Progress Results Indicate

Caucasian women

- Low ostracism: 21.1%
- High ostracism: 78.9%

Latina women

- Low ostracism: 33.3%
- High ostracism: 66.7%

Asian women

- Low ostracism: 57.1%
- High ostracism: 42.9%

African-American women

- Low ostracism: 50%
- High ostracism: 50%
The Consequences for Faculty Women of Color are...

- **Ostracism leads to:**
  - Lower job satisfaction
  - Increased burnout
  - Lower life satisfaction
  - Greater psychological distress
  - Greater negative affect
  - More symptoms of stress
  - Higher turnover intentions
The Costs for Faculty Women of Color are...

- Compared to workplace bullying, ostracism has a stronger influence on:
  - Commitment
  - Psychological withdrawal
  - Turnover
  (O’Reilly et al., 2014)

- Compared to sexual harassment or incivility, ostracism has a greater effect on:
  - Emotional exhaustion
  - Cynicism
  - Professional efficacy
  (Sulea et al., 2012)
Do Organizational Level Interventions Work?

- **Representation**
  - The proportion of women in the department does not reduce the risk of experiencing workplace ostracism

- **Support**
  - Organizational support does not buffer the psychological or organizational consequences

- **Mentoring**
  - Positive, effective mentoring benefits those who do not experience much workplace ostracism, but these benefits are reduced for those who experience high amounts of ostracism
What Can We Do?

- Include information about the harmful effects of workplace ostracism and ways to identify and combat it in employee training programs.
- Take steps to foster a climate of inclusion by ensuring that employees are not unintentionally excluded from meetings or sponsored social events.
- Responsibility for alleviating this issue rests on both individuals and organizations
  - Ostracism is fundamentally an interpersonal process
  - This means the solution needs to focus on relationships between people as individuals and as group members
Conclusion

• Faculty Women of Color, because of their unique position at the intersection of race and gender, are particularly vulnerable to being ostracized in the academic workplace.
• Research indicates that workplace ostracism is harmful for the target and the organization.
• Traditional attempts at increasing diversity and equality do not adequately address workplace ostracism.
• Work in progress will address what can be done successfully to improve experiences at the individual, group, and intuitive levels.
Thanks for your attention!

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