LEARNING TO WORK IN WHITE SPACES: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF RACIAL AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN A MIDWESTERN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

Pairing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of a prominent talk radio program with workplace autoethnography, this dissertation explores life and language in a construction-sector business staffed almost entirely by White men. The multi-method approach facilitates intersectional analysis of racist, sexist, and homophobic talk while also attending to issues of class.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On June 17, 2015, 21-year-old White male Dylann Storm Roof murdered nine African Americans while they worshipped in an historically Black church in Charleston, South Carolina. Directly after the shooting, national media personalities and political commentators expressed surprise that someone so young would commit a racially targeted act of violence. Commentators were surprised because they believed in a metanarrative of American history that assured them that racism is declining; some even believed that we live in a post-racial society. According to this metanarrative, the Obama presidency was the harbinger of a new age for American race relations, and racists were old men whose racism would die with them.

As I listened to commentators who expressed bewilderment at how a young White person in America could be this racist, I muttered under my breath, "Because we are taught to be racist." By the time I turned off the news, I was almost as upset at the willful blindness toward the racism cultivated in White American youth, the unwillingness to question the metanarrative of racial progress, and the failure to discuss the role of education in developing racism as I was about the shooting.

While I was outraged by Roof's actions, I was not surprised by his youth. I have had many White mentors who used informal workplace interaction to teach me racism and many young White colleagues who embraced the lessons. My love for these mentors as well as their investments in me created an environment where access to the material and social benefits of White privilege made complicit acceptance of bigotry tempting. To me, Roof is not an aberration, and he is not impossible to relate to. While his murderous approach would be considered extreme to even most avowed White supremacists, his animus would have found quarter, if not outright encouragement, in some of my White workplaces.

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In my research, I seek to explain how racism can be encouraged, taught, and developed in organizational contexts. I approach this from the perspective of a junior employee seeking to make his way in a world of work dominated by White men. I hope that a better understanding of how racism can permeate a workplace culture will enable activists, allies, and organizations to join together to disrupt hegemonic forms of racism that require young White men to either join in with or tacitly accept bigoted discourse.

The racism that is taught to young White men does not typically manifest itself in overt racial violence; more often it manifests in ways that subtly harm organizations, employees, and prospective employees. In a recent study, White men who applied in person for low-wage jobs in New York were about twice as likely to be offered a job as compared to Blacks with identical qualifications (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009). In this study, Whites with criminal records were also more likely to receive job offers than Blacks without records. A popular explanation for these and other types of workplace inequities is Bonilla-Silva's (2014) argument that "color-blind" forms of racial biases affect everyday decisions in the workplace. While I do not disagree that some of the disparate treatments of minorities in the workplace can be explained by color-blind racism, my firsthand experiences tell me that covert intentional bias is just as real.

I know that when Black people applied for low-wage jobs in organizations where I worked, their applications were intentionally thrown in the trash. From a workforce education perspective, the most disturbing part is that my supervisors *trained me* to do the same thing. They also *trained me* to use naming conventions and voluntary racial information on applications to screen out minority applicants, and they *taught me* the rationales that they believed justified these off-the-books hiring policies. If asked, my mentors might not have admitted racism to an outside researcher. Their racism was not implicit or color-blind but rather covert and intentional.

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I am one year younger than George Zimmerman. He was 28 when he shot and killed Trayvon Martin. Darren Wilson was 28 when he shot and killed Michael Brown. Two of the officers charged in relation to the death of Freddie Grey are under 30. Old White men do not have a monopoly on racism. Why? Because young men like me are learning it. We are learning it in a variety of settings, including the workplace.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to advance research regarding diversity and race in the workplace. In this effort I will build on a framework for utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Human Resources Development (HRD) research as put forward by Rocco, Beriner, and Bowman (2014), Byrd (2007, 2014), and Alfred and Chlup (2010), by using Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches to explore majority group workplace relationships. I will seek to explore the complex ways in which straight White men with seniority can use workplace mentoring and informal learning to encourage the development of racist, misogynistic, and homophobic organizational cultures. I will also look at how media consumption patterns contribute to climates of racial exclusivity. My hope is that in bringing these issues to light, my research will help facilitate movement toward more just workplaces and toward a more inclusive society. While my study began as an exploration of workplace racism, I could not ignore the abundant evidence that organizational racism was linked with and reinforced by sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of intolerance. Following Collins (2010), I work to explore manifestations of various "isms" in relationship to one another because an exclusive focus on racism would lead to an artificially fragmented and wholly incomplete representation of the phenomena.

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Design

I believe that combining analysis of personal journals, autoethnography, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of mass media to explore disturbing implications of privilege in the workplace will help other majority group members to recognize the ways in which they may be tacitly complicit in perpetuating White supremacy or other forms of bigotry (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) in the workplace. I also believe that this method will allow me to explore ways in which majority group members can push back against systemic discrimination and White supremacists who are empowered by their places in organizational hierarchies. Boylorn and Orbe (2014, p. 15) identified autoethnography as "a powerful method for working with topics of diversity and identity," because it presents readers with visceral experiences that can lead to better intellectual understandings of diversity-related issues and also greater empathy. This method connects "the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political" (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). Autoethnographers do this by focusing the ethnographic gaze inward onto oneself as well as outward into the environment in which personal experiences transpire (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Boylorn and Orbe argued, as did Madison (2012), that when autoethnographers employ critical theory they have an ethical responsibility to use their research to address "processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain" (Madison, 2012, p. 12). I hope that my autoethnography and analysis of personal journals will contribute to a greater understanding of how racism is cultivated through mentorship and miseducation among Whites and how White supremacy can be part of an organization's hidden curriculum. Boylorn and Orbe (2014) noted that autoethnography is useful in resisting "mythical normative perspectives" that are false because they do not account for various elements of diversity.

I will complement my autoethnographic writing and journal analysis with linguistic analysis of mass media consumed on a job site where I worked almost exclusively with White men. The mass media content selected was identified because of its popularity on the job sites and because of the ways it both influenced White male discourse patterns at my job site and reflected the reality of daily conversations. Sociologists and anthropologists have used analysis of White language to better understand racism (Bucholtz, 2011; Hill, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Myers, 2005; Zerai & Banks, 2002). These works, however, have not yet specifically focused on language in paid organizational settings and have rarely focused on White male language use.

This project seeks to address both of these gaps by exploring how hegemonic masculinity (Collins, 2015; Connell, 1987, 2005) and coded racist language (Hill, 2008; Myers, 2005) work together to marginalize women, members of the LGBTQ community, people of color, and especially those at the intersection of those three identity markers. Through this intersectional (Collins, 2016) analysis of straight White male working experiences, I hope to challenge the perception of White racelessness (Alfred & Chlup, 2010; McIntosh, 1997) and to explore how cultural practices in masculinized workplaces (Collins, 2013, 2015) produce patterns of behavior that marginalize people whose identities intersect with gayness, womanhood, or membership in a racially minoritized group. Through this intersectional analysis, I also hope to address the critique that the majority of extant Critical Human Resource Development (CHRD) research is constructed to focus on the marginalization of a single minority group (Baek & Kim, 2017).

I believe that racism, sexism, ableism, and other "isms" are learned attitudes and behaviors that are implicitly and explicitly taught in a variety of settings, including the workplace. I reject the commonly believed assumption that racism is "just ignorance." My hope is that by demonstrating how racism is learned behavior, I will be able to contribute to the

disruption of its development. Understanding the educational component of racism is important for HRD because racism and other forms of discrimination have the potential to affect all aspects of HRD, including employee wellness, career development, organizational change, workplace ethics, and employee relations. Byrd (2014) argued that bringing oppression to light "can be a springboard for social justice advocacy" (p. 520). My hope is that a better understanding of oppression will lead to both advocacy and intentional organizational change aimed at creating what Spataro (2005) called "cultures of integration."

Significance

I agree with Alfred and Chlup (2010) that race and diversity are under-explored in HRD owing to "intense emotional resistance" and the often contested realities of this topic and its history. Reluctance to take up racism, sexism, and homophobia as categories of inquiry is probably especially strong among straight White male scholars who are reluctant to face White guilt and who also fear the possibility that we will alienate White colleagues by taking critical stances. I believe, along with Ignatiev (1997) and Ansley (1997), that it is necessary for White researchers to enter into the discussion as partners in the project of confronting and dismantling White supremacy in the workplace. Alfred and Chlup (2010) argued that Whites are "often conceptualized as being raceless" (p. 334) and suggested that HRD scholars should examine Whiteness as a racial category. Likewise, McIntosh also called for "down-to-earth writing by people about these taboo subjects (privilege, racism and conferred dominance)" (1997, p. 297). She emphasized the need to explore "the ways in which white 'privilege' damages white people, for these are not the same ways in which it damages the victimized" (p. 297).

My paper answers their call that "discourses on race and racism must be explored for its impact on the everyday experience of those categorized as White" (Alfred & Chlup, 2010, p.

336). This paper will also respond to the call from Rocco, Bernier, and Bowman (2014) that professionals should "reflect on their racial identities" (p. 466) as a first step in challenging our stereotypes. I will reflect on my racial identity and the ways in which my mentors often encouraged me to conflate my White phenotype with an agenda of White supremacy.

I also agree with Byrd (2018) that HRD researchers have a moral duty to respond to organizational injustice. Traditionally, business and HRD scholars have discussed diversity in terms of difference and have used the term in branding efforts, such as the phrase "celebrating diversity." Byrd (2018) noted that this treatment of diversity focuses on diversity as a business necessity while concealing social injustice. Byrd called for a move toward a moral commitment to addressing social injustice and argued for a "sense of moral agency that encourages and inspires action against the unjust acts that deny equal respect and dignity" (Byrd, 2018, p. 7). As racism and other forms of discrimination deny respect and dignity, my research answers Byrd's call. She argued that research elucidating social injustice is an important moral act because many researchers and organizational leaders "may be unwilling to acknowledge that social injustice exists" (p. 7).

Byrd (2018) joined with Kuchinke (2013) in referring to Immanuel Kant as a starting point for moral understandings of HRD work. Byrd interpreted Kant through a social justice lens and believed that a Kantian perspective on morality in HRD can begin with reflections on the following questions:

> What can I know (about social injustices that create oppressive conditions)?
> What might I do (on behalf of those who are subjected to mistreatment)?
> What may I hope (will change the conditions to minimize their harm)? (p. 6)

I hope that my research will help readers to better understand how social injustice is perpetrated at work (What can I know?), how to recognize and resist it (What might I do?), and how we can explore ways to envision more just workplaces (What may I hope?).

Research Questions

Reflections on White racial identity lead to questions about the relationships between Whiteness, White privilege, racism, and White supremacy as well as to questions about the relationship between racism and other forms of discrimination. Further questions arise about what a White man can do to best facilitate racial equality in organizational settings and how racial equity intersects with other aspects of social justice. These are the questions this paper addresses:

- How are race, gender, and sexual orientation discussed among majority group members in the workplace?

- What do majority group workplace conversations reveal about intersectionality in the workplace?

- What lessons about privilege and marginalization are communicated in White-on-White mentoring relationships and informal learning?

- How can majority group members resist when they are expected to take complicit stances in various bigotries?

- How do conscious biases operate covertly to secure White privilege in the workplace?

Theoretical Framework

Owing to my White male identity, I was welcomed into White-dominated workgroups where members openly expressed their views of "others" and took the liberty of sharing their negative feelings about racial, sexual, religious, and gender minorities. In essence, one thing that

privilege bought me was a place at the table where majority group members spoke openly with one another about minorities (Ansley, 1997; Myers, 2005). In this intra-group dialogue, I found frequent confirmations of Collins' (2010) argument that privilege produces a variety of forms of discrimination within organizational cultures. Based on these experiences, I agree with the argument that "the assumption that (organizational) policies and programs are neutral should be abandoned" (Rocco et al., 2014, p. 457). To best explore these issues of privilege, I will be drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT focuses on issues of social justice and inequity as they relate to race (Delgado & Stephancic, 2001). In writing from this perspective, it is common to use individual experience, biography, and autoethnography to explore phenomena that are difficult to explain substantively using traditional methodologies (Bernal, 2002).

While one of the central tenets of CRT is the emphasis on acknowledging the unique voices of racialized minorities, some CRT scholars such as Brown (1997) argue for the inclusion of White narratives for racialized analysis.

My autoethnography presents one such White reality, which I share with the intention that it be scrutinized using CRT to facilitate a better understanding of White racism. This narrative is not intended to displace the voices of people of color whose perspectives are so integral to understanding systems of oppression. Rather, I hope that my White male voice can join the chorus of voices singing together calling for racial equality in the United States. I believe my years of playing lead guitar and singing in otherwise all-Black churches and gospel quartets has uniquely prepared me for this task. In that context, I learned the importance of maintaining and developing my voice while using it to support creative Black leadership. In these groups, I was primarily an accompanist, but at times I was called upon to lend my voice as a soloist. When I soloed, it was always for the benefit of the group, the edification of the congregation, and the

glory of God. Likewise, as I share my voice through autoethnography, I hope that it will be for the benefit and edification of those laboring against repressive systems.

According to Creswell (2013), Critical Race Theory seeks to empower individuals and help them to overcome hegemonic barriers. Critical race theorists do so by conducting research that facilitates more effective social action. They can be researcher-advocates who engage in consciousness raising and community advocacy. CRT focuses on how race and racism affect daily life in the United States. One particular branch of CRT that will be central to this study is Whiteness theory, which is also known as Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) or WhiteCrit. This branch of CRT has not been investigated in HRD in a significant way, but historians, sociologists, and legal theorists (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; McIntosh, 1997; Roediger, 1991) have laid a solid theoretical foundation in which my research will be grounded. CRT uses stories of discrimination to elucidate power differentials and discriminatory actions. CRT also uses counternarratives to challenge privilege and White supremacy and pays attention to other areas of difference and how they intersect with race. Following the suggestion of Rocco, Bernier, and Bowman (2014), I will attempt to move race front and center by applying CRT in this study.

Jacobson (1998) noted that race is a "product of specific struggles for power at specific cultural sites" (p. 11). Contemporary American workplaces constitute one set of these sites. Thus, a detailed examination of struggles for power in the workplace can help elucidate the concept of race while also allowing researchers to identify certain strategies that are used to enact Whiteness and White supremacy. Many scholars have noted that people of European descent sometimes engage in overtly racist behavior toward Blacks in order to win acceptance in the dominant White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture (Dowling, 2014; Feagin, 2010;

Hale, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991). I seek to demonstrate how these behaviors can be seen in the contemporary American workforce and also to explore how young White men are expected to participate in or tacitly accept these types of actions. Merriam, Cafferella, and Baumgartner (2007) noted that a great deal of adult education happens in nonformal or informal settings and that much of this nonformal learning is either an alternative to formal education or a supplement to it. In my work, I will look at how supplemental lessons in nonformal learning can be in conflict with formal learning on diversity. Nonformal education can take many forms, including *indigenous learning* in which cultural knowledge of a people or group is passed on to the next generation. Informal learning is unstructured and spontaneous learning that can take place in a variety of settings, including the workplace. I believe that the teaching of racism is a form of indigenous learning for White Americans, that this education is both nonformal and informal, and that it takes place in a variety of settings including the workplace. I also believe that human agency allows Whites to push back against hegemonic forces guiding them toward bigoted stances. Thus, this paper will also explore ways in which I sought to push back and the various successes and failings in my efforts.

Intersectionality

My initial interest for this project was primarily with race and racism, so Critical Whiteness Studies is my theoretical starting point. As the project progressed, however, evidence emerged that required me to take up analysis of discourse around class, gender, and sexual orientation. To integrate analysis of these different aspects of identity, my research is informed by intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989. Collins and Blige (2016) defined intersectionality as a way of viewing the world in which

> The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be
> understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse

and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other (p. 1).

Adopting an intersectional approach revealed itself as a practical reality when I was doing preliminary data analysis and noticing the substantial amount of sexism, homophobia, nativism, and other forms of discrimination alongside the racism I was originally interested in studying. My commitment to social justice research compelled me to attend to these other "isms," while the insights from intersectionality helped me to recognize that studying racism apart from these other factors would lead to an incomplete and possibly illusionary understanding of the problem.

Limitations

There are certain limitations inherent in an autoethnography, such as its lack of generalizability. While my research can contribute to theory development in HRD, ideas generated in this study will need to be further explored using other research methodologies if conclusions are to be generalized. I seek to partially address this concern with the inclusion of linguistic analysis of data pulled from nationally circulating mass media. While this does not allow for generalizability from my job sites, it can demonstrate discourse-level connections between my personal experience and the broader culture. As an ethnographer, I serve as the instrument of analysis, and there are a couple of ways in which I am limited as an instrument. First, as a White man writing about race, I must admit my own limitations in regards to understanding how the events of my autoethnography would affect or be interpreted by White women or by men or women of color. Second, because I am writing from my own unique personal experience and perspective, there are limitations regarding how well I can understand how events in my autoethnography were experienced and understood by other White men. The

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other major limitation is that the narratives I recount were constructed based on personal memory, which is inherently partial, limited, and subjective.

Delimitations

As a researcher interested in HRD, I focused my autoethnography on my personal experience within and related to organizations. This focus on my life within organizations means that I am excluding experiences from outside organizational contexts. I do not include family and personal experiences in substantive ways. Also, my dissertation focuses on experiences along the Black-White binary. This is largely a result of the setting in which my life/autoethnography was conducted. When I joined the workforce, Blacks and Whites combined to make up about 90% of the population in my state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), and as a result, Black-White tensions in the workplace were much more palpable than other racial friction points. I recognize that the Black-White binary does not reflect the realities of other more diverse regions. Similar research in the Southwest or on the West Coast, for example, would likely yield results in which White relations with more diverse groups of people of color could be captured. Finally, because my study focuses on White identity formation and White workplace cultures, Whites are put in the foreground of the study. By extension, this means that I am not directly studying the experiences of people of color in predominately White organizations. Additional study in this area is needed.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WHITE RACISM

Racism continues to plague many types of organizations, creating hostile, inequitable, and unjust environments. HRD has a duty to respond to such injustice (Byrd, 2018), and this chapter seeks to broaden our community's theoretical base for recognizing and opposing racism. While the Human Resource Development (HRD) literature has made strides to incorporate important theoretical lenses for addressing issues of racism such as Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Byrd, 2007; Rocco et al., 2014) and Black Feminism (Byrd & Stanley, 2009b), Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS, also called WhiteCrit) has not been substantively addressed. Representations of CRT and particularly voices of minoritized people need to be increased in the field of HRD. CWS does not seek to draw attention away from people of color's experiences with discrimination; rather, it seeks to focus on Whiteness as a means of problematizing racism (Green, Sonn, & Matsebula, 2007). Alfred and Chlup (2010) noted that White experiences need to be incorporated into HRD literature in a racialized way. Explaining the racialized experiences of Whites is important because it challenges the often unstated assumption that White experiences are normal and neutral. The uncritical centering of Whiteness is part of what makes the marginalization of racialized others possible, and CWS research seeks to contribute to the decentering process. This review of literature will seek to integrate key themes from literature exploring racialized White experiences from related disciplines, including history, sociology, and legal studies. This research will place special emphasis on aspects of critical Whiteness that relate to the workplace. This chapter will conclude by integrating themes from CWS into the framework for Critical HRD (CHRD) put forward by Bierema and Callahan (2014).

Yosso (2005) presented an intellectual genealogy of Critical Race Theory that highlights its roots in Critical Legal Studies, Feminism, Ethnic Studies, Cultural Nationalism, Marxism, and

Colonialism. This genealogy (see figure 1) also shows that CRT has spawned several offshoot subdisciplines, including LatCrit, FemCrit, AsianCrit, TribalCrit, and CWS. Yosso explained that CRT branches are meant to complement each other and are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they seek to reinforce each other's work by providing multiple perspectives on the issue of racism. This review of CWS literature highlights key areas of White racial formation, White identity, learning Whiteness, color-blindness and transparency, unconscious bias, privilege, lock-in, old-fashioned racism, and approaches to anti-racism. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of various scholarly perspectives on combating racism and privilege. While this chapter focuses on the CWS offshoot of CRT, HRD would benefit from complementary projects that aim to deepen and broaden our understanding of each of the branches of the CRT family tree. Additionally, putting discussions about different aspects of CRT into dialogue with other aspects of diversity such as disability, immigration status, sexuality, and class will strengthen the theoretical basis of HRD.
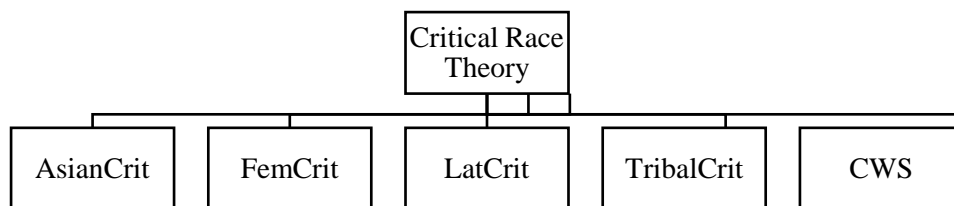
Figure 1. An intellectual genealogy of Critical Race Theory, adapted from "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth," by Yosso T. J., 2005, *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*, p. 71. Copyright 2005 by Yosso, T. J.

Framework for CHRD

Bierema and Callahan (2014) presented a new framework for HRD based on critical theory. This framework explains how tenets of CHRD can inspire interrogations of the strong tradition of masculine rationality in HRD that privileges performativity, commodifies workers, preferences the needs of stockholders over shareholders, and ignores power relationships. Bierema and Callahan suggested that paying attention to how key HRD areas of engagement such as relating, learning, changing, and organizing interact with organizational context, stakeholders, methods, and processes can forward the CHRD aim to redress the marginalization and disenfranchisement of minoritized employees. Figure 2 summarizes this relationship. In their model,

> *Context* catalyzes reflection about *where* HRD practice occurs and the situational factors that inform and influence engagement. *Stakeholders* encourage the HRD professional to reflect on *whom* their engagement serves, and who is privileged or marginalized as a result. *Process* facilitates reflection on *what* values and assumptions undergird the HRD interventions enacted. And *method* guides *how* HRD will be implemented. (Bierema & Callahan, 2014, p. 436)
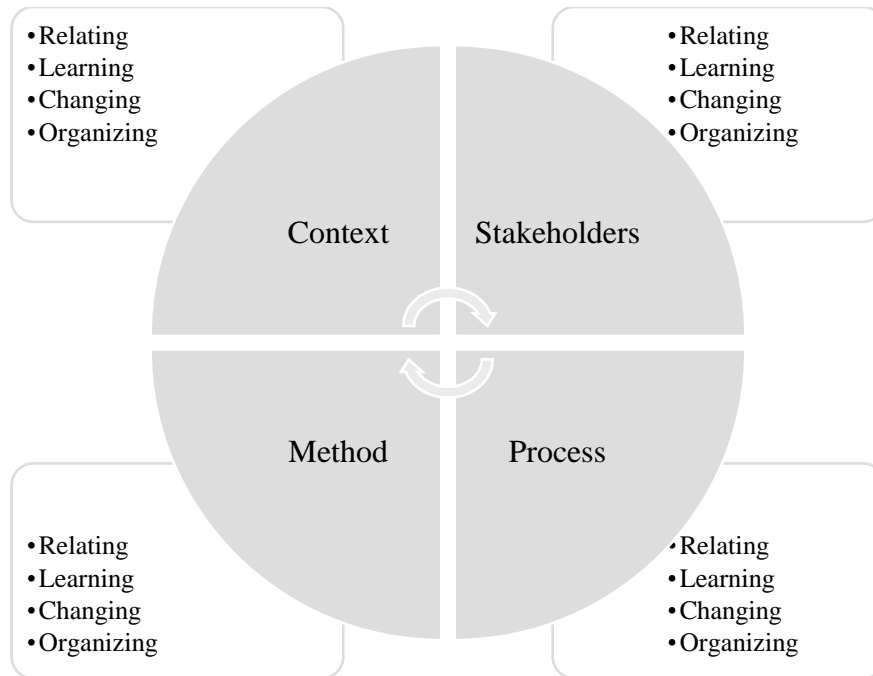
Figure 2. A Framework for CHRD, adapted from "Transforming HRD: A Framework for

Critical HRD Practice," by Bierema, L., and Callahan, J., 2014, *Advances in Developing*

Human Resources, 16, p. 437. Copyright 2014 by Bierema, L., and Callahan, J.

Review Process

The researcher began developing a reading list for CWS and HRD by searching in

Academic Search Complete for the term "Critical Whiteness Studies" in all fields, plus "human

resource, development," "human resource management," or "organizational development" in all

fields, and this effort yielded zero results. Repeating the same procedure in ABI/Inform Global

yielded two hits. Searching titles from AHRD conference proceedings from 1995 to 2017 for

"Whiteness" yielded zero results, and the term "White" yielded two results. Full-text searches of

these AHRD proceedings produced multiple hits for the term "White," but most hits resulted

from proper names including "White," references to white-collar workers, or brief descriptions

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of research subjects. Fewer than 10 substantively addressed White racial experience. Discussions with colleagues interested in racial justice led to referrals to read several books that addressed Whiteness and its relationships to educational and organizational contexts. Subsequent searches on Amazon.com yielded additional books related to the topic. The researcher proceeded using these books, their references, and the publication *Towards a Bibliography of Critical Whiteness Studies* (Engles, 2006) to deepen the reading for this chapter. Continued reading allowed the researcher to feel comfortable that he had reached a saturation point before undertaking to write this review of literature. The reading list ended up including over 100 articles or chapters in edited books and at least 20 book-length monographs. CWS is a broad and interdisciplinary field, so the researcher purposefully chose to include texts that he deemed to have clear relevance to HRD. The researcher paid special attention to research that was conducted in organizational settings and to writing in which the author was explicit about workplace connotations. Areas with developed CWS literature that are not substantively represented in this chapter include film studies, literature, visual arts, and K-12 education. Topics selected for inclusion include the history of White racial formation, White identity, color-blindness, unconscious bias, White privilege, old-fashioned racism, and approaches to anti-racism. This chapter concludes by suggesting how to integrate key concepts from CWS into Bierema and Callahan's (2014) framework for CHRD.

Review Analysis

Analysis of literature began with detailed reading and note-taking of each text. The author made annotations regarding key concepts that were addressed in multiple sources. The author also noted key citations that appeared in multiple texts. Following Hamilton and Torraco (2013), literature was sorted into categories based on the works' primary contributions. Several

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themes emerged through this process. Other themes, such as representations of Whiteness in the performing arts and anti-racist K-12 education, were not included in the findings of this chapter. The latter of these themes does have a considerable degree of research, which would be worthy of its own review of literature in a K-12 focused journal.

One critique that emerged from this analysis was that previous scholarship, most of which came from pure social sciences, did little to specifically address how organizations and organizational researchers can work to confront White privilege and racism in the workplace. Hamilton and Torraco (2013) noted that literature reviews add value to HRD by bringing together fragmented knowledge spread across a variety of fields and developing a framework for research and practice. The present chapter seeks to accomplish this by integrating key themes from CWS into an existing framework for CHRD.

Findings

History of White Racial Formation

Several studies have explored how Whiteness has been constructed throughout history. In the American context, many European immigrant populations were initially regarded as others by dominant Whites but gradually earned acceptance by positioning themselves against Blacks (Baldwin, 1985; Du Bois, 2010, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 2006, 2017). For example, aligning with the anti-Black positions held by dominant Whites provided the 19th-century Irish access to labor market advantages such as increased access to employment and greater opportunities for entrepreneurship, as well as political advantages such as suffrage and jury service. Workplaces and labor unions functioned to assimilate European immigrants into American Whiteness, and their labor activism included opposition to the abolition of slavery and efforts to exclude free Blacks from obtaining jobs typically reserved for Whites (Ignatiev, 1995).

A similar process continued into the 20th century with White ethnics buying into the idea that American Blacks are the true others and subverting their own linguistic, religious, culinary, and cultural traditions in order to gain access to the benefits of Whiteness (Roediger, 2006, 2017). The workplace persisted as a key locus of acculturation into Whiteness, and White ethnics continued to accrue material benefits from White solidarity. The success achieved by European immigrants was used to insinuate that the failure of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians to advance was owing to a lack of initiative or determination. These narratives ignored that non-Europeans did not have access to the pathways to Whiteness and likewise ignored that the pathways to Whiteness included the expectations that new Whites would work in solidarity with old Whites to exclude non-Europeans from the benefits of full citizenship and full economic opportunity.

Labor markets, education, and entrepreneurship were much more open to Whites than to people of color and represent hundreds of years of White economic advantage, as did many 20th-century government initiatives including the New Deal, the post-World War II G.I. Bill, and Federal Housing Administration policies, all of which served to enrich and educate Whites more so than people of color (C. Anderson, 2017; Greenburg, 2009; Painter, 2011; Phoner, 1997). The major economic disparities that resulted from past discrimination continue to provide advantages to Whites today. Thus, mindfulness of the connection between White identity and labor market exclusions will lend perspective to HRD professionals as we design programs to address present forms of labor market and organizational injustice.

White Identity

White identity is difficult to define in the contemporary context because Whites often conceptualize themselves as raceless (Gallagher, 1997; Roediger, 2017). This obliviousness is a crucial part of White identity to the point that when a White person makes a point of talking

about Whiteness, they run the risk of being perceived as sappy by other Whites and dangerous by people of color (Grover, 1997). When Whites are aware of their racial identities, their understandings tend to be complex and often contradictory, with Whiteness often being perceived as a liability (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Myers, 2005). For many Whites, the construction of Whiteness largely hangs on fears of reverse discrimination and efforts to construct Whiteness in virtuous terms. There is a common perception that affirmative action and other governmental or organizational policies are barring deserving Whites from opportunities, which is supported by a view that people of color are undeserving takers (C. Anderson, 2017; Gallagher, 1997; Myers, 2005). The prevalence of these views is important for HRD professionals to consider as organizations implement diversity initiatives. It may be prudent for many organizations to consider anti-backlash programs to help Whites understand the rationale behind diversity initiatives and process negative feelings, and to prevent negative actions against people of color who are advancing within the organization.

When forced to confront their racial identities, either through the presence of racial minorities or in formal educational settings, Whites often experience intense negative emotions and defensive posturing (Gallagher, 1997; Matias, 2016). Similarly, when racially conscious Whites criticize White racism, they are frequently subjects of verbal attack from other Whites (Myers, 2005) and social isolation (Lensmire, 2017). HRD professionals should consider methods for disarming negative feelings and backlash that may arise from diversity trainings or from the increasing presence of people of color in the workplace. Addressing negative emotions may be an effective way of stemming microaggressive behavior and other forms of discrimination.

Learning to Be White

White racial identity formation can be seen as following the cycle of socialization (Harro, 2000), with early socialization into racial bias happening in the home and among trusted community members. This process continues with engagement with institutions and the broader culture, and maintenance of racially biased positions are enforced by sanctions and rewards in social and organizational contexts. Recognition of the racial biases one has been socialized into can lead to negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and guilt. Confronting these feelings requires individuals to make a choice to either begin to resist racism or remain complicit in the status quo. Whites sometimes feel shame when considering their actions toward people of color as a result of the moral compromises they feel compelled to make in order to retain acceptance in their own communities. The threat of racial exile facilitates a process in which Euro-Americans are taught not to question the racial status quo (Lensmire, 2017; Thandeka, 1999).

White parents often threaten their young children with the withdrawal of love and support if they violate racial taboos (Thandeka, 1999), making Euro-American children (when they have not yet developed an understanding of White social practices) victims of racially based abuse at the hands of their community. The development of a White racial identity is a defensive coping mechanism that ensures that their parents will not find them unlovable, and later that protects them from loss of respect in their broader communities (Lensmire, 2017).

In one example of this loss of respect, Thandeka (1999) recounted a conversation with a White male who explained that he had been pressured by his fraternity brothers to expel a Black friend from the frat house. The Black student had been admitted by the local chapter, but the fraternity's national leadership instructed them to kick him out. The White man who had pushed for the Black student's admission was then given the responsibility of expelling his friend. Given

the social networking roles of fraternities, it is likely that such exclusions present obstacles to the career development of people of color.

While confessing his moral failure, this man broke down in tears and branded himself a racist. Thandeka argued that his tears were evidence that he was not racist but rather a victim of the racialized bullying of his fraternity brothers, and she approached this man's pain therapeutically in the hope that by working through his racial guilt he would be able to grow. While Matias (2016) warned that Whites can sometimes use tears to present themselves, rather than people of color, as victims of racism, taking such emotions seriously may allow HRD professionals to develop programs aimed to address debilitating shame and guilt preventing many Whites from fully engaging in social justice advocacy. This approach to helping potential allies overcome White guilt and White shame might have merit in the milieu of training, mentoring, or coaching.

Color-Blind Racism, Neutrality, and Transparency

Color-blind racism, White neutrality, and transparency of Whiteness are common themes in CWS (Alfred & Chlup, 2010; Flagg, 1997; Rodriguez, 1998; Roithmayr, 2014; Thandeka, 1999). "Color-blindness" or "color-blind racism" is the insistence that individuals do not or should not see race because race no longer matters (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 2). Neutrality and transparency of Whiteness refer to the implicit assumption that White standards of behavior are or should be treated as normative in a culture (Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001).

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary Whiteness is that Whites often choose not to think about themselves in racial terms (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Flagg, 1997). Conceiving of Whiteness as transparent and only considering the races of minority group members facilitates the belief that Whiteness is neutral. This myth of White neutrality can lead to

decision making that is ostensibly race-neutral but that is culturally loaded nonetheless because decisions are informed by White norms (Flagg, 1997). Early articulations of color-blindness and neutrality were based on qualitative research, and some questioned how widespread or representative these findings were (Andersen, 2003; Bonnett, 2008). Quantitative research has confirmed that Whites are more likely to embrace color-blindness than other racial groups but has also demonstrated that there is variability among Whites regarding race consciousness (Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll, 2009). According to this research, color-blindness in the United States is most common among college-educated Whites not from the South. To combat false neutrality, researchers should question the neutrality of White/Western epistemologies (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008) and foreground the voices of people of color (Dixon & Anderson, 2018). In organizational settings, unexamined assumptions of White neutrality can lead to people of color being implicitly relegated to the margins of organizations.

While working within White corporate cultures, people of color can face challenges regardless of the degree to which they adapt to White norms (Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Flagg, 1997). To demonstrate divergent ways in which the prevalence of White cultural norms can adversely affect people of color in the workplace, Flagg presented two case studies. In the first, a Black woman followed corporate cultural practices yet was questioned and censored for following the timekeeping practices used without question by all of her White peers, and she was permanently barred from advancing to a leadership position despite the fact that White men using the same method were frequently promoted. In a contrasting narrative, a second Black woman chose to openly embrace her African American heritage at work and refused to conform to her White corporate culture. As a result, she was passed over for leadership positions because senior leaders believed that she would not be able to communicate effectively with White

subordinates, and also because her superiors asserted "a need for a department head who shared the perspectives and values of the employees under her directions" (Flagg, 1997, p. 86). All of the White coworkers she hired in with were promoted, and she was the only member of her cohort who was not promoted.

Corporate cultures based on White norms hurt people of color whether they conform or stand apart because "White people frequently interpret norms adopted by a dominantly White culture as racially neutral, and so fail to recognize the ways in which those norms may be in fact covertly race-specific" (Flagg, 1997, p. 87). Delgado and Stefancic (1997) discussed how the belief in race neutrality can be a defensive posture for Whites when they resist calls for change. These authors noted that, because many regard the current system as neutral and meritocratic, challenges to the system's fairness are subject to major scrutiny.

Many strategies can be employed in defense of neutrality, including portraying advocates as people with chips on their shoulders rather than true social justice advocates and portraying their demands as being "excessive, tiresome, or frightening" (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. 98). Defensive postures include evading responsibility, claiming that enough has been done for people of color already, invoking fear of revolutionary change, and choosing to believe that majority group issues are more pressing and important than issues of those on the margins. HRD professionals need to be aware that assuming that the dominant culture is neutral within an organization creates implicit double standards, and the color-blind posturing prevents many Whites from acknowledging how policies and group norms disproportionally benefit majority group members. HRD interventions that may help to confront false neutrality could include presenting critical studies of the organization's history and prevailing cultural norms and

facilitated discussions about how accepted organizational standards adversely affect minoritized people.

Unconscious, Aversive, and Dysconscious Racism

One of the dangers of race neutrality is that it allows discrimination to take place in the absence of discriminatory intent. CRT and CWS scholars have introduced several concepts to explain further how racist behavior can manifest even in those who genuinely believe in racial equality. There is a disconnect among Whites who espouse inclusive or multicultural ideals but whose actions and backstage discourse diverge significantly from their publicly stated ideals (Hughey, 2011). The term "aversive racism" is used to describe individuals who claim to oppose racism but who nonetheless fail to internalize feelings of racial equality (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004, p. 4). Many act out of a desire to be perceived as non-racist and out of motivation to cover or suppress their negative feelings toward people of color. In an organizational setting, attempts to suppress, rather than confront, negative biases can lead to negative feelings manifesting in the form of microaggressions, which can be hurtful to people of color and difficult to confront. Whites attributing positive bias toward other Whites, even when they do not show negative bias toward Blacks, demonstrate the complexity of this issue (Hayman & Levit, 1997).

Differences in stated ideology and actions result from the fact that racism does not square with the dominant ideology but still affects many at unacknowledged levels (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Ross, 1997). The problem is that "When our culture teaches us to be racist, and our ideology teaches us that racism is evil, we respond by excluding the forbidden lesson from consciousness," and that to keep racism out of conscious thought Whites imagine racists to be "either historical figures or aberrational and isolated characters in contemporary culture" (Ross, 1997, p. 29). Thus, Whites often keep racism out of their constructions of society by imagining

racists as historical figures or fringe personalities. By externalizing racism as the purview of hate groups, Whites can avoid confronting their own racial discomforts.

King (1997) identified "dysconscious racism" as a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. This stems from uncritical thinking about the "social and economic advantages White people have as a result of subordinating others" (King, 1997, p. 128). The habit of uncritical thinking about racial inequity makes imagining a society without racial privilege difficult for Whites. Dysconscious racism differs from unconscious racism in that dysconscious racism does not need to be accompanied by repressed racial animus but rather tends to be accompanied by a blasé ignorance toward racial inequity. In organizational settings, similar lacks of reflexivity regarding the privileges of Whiteness can prevent the recognition of inequity and the development of empathy for those who are laboring in the face of marginalization.

Privilege

White privilege provides unearned systemic advantages to those racialized as White (Allen, 2004; McIntosh, 1997). These advantages are less likely to be recognized by Whites than people of color, but some Whites—particularly men and those identifying as Republicans—are less likely than others (Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll, 2009). McIntosh (1997) defined White privilege as

> an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks. (p. 291)

Race, gender, sexual orientation, and other areas of difference can each account for one area of privilege that can work in concert with others. However, recognizing privilege can be difficult for those who possess it. McIntosh suggested that Whites work to identify their own

privilege and how it has influenced their lives. This process can encourage Whites to "give up the myth of meritocracy" and resist the "permission not to hear voices of people of other races" that the dominant culture affords us (McIntosh, 1997, p. 295).

While not shying away from the language of privilege, McIntosh also expressed concerns that privilege can hamper the personal development of those who have it because "it does not confer moral strength" (McIntosh, 1997, p. 296). This raises concerns that those who depend on privilege are not challenged in the same way as others and therefore may be stunted in growth. In this worldview, the anti-competitive elements of privilege will weaken those who hold power, and anti-racist reforms will encourage development through truly open competition. It has been argued that the significance of merely recognizing privilege can be overstated and that it must be accompanied by both challenges to the racial status quo and effort to work in solidarity with people of color to confront racism (Allen, 2004). HRD professionals should work to include privilege identification exercises into diversity and inclusion trainings and to facilitate discussions on how understandings of privilege can be parlayed into meaningful action for racial justice.

The Locking-In of White Privilege

Racial disparities in the United States continue to persist and can be seen in the fourfold increases in wealth gaps between Black and White families since the 1980s, resegregation of schools along racial lines, differences in infant mortality rate, and inequity in incarceration rates (Alexander, 2010; Hill & Holzer, 2007; Roithmayr, 2014). Racial inequality will continue to reproduce itself generationally even if it operates in the absence of intentional racism. The power of White advantage through structural racism can be explained using economic theories of positive feedback loops and first-mover competitive advantage. According to this argument,

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Whites used the overt racism to gain competitive market advantages through most of American history (C. Anderson, 2017; Roithmayr, 2014). These actions have given Whites "a significant and self-reproducing unfair advantage early in the game and that advantage now reproduces itself from generation to generation" (Roithmayr, 2014, p. 126), and they are now protected by the informal institution of the White good-old-boy network, residential segregation, inequities in the legal system, unequal access to education, and color-blind and race-neutral ideologies (Alexander, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Graham, 1997; Loewen, 2005). HRD professionals will benefit from a growing understanding of the degree to which racial privilege is ensconced within our organizations and our broader society. This knowledge gives us the perspective to realize that our efforts for organizational diversity and inclusion cannot always be viewed in terms of a closed system. Rather we must recognize that progress toward racial equity will require internal organizational change, as well as partnerships for community action for broader social, legal, and educational reform.

Old-Fashioned Racism

While much of the contemporary CWS focuses on subtle forms of racism, it is worth noting that old-fashioned racism continues. Langer (1997) pointed out that White supremacist leaders such as former Klan Grand Wizard David Duke have embraced a dual strategy of publicly cultivating a racially sensitized moderate conservatism while working in private circles toward explicitly White supremacist aims. These efforts have seen some success. Ross and Mauney (1997) noted that, while membership numbers of White supremacy groups are relatively small, the number of people who sympathize with their beliefs is much higher than formal membership indicates. These authors argued that

> While the Klan and new Nazis are still abhorrent to the vast majority of the American
> people, their sentiments have been embraced by the public when presented in a more

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sanitized fashion and disguised as nationalism, patriotism, and family values. (Ross & Mauney, 1997, p. 552)

Ansley (1997) agreed and tied the phenomena to organizational settings by explaining that "White dominance and non-White subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings" (p. 592). Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991) showed that many employers are open to sharing their racial biases with researchers. In their research, businesspeople explain their biases, express stereotypes and negative feelings about people of color, and explain their preferences for White employees. Such preferences can quickly create patterns of inequitable hiring across an organization or in isolated workgroups within a larger organization. Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991) also noted a geographic element to this discrimination by pointing out that employers expressed negative stereotypes about applicants who lived in inner-city areas associated with poverty and people of color.

Even a relatively small number of old-fashioned racists, particularly when they are managers and have the authority to hire and fire, can exert huge influence. They can scuttle the careers of people of color by closing certain organizations or units to minority hiring, excluding people of color from key networking and leadership development opportunities, and creating work cultures in which moderate Whites feel pressured to quietly accept questionable practices. Additionally, they can create opportunities for Whites through preferential treatment. A young White who is benefiting from preferential treatment of a senior White employee might do so without ever recognizing that his preferential treatment is motivated by a racial agenda. To him, privilege could be invisible or, if noticed, might appear race-neutral. HRD professionals should be mindful of the possibility that some employees or workgroups may embrace old-fashioned racism. Formal disciplinary policies will be required to deter and address overt racism in the workplace, but organizations should not limit themselves to reactive disciplinary policies.

Developing strong social justice identities among employees and encouraging growth of an anti-racist organizational culture should deter expression of old-fashioned racism and facilitate the identification and confrontation of ringleaders who may otherwise operate safely in informal spaces.

Approaches to White Anti-Racism

CWS scholars have suggested several ways in which Whites can move themselves, their organizations, and society toward a more equitable state. These include encouraging individual-level reflection on how privileges create advantages, making efforts to manage unconscious bias, challenging the belief that norms are neutral, encouraging individuals to attempt to undermine privilege, facilitating the creation of positive majority group self-identification, confronting overt racism, and listening to the voices of nondominant groups.

Recognizing individual levels of privilege is probably a good first step for individuals who want to pursue social justice. Many majority group members fail to recognize that they benefit from systems of oppression (McIntosh, 1997), and this failure can lead people to overvalue their individual achievements. For example, an employee might attribute advancement in their firm to hard work without recognizing that their hiring, and thus their opportunity to demonstrate their work ethic, was facilitated by their access to powerful White social networks. In this case, the point is not to devalue the individual's hard work but to recognize that group membership opened a door. The failure to recognize how privilege facilitated this individual's hard work could then lead this employee to attribute the lack of success of people of color to personal failings, such as an unwillingness to work hard, when in reality, many of those people of color did not have equal access to the opportunity to demonstrate their work ethic.

Seeking to address and manage one's own unconscious, aversive, or dysconscious bias is an important developmental step for aspiring anti-racists. History is replete with individuals who advocated for the rights of racial minorities while acting in condescending ways toward the groups they were seeking to help. Recognizing that all people probably have some repressed bias is an important step that should be followed by efforts at becoming aware of one's biases. Pope, Price, and Wolfers (2014) demonstrated that NBA officials, after being made aware that economists had proven them to be more likely to call personal fouls against members of a different race than against members of their own race, corrected the bias. This work suggested that becoming aware of one's implicit biases could be enough to help individuals begin to overcome their biases. This is an important insight for HRD practitioners, who should work to include exercises that make people aware of their own implicit biases in diversity trainings.

Seeking to recognize that majority group cultural norms are not neutral can help move Whites toward productive anti-racist action. Long reliance on transparency will make it difficult for White people to consistently recognize which decisions are loaded by White cultural norms, but Flagg (1997) argued that general skepticism toward it is a reasonable first step. This step includes recognizing that "white people participate in the maintenance of White supremacy whenever we impose white norms without acknowledging their whiteness" (Flagg, 1997, p. 222). This could lead to a relativizing of White racial norms and thus to more inclusive organizations.

Rodriguez (1998) agreed with McIntosh (1997) and Flagg (1997) and suggested the process can be facilitated by mapping Whiteness, which proceeds by "interrogating and naming those aspects of normative discourses that are oppressive" and "uncovering the hidden curricula of normalizing systems" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 33). This can move Whites toward a racial justice orientation. The interrogation of assumedly neutral norms could lead to recognition of many

forms of previously invisible bias. One example could be an organization steeped in the White male value of rugged individualism that might, upon interogation of its norms, realize it has been undervaluing the contributions of employees who were raised in cultures that emphasized collaborative effort and credit sharing.

Developing positive forms of majority group identity could be another key to facilitating White commitment to racial justice. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) called for the construction of positive White identities. White identity is often associated with conservative White identity politics or White supremacy, and thus many socially conscious Whites feel uncomfortable in discussing their racial identities. This sense of discomfort is compounded by White guilt experienced by Whites whose reflections on White identity leave them feeling condemned. Both White guilt and a lack of a positive White identity inhibit White commitment to struggles for racial justice. Kincheloe and Steinberg argued for the necessity of "creating a positive, proud, attractive, anti-racist White identity that is empowered to travel in and out of various racial/ethnic circles with confidence and empathy" (1998, p. 12). They believed that such an identity would empower Whites to have positive and affirming experiences with racial minorities and that it would also help them to be better allies. To create these new White identities, assumptions of White supremacy must be challenged, and that racism must be unlearned.

After recognizing non-neutral norms, the next logical step for an anti-racist is to challenge those norms. Noel Ignatiev (1995, 1997) has been a proponent of the need for Whites to undercut their own privilege. He defined Whiteness as "nothing but an expression of race privilege" and warned against "the willingness to seek a comfortable place within the system of race privilege" (1997, p. 609). He believed that Whites should aspire to disrupt White norms to the point that other Whites view them as race traitors. He recognized that this is not an attitude

that a majority of Whites are ever likely to commit to but believed nonetheless that if a sizable minority of Whites pursued this goal, then the system of White privilege could be weakened to the point of collapse. This approach to anti-racism has been criticized for failing to work collaboratively with people of color and encouraging an *opting out* of Whiteness that represents a denial of Whiteness rather than a critique of it (Allen, 2004; Leonardo, 2002; Thompson, 2001). While the rejection of White identity called for by Ignatiev (1997) might be impractical or even counterproductive, efforts at undercutting privilege might yield results. For example, a member of a predominantly White organization could begin by pushing the company to post all jobs externally rather than allowing managers to fill positions from within their personal networks.

Confronting overtly racist behavior is another important part of White anti-racism. While this may appear to be the simplest form of anti-racism, it can be difficult to do. Confronting racist behavior at work can introduce considerable personal risk (Myers, 2005), particularly when the offending party is a powerful senior employee. It is also important to consider that confronting overt racism can drive the behavior underground. So even if a successful confrontation convinces an offender to give up racist jokes or slurs, this is no guarantee that they will not continue to enact more subtle forms of discrimination.

For a White anti-racist, the importance of listening to the voices of racial minorities cannot be overstated. Encouraging and listening to voices of people of color is essential to the foundational effort to move beyond color-blindness and myths of neutrality. It is also essential for learning how to be a reliable and helpful ally to a particular individual and within the context of a particular organization. Because people have different needs and desires, and organizations have different cultures, Whites must avoid the belief that they have general cut-and-paste

solutions. Rather, they should make use of existing theories and past successes to inform actions that are sensitive to the real needs of each organization and its people.

Racist Discourse

Patricia Hill Collins argued that "To maintain their power, dominant groups create and maintain a popular system of 'commonsense' ideas that support their right to rule" (2000, p. 284). These common-sense ideas are transmitted through racist discourse and serve to normalize the differential treatment of "others." In this way, racist discourse is a way of doing racism that is crucial to the support of inequitable systems (Myers, 2005). Collins wrote, "A choice of language transcends mere selection of words—it is inherently a political choice" (1998, p. xxi). Myers (2005) expanded on this theme by pointing out that "The words that we choose have the power to shape the opportunities and constraints faced by different groups of people in society at large" (pp. 2-3). In the workplace, language that privileges some while marginalizing others creates a state of social injustice (Byrd, 2018) that can have profound effects on the lived experiences of employees, as well as on access to resources.

While writing in the early 2000s, Myers (2005) argued that overtly racist language was on the decline and stated that its "expression endures in the private realm: an unofficial classroom where the old ways can be nurtured, innovated, and passed on with little scrutiny or castigation" (p. 3). My autoethnographic writings will explore the realm of this "backstage" racial discourse and develop Myers' argument that racist discourse can move like a contagion through a community, affecting a variety of people while it changes and evolves over time. Through this process, adults teach both each other and their juniors new ways to code and exploit racist discourse.

Readers who are not engaged with cultural subsets in which racist discourse is readily accepted may have a hard time understanding its allure. Myers (2005), however, argued that for many Whites, "it spices up conversations in enjoyable ways; it provides tools for ostensibly analyzing social problems" (p. 3). She further noted that speakers can accrue social capital through creative, incisive, or humorous deployments of racist language.

Racist talk can carry what Bourdieu (1977) called "discursive capital" that encourages many to repeat slurs, epithets, and jokes to gain acceptance or admiration in certain social settings. Because access to this discursive capital requires participants to break with the dominant cultural frame of purported color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2014), humor is often used to legitimize racist discourse (Myers, 2005). Myers pointed out that, even when racially diverse Americans seek common ground across racial and ethnic lines, attempts at friendly joking often "reinforced demeaning stereotypes" (pp. 9-10). In this way, the reliance on racist discourse can prevent the type of authentic bonding that would have a real chance of challenging the existing racial hierarchy.

The major economic disparities between racial groups requires researchers to look at everyday expressions of racism and how they impact individuals' lives in organizational settings. Major disparities cannot be attributed to the actions of the very small number of self-identified White supremacists. Hill (2008) argued that racism must be practiced in some way by the majority of Whites for racist systems to endure. She explained that the majority of Whites participate in this system by drawing on what Feagin (2006) called a White racial frame. He defined the White racial frame as "an organized set of racialized ideas, stereotypes, emotions, and inclinations to discriminate" (Feagin, 2006, p. 4). Hill elaborated, explaining that the racial frame provides "contextualizing perspective, an angle or point of view that endows a racialized

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world with common-sense properties" (2008, p. 19). Feagin's idea of a racial frame can be compared to Smedley's (1993) concept of a racist "worldview." While discussing how racism is operationalized, Goldberg argued that "racism is a cultural phenomenon that exists in publicly circulating discourses" (1993, p. 92). Combining the ideas of Feagin and Goldberg leads researchers to consider the existence of a White racial discourse frame.

In her research on "racetalk," Myers (2005) laid a foundation for understanding a White racial discourse frame by noting three structures of signification (Giddens, 1984) used by Whites in racialized conversations to make sense of socially constructed racial and ethnic differences. She pointed to Whiteness, Brownness, and Blackness as structures that give order to racial meaning-making activities in White social settings. She noted that her references to a category of "Brownness" is not meant to minimize the vast cultural differences that separate groups as diverse as, say, Chicanos, Native Americans, Muslims, and Pacific Islanders. Rather, by identifying Brownness as a structure of signification, she demonstrated that White discursive treatments of these (and other) diverse people groups shows that many Americans see little difference between these peoples and instead see them as occupying a middle space between Whiteness and Blackness. As I will argue in chapter 8, my findings suggest these structures of signification might underestimate the intenseness of dehumanizing vitriol directed at Native Americans. My research notes that racist jokes about Native Americans are quantitatively fewer, but no less qualitatively offensive, than racist jokes about Blacks.

Significance of discourse

While analysis of discourse may strike some as abstract, it is of particular importance in the study of White racism because social, residential, educational, and occupational segregation limit the amount of contact Whites have with people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2014), making

indirect sources of information all the more important (Hill, 2008). For Whites who move in mostly homogeneous circles, the most accessible information about people of color can "include casual conversation with other Whites, information circulated officially and unofficially in institutions like schools and workplaces, and, especially, representations of all types in mass media" (Hill, 2008, p. 32).

On the surface, the idea of a White racial frame and its corresponding discourse appears to be at odds with the dominant trend in which Whites present themselves as non-racists or anti-racists (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Hill (2008) explained that this contradiction can be attributed to conflicting ideas about race and racism: the first she labeled the "folk theory of race," and the other "critical race."

Folk theory of race vs. critical race

Hill (2008) argued that "most White Americans share a single set of folk ideas about race and racism" that "attend to so much that is irrelevant, erase so much that is important, and create so many traps and pitfalls that it is probably impossible to develop anti-racist projects within their framework" (p. 6). She contrasted this view to the critical view of race that is typically forwarded by scholars and racial justice advocates. By exploring the contradictions between the folk theory of racism and critical race, we can begin to see how official discourse centered on color-blindness or anti-racism can coexist with parallel discourses that are deeply steeped in racism. Table 1 outlines the key differences between the two theories of race.

Table 1. Summary of Hill's Comparison Between Folk Theory of Race and Critical Race Theory

Folk Theory of Race	Critical Race Theory
Differences between races can be attributed to observable biological traits that resulted from divergent evolutionary paths.	Race is a social construction.
Each person can be assigned to a racial category.	Racial identification is a complex personal, cultural, and political issue.
"Racism is entirely a matter of individual beliefs, intentions, and actions" (Hill, 2008, p. 6).	Racism is a systemic form of marginalization that can continue without intentional acts of discrimination.
Only White supremacists or other ignorant and mean-spirited people are racists.	Racism can be carried out by "good people" in subtle and unintentional ways, and people who do not share White supremacist beliefs can contribute to the maintenance of a racial social system.
Racism is going away in America.	Racism is a durable aspect of American society.
Prejudice is natural to the human condition because people prefer to be with their "own kind."	Whites use homophily in such a way as to accrue resources for their "own kind" while restricting resources for others.

Structures of Signification

Hill (2008, p. 6) argued that, even for those who embrace critical perspectives on race, Americans must understand the folk system of race to navigate daily life. Thus, research is needed that further elucidates the folk theory of racism and the language that supports it. A further exploration of Myers' "structures of signification" in White talk about race can be useful in deepening our understanding of how the folk theory of racism manifests in racialized discourse. Myers' detected use of the signifiers of "Whiteness," "Brownness," and "Blackness" in diverse social settings include schools, bars, family dinner conversations, and places of

employment. These structures were used to reproduce stereotypes, as well as to increase power and social distances between Whites and Blacks. See figure 3.

Whiteness

Whiteness is often hidden or obscured from Whites by the façade of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) but serves as a standpoint from which to view "others." A corollary of color-blindness is that Whiteness can be portrayed as bland, boring, and lacking the spice of racial otherness, which leads to what Myers (2005) called the "cooption of color" in which Whites may admire or appropriate cultural practices of non-Whites.

Whiteness is often recoded in conversation using the language of ethnicity or class, and its boundaries are often defended through linguistic practices. Recoding based on ethnicity can include referring to White people or cultural practices by the names of European people groups—such as the Celts or Nordics. Recoding based on class happens when "middle class" is used in reference to Whites and families qualifying for "free lunch" or other social welfare programs in reference to people of color (Bucholtz, 2011). Boundaries of Whiteness are permeable in that they allow members of certain minority groups to be regarded as "honorary Whites" but also policed owing to the stigmatization that can be attached to social interactions with others, particularly Blacks.

There is also a hierarchy within Whiteness with White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) and upper-class Whites occupying positions of greatest prestige. These most highly privileged Whites may choose to distance themselves from recent European immigrants, White ethnics, and rural or poor Whites who are often denigrated as "White trash." Many Whites demonstrate that they are worried about being "crowded out" by minorities or have deep concerns about being the victims of reverse discrimination. Additionally, smaller but outspoken

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groups of Whites defend White societal or organizational dominance in terms of White supremacy or by deploying correlated discourse that conflates Whiteness with hard work, virtue, honesty, cleanliness, civilization, and holiness.

Blackness

Whites typically construct the signifier of "Blackness" as the opposite of Whiteness, and Myers documented how historical stereotypes of Blacks strongly inform racialized discourse in the present day. To this end, Myers pointed to stereotypes of Black women as recorded by Collins (2000) and Black men as noted by Wallace (1994). Stereotypes of Black women include the Mammie, who is so selflessly devoted to her White exploiters that she neglects her own family; the Matriarch, who is an emasculating woman plaguing her community by challenging patriarchal authority; Welfare Queens, who are perpetual takers; Black Ladies, who are essentially super mammies who work twice as hard as anyone else to achieve middle-class standing; and Jezebels, who are seductresses and miscegenators. Corresponding images for men include the Uncle Tom, who is the male counterpart to the Mammie; the Coon, who is portrayed as a childish buffoon; the Buck, who is a rapist or sexual predator; and the Black Macho, who exerts dominance through violence.

Myers' (2005) study of racist talk among Whites demonstrated that these old images have been modernized. In the updated racial frame, she observed that Mammies and Uncle Toms are recast as sellouts; Welfare Queens and Coons as freeloaders and reprobates who do not want to work; Black Machos as gangsters or violent, thieving criminals who are ticking timebombs always on the verge of irrational bursts of anger; and Bucks and Jezebels as players and dirty-ass bitches, with Black men presented as hypersexualized polluters of White women who possess over-large penises. The essence of each stereotype remains intact, but the language used to code

racist messages is evolving. She pointed out the prevalence of characters who are constructed and portrayed in mass media using these stereotypes and noted that White discussions about race often use these characters as starting points. Myers also noted that in private discussions, Whites associate Black modes of speech with ignorance and a lack of professionalism. While there is space in White discourse for Whites to accept worthy Blacks, Myers (2005) demonstrated that many Whites will "assume nigger" until proven otherwise.

Brown

Myers (2005) lumped many diverse cultural groups together as "Brown" because White racist discourse associates multiple non-Black "others" with a single signifier. This group occupies a middle space between Black and White where they can at times be provisionally welcomed into White circles as "honorary Whites" or "Whites in waiting" but can also be associated with Black corruption, troublemaking, and criminality. Linguistic minorities face the admonition to "speak American" when they use foreign languages or have accents. In this way, people whose speech patterns do not reflect White standards of communication are perceived as dangerous outsiders. Whites often mimic accents for humorous effect and associate professionalism with standard (White) forms of English.

Racial signifiers as theoretical framework

Similar findings to Myers' (2005) racial signifiers were also reported by Bucholtz (2011) when she stated that "discourses of race united many white youth around a shared racial identity that was ideologically counterposed to nonwhiteness and especially to blackness" (p. 23). Given that similar discourse patterns have been identified in major studies of White language, it will be useful to incorporate these findings into HRD literature by examining how Blackness, Brownness, and Whiteness are operationalized, if at all, in predominantly White organizations.

Black	Brown	White
Corruption Stereotypical images	Corrupting association with Blackness vs. honorary Whites	Purity/Virtue Blandness Transparency
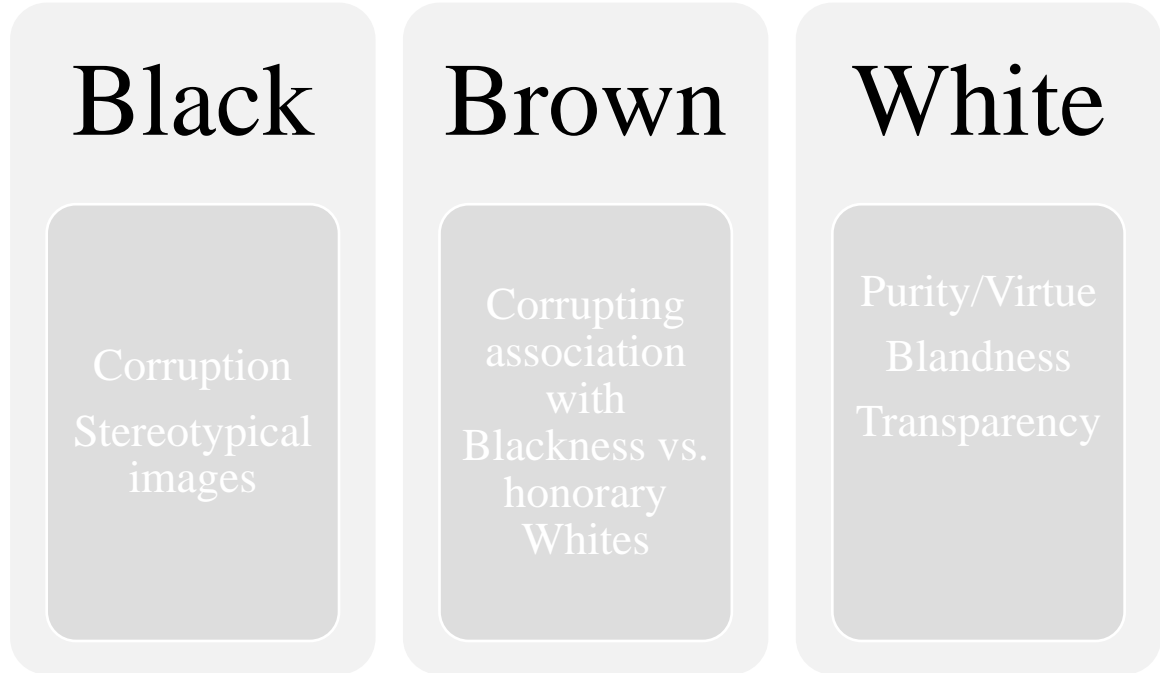
Figure 3.

Enactment of Racial Frame

The White racist discourse frame can be enacted overtly, covertly, through appropriation, and through humor. It can also be resisted but at considerable risk to the challenger.

Overt and covert racist discourse

Perhaps the most obvious invocations of race and racism in White discourse are the use of slurs. Slurs are especially important in masculinized environments because "Slurs are important as well for a tough, hypermasculine register of American English, where they are emblematic of straight talk and the right to unconstrained and 'irreverent' expression, even among people who would deny a charge of racism" (Eliasoph, 1999; cited in Hill, 2008, p. 49). In addition to slurs, racist talk can include overtly racist comments, blunt invocations of stereotypes, or subtle, covert deployments of prejudicial concepts, linguistic appropriation, and humor.

In addition to the use of slurs, the perpetuation of the White racial frame depends on the use of coded or covert racist language, which can pass unnoticed and be difficult to confront. Covert racist discourse can include ways of speaking in which Whites invoke stereotypical images without intention or recognition of racist overtones in the discussion. Participation in covert forms of racist discourse requires access to the negative stereotypes being invoked. Even a listener who does not express covert racism draws on knowledge of stereotypes each time he gets a joke or is offended by a slightly off-color remark. Hill (2008) argued that covert racist discourses are used in a variety of linguistic contexts, including, humor, marketing, and entertainment. She pointed to advertisements produced for alcohol distributors that draw on stereotypes of "drunken Mexicans" by including snippets of Spanish in their slogans as a subtle form of racist discourse.

Linguistic appropriation

One prevalent practice that facilitates both overt and covert racist discourse is linguistic appropriation. Hill explained that "in linguistic appropriation, speakers of the target language (the group doing the borrowing) adopt resources from the donor language, and then try to deny these to members of the donor language community" (2008, p. 158). These appropriative acts work by "reshaping the meaning of the borrowed material into forms that advance their own interest, making it useless or irrelevant, or even antithetical, to the interests of the donor community" (p. 158). Hill noted that appropriation requires that the dominant group have the power to control "institutions through which linguistic resources circulate, such as markets, media, schools, and the legal system. It must also control both formal and informal mechanisms through which the linguistic behavior of the donor population can be regulated" (2008, pp. 158-159).

Whites who indulge in appropriative language use benefit by appearing "learned, cosmopolitan, regionally grounded, cool, hip, funny, street-smart, tough, masculine, laid-back, rebellious, etc." (Hill, 2008, p. 160). to other Whites. These social benefits are accrued through a process that simultaneously puts down the cultural groups whose language is being appropriated.

Humor

Previous studies on White language use have produced significant insights through analysis of humor. As Hill (2008) argued, negative stereotypes are "co-constructed in the communicative space shared by interlocutors, in the collaborative project that is required to 'get' jokes, to share moods, to enjoy sociality itself" (2008, p. 41). Hill illustrated this premise by explaining how a reliance on mock Spanish to joke about cracking a few "cerveza" after work allows Whites to escape from constructions of White purity and restraint by temporarily associating with a "Mexican" identity, which is in turn associated with stereotypes about drunken Mexicans. Interlocutors who are familiar with stereotypes about drunken Mexicans can laugh at such a joke without perceiving any racism. Similar mock versions of Native American, Black, and Asian ways of speaking are common in popular culture; they are often not perceived as racist by Whites but are often perceived as racist by members of minoritized groups.

Furthermore, the act of laughing at the stereotype has a cathartic and pleasing effect that can make racialized comments more palatable when framed as a joke. Myers argued that,

> Jokes were powerful racetalk because they were meant to be shared—that is the very purpose of a joke. People might scorn the joke when it was told; but if they left the content of the talk undisputed, then casual participants in the racetalk might have uncritically recycled the talk in a new, less contentious context. (2005, p. 189)

Framing racist discourse humorously also allows the speaker to retreat to a defensive posture if confronted by claiming that he was "just joking." Humor also can occupy a policing function in a social setting where lines of membership in the group are guarded with barbed

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jokes (Myers, 2005). This policing function is especially important in workplace settings where acceptance into a workgroup can be mediated by participation in off-color humor.

Resistance

Resistance to racist discourse is difficult for several reasons, including that "Whites actively resist acknowledging its existence" and that "White racist culture is organized in such a way that White racism can persist, and yet be deniable or even invisible to those who participate in it" (Hill, 2008, p. 177). When confronted about inappropriate racist comments, Whites have several face-saving strategies available to them, including avoidance, making excuses, claiming that their language was a joke or an accident, justifying their comments, or going on the attack. These responses can be used independently or in combination.

Avoidance is a common maneuver for Whites who have been confronted about an inappropriate comment. Typically, this involves shifting the topic of the conversation or a reframing of the conversation in such a way as to move the discussion away from race. Making excuses can include claiming that their language was a joke or an accident. Whites of good reputation, particularly public figures, are often absolved for a racist remark by claims that they "gaffed" and that their words do not reflect their true feelings. Other times Whites may attempt to justify their comments by describing personal experiences. In such cases, Whites avoid making factual statements that could be directly challenged. An example of such a maneuver would be to say, "Well, all the Mexicans I went to school with…." Such a comment casts a stereotype in the form of a personal reflection that cannot be challenged as easily as a comment like, "All Mexicans are…." Other forms of justification include claiming that having friends from a certain minority group allows a person outside that group to make racist comments. Finally, some Whites will choose to go on the attack by challenging the credibility, loyalty, or

trustworthiness of the challenger or by denigrating the challenger as naive, oversensitive, or lacking a sense of humor (Myers, 2005). Additionally, many Whites will appeal to the right to free speech, even when their words are understood by others to be hate speech.

Do challenges work?

Challenges to racist discourse can play out differently depending on whether the offending remarks were public "frontstage" comments or personal "backstage" comments. When stereotypes are invoked publicly, confronting them requires restating the stereotype, which can further reinforce its prevalence. In this way, even confronting bigotry through education does not lead to the elimination of the stereotypes but rather to possible retrenchment. Reactions to slurs and other offensive comments often evoke a sense of moral panic in which advocates end up reproducing the offensive remarks over and over again in their attempts to combat them (Hill, 2008). A recent example can be found in the moral outrage over President Trump's denigration of Haiti and African nations as "shithole countries." In the aftermath of his remarks, his comments were rebroadcast and circulated on social media in such a way as to broaden his platform and to recycle the offensive language. In daily conversations—including in workplaces—people distanced themselves from the President's language either referencing or repeating the phrase and the associated negative images.

On the interpersonal level, Myers (2005) argued that a person who challenges racist discourse faces a greater social risk than the person who made the offending comment: "the racetalker often earned discursive capital as a result of her/his comments, underscoring the social value associated with the content of the talk. The challenger was one who took a risk and went against the grain" (Myers, 2005, p. 205). Most often, however, racist discourse is not confronted

because would-be confronters want to fit in, do not want to embarrass or offend the person who made the offensive comments, or believe challenges are futile.

Despite the infrequency and general lack of success of challenges, Myers (2005) observed that when racist discourse was confronted, challenges were most likely to be successful when they were consistently made by the same person in the same way. From this insight, she drew some hope for the possibility that Whites can use in-group positions to confront racist speech.

Myers (2005) also pointed to the potential for intergroup dialogue and social situations to break down barriers. She observed that this happens when people name "the elephant" (a racially diverse social setting), share stories and educate one another about differences in experiences based on race, find connections, bond over contrast, and develop empathy. She also noted that in rare cases people can "cross over" into new social worlds by gaining acceptance in a racial group other than their own. To illustrate the concept of "crossing over," Myers related the story of a White college student named "Rachel" who earned acceptance across the Black-White racial divide while pursuing a minor in Black Studies. She did so by "(1) showing authentic, sincere respect to her black peers and the course material; (2) making repeated efforts at crossing; and (3) demonstrating in class discussion that she had the skills required to truly belong as a Black Studies student" (p. 229). Based on Rachel's success, Myers concluded that,

> In order to break down the system of racism, people must attempt to cross boundaries. They should do so reflexively, taking note of the effect they are having on people as they cross. People should cross sincerely, being as authentic as they can be so as to avoid reproducing damaging tropes. By successfully crossing, we nurture empathy. Only by crossing these boundaries can we dismantle the power of policing orthodoxy, which keeps people "in their place." (p. 230).

Discussion: Framework for Integrating Critical Whiteness Theory With CHRD

One of the strengths of the CHRD framework introduced earlier (Bierema & Callahan, 2014) is a breadth and flexibility that would allow it to function as an umbrella under which CHRD professionals with varying interests and aims can practice and conduct research. Operating under Bierema and Callahan's framework, the present chapter suggests how findings from CWS can be incorporated to provide a more tightly bounded framework to inform research and action regarding White racism in HRD (see figure 4). This model addresses a need area identified in my analysis by providing organizational researchers and change leaders with a conceptual guide for addressing privilege and racism. In this section, I will describe how insights from CWS can inform understandings of CHRD areas of engagement and facilitate the creation of liminal spaces for anti-racist action.

- Recognizes that majority group norms are not neutral and function to privilege majority group members
- Recognizes that organizational norms are historically constructed
- Recognizes that true inclusivity will typically demand a fundamental shift in organizational culture
- Recognizes that multiple interlocking privileges and multiple intersecting marginalizations can disrupt formal leadership structures to cause asymmetrical, dynamic, and often contradictory power relations.
- Recognizes that true inclusivity will require continual shifting of organizational culture in a globalizing world

- Recognizes interlocking privileges
- Recognizes intersecting oppressions
- Recognizes personal agency and ability to subvert privileges and/or overcome oppressions

Context

Stakeholders

Method

Process

- Increases awareness of unconscious bias
- Encourages ally development

- Encourages individuals to endeavor to undercut their own privilege
- Listens to the voices of the historically marginalized
- Is receptive to bottom-up change initiatives

Figure 4. Framework for integration of CWS and CHRD, adapted from "Transforming HRD: A Framework for Critical HRD Practice," by Bierema, L., and Callahan, J., 2014, *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 16*, p. 437. Copyright 2014 by Bierema, L., and Callahan, J.

Context

Literature from CWS helps to underscore that organizational cultures are historically constructed in ways that affect all *relating* aspects of HRD research and practice. Typically, majority group norms are privileged by the appearance of neutrality. Because people of color are marginalized by the centering of White cultural expectations, true inclusivity will demand fundamental shifts in organizational cultures. Such shifts will require members of the

organization to *learn* to recognize that multiple interlocking privileges and multiple intersecting

marginalizations can disrupt formal leadership structures to cause asymmetrical, dynamic, and

often contradictory power relations. Moving toward true inclusivity will require a *change* in the

form of continual shifting of organizations' cultures in a diversifying and globalizing world.

Facilitating such change will require HRD professionals to *organize* with allies in our

organizational contexts and collaborate with social justice advocates in other spheres.

Stakeholders

CSW literature foregrounds the power differentials that affect relationships between

stakeholders. These differentials can be especially poignant when White stakeholders are relating

to people or communities of color both inside and outside the organization. People from

privileged positions need to *learn* to be aware of the power they hold and should work on

changing behavior patterns that derive from the exploitation of people of color. Businesses need

to recognize that communities of color affected by their decisions are stakeholders whose voices

need to be heard. Hearing these voices will require *reorganizing* decision-making processes to

allow input from communities that may be affected by shifts in organizational policy.

Method

To improve the *relating* aspect of organizational life, CWS literature suggests that

trainings designed to help employees *learn* about their unconscious bias can be an important step

toward changing discriminatory workplace cultures. Additional change initiatives could include

moving beyond diversity training to incorporate racial justice ally development programs and

organizing communities of practice that meet to discuss efforts to combat organizational

injustice.

Process

  CWS literature challenges HRD professionals to find ways to encourage Whites to reflect on how privileged positionalities affect the way they *relate* to people of color and to look for ways to engage in these relationships more equitably. Additionally, people at all levels of an organization need to *learn* to listen to people of color and recognize their unique voices on matters related to racial inclusivity. Organizations should work to become more receptive to bottom-up and community-driven *change* initiatives. *Organizing* in ways that maximize communication with communities of color will be beneficial to organizations that seek to avoid doing harm in minoritized communities, while working toward a more equitable society.

Liminal Spaces for CWS in HRD

  Bierema and Callahan (2014) described their original model as nested and interconnected in ways that create liminal spaces for critical action. While they may be discussed separately in research, in practice the areas of engagement overlap. For example, when working in a predominantly White *context,* one must recognize how White cultural norms are overvalued. Knowledge of this inequity can empower any *stakeholder* to engage in the *process* of learning to value the voices of racialized others. This *process* could be greatly facilitated by ally development programming offered by HRD professionals. Many such permutations of the interrelatedness of the areas of engagement could be explored. These could continue a focus on racism or explore the intersectional potential of the framework for CHRD. In an intersectional application, privileges and marginalizations based on other factors such as gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, an immigration status would be carefully considered within each area of engagement.

CHAPTER 3: EXPLORING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION THROUGH AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

I employ a multi-method approach to my dissertation in which I primarily rely on a combination of analysis of personal journals, autoethnography, and Critical Discourse Analysis of mass media content. I complement these methodologies by including limited amounts of statistical analysis and analysis of local print media archives. In the first section of this chapter, I explain the rationale for using autoethnography to address issues of social justice in HRD and describe my autoethnographic method. I will also explain how personal journals are analyzed alongside autoethnographic writings. In the second section of this chapter, I describe the methods I will use to explore White discourse around race and racism. I draw from literature outside of HRD but argue that methods used by linguistic ethnographers, anthropologists, and sociologists can be applied to organizational settings in ways that can enrich the HRD literature's understanding of workplace language. I will also explain how I plan to connect my autoethnography and linguistic analysis. As this project has unfolded over several years, I have included a timeline outlining the process in appendix A.

Autoethnography

I use autoethnography, which is a form of narrative research (Creswell, 2013) that allows for the extraction of themes from personal stories and facilitates understanding from the perspective of lived experience. Grenier (2015) argued that this methodology can be useful in HRD for "exploring everyday work phenomenon that can lead to the development of new theories of HRD" (p. 1). To answer the call for HRD researchers to reflect on their own identities (Rocco et al., 2014), I can think of no better method than autoethnography. Creswell (2013) agreed that autoethnography is well suited for exploring personal experiences. Grenier explained

how this methodology directly answers Rocco's call because "autoethnography has the ability to connect the seemingly common and everyday experiences of the author to the broader political, social, and organizational implications and it can also expose and highlight tacit knowledge and memory not easily accessed through traditional methodologies" (Grenier, 2005, p. 4). This method facilitates my attempt to subvert dominant understandings by exploring multiple levels of consciousness and critiquing my own actions and social experiences (Muncey, 2010). Given the centrality of storytelling to autoethnography and CRT, Rodriguez (2009) demonstrated that autoethnography is a useful tool for deconstructing various forms of privilege and discrimination. I believe that autoethnography can be just as useful for deconstructing privilege as I work under a Critical Whiteness Studies frame. As suggested by Rodriguez, my work deconstructs various elements of my privilege. Given the many positions of privilege that intersect in me, autoethnography provides me with the ability to tap into an "emic, or insider viewpoint" (Grenier, 2015, p. 4). I critically examine my own actions within hegemonic power structures. To this end, I explore ways in which I have been complicit in perpetuating White supremacy and ways I have benefited from White privilege. I also discuss ways in which I have attempted to resist complicit actions.

Grenier (2015) argued for the importance of incorporating autoethnography into HRD. Reed-Danahay (2001) highlighted careers, mentorship, and employment-related issues as being potentially fertile ground for exploration through autoethnography. This method can allow researchers to explore "their emergent identities in relation to others and the organization in which they operate" (Grenier, 2015, p. 13). She further noted the strength of autoethnography for hypothesis and theory generation in HRD. My work uses autoethnography to build HRD theory as she suggested.

In this discussion of my autoethnographic method, I feel it will be helpful to discuss ethnography more generally and to use it as a background to address issues particular to autoethnography. For information regarding ethnography more generally, I will draw heavily on Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's (2011) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. I place Emerson et al. in conversation with other authors who focus more directly on autoethnography and also explain how threads introduced by these various authors influence me in my autoethnographic writing. Emerson et al. (2011) emphasized that ethnography involves studying people in their everyday environments and activities. To do this, an ethnographer enters "into a social setting and gets to know the people involved in it" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 1). Because ethnography involves both participation with the people being studied and observation of them, the term "participant observation" is sometimes used in reference to ethnographic research. In autoethnography, the researcher moves beyond being a participant-observer and becomes a full participant (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008; Grenier, 2015). In my study, I did this by entering into a workplace and acting as a full participant who learned the internal cultures of organizations. I spent three years becoming a full participant and learning the organizational culture of the company I explore in this autoethnography. In a larger sense, my attempts to understand this organizational culture were part of my efforts, as a member of a newly arrived immigrant family, to understand American culture. The workplace encounters described in my autoethnography strongly influenced my gradual movement from being a person who identified as being Ukrainian-Canadian to a person whose identity includes White and American. In this regard, my autoethnography captures portions of my experience with the contemporary American melting pot that intersects with organizational experiences and culture.

Ethnography is useful for identifying social processes and taken-for-granted assumptions of researched groups (Emerson et al., 2011; Grenier, 2015). My years of exposure in the various work environments in the present study allowed me to experience such social functions and to later reflect on the nature of the taken-for-granted aspects of my job and workplace relationships. Emerson et al. emphasized that researchers must do much more than merely observe, but rather need to get close to the participants by immersion in the group. In my case, I did this by forming close bonds of affinity and friendship with most of the individuals I reference in this chapter. In some cases, the word "love" would not be an overstatement in describing my feelings for them. My immersive approach does not allow me to work under the traditional academic pretense of objectivity but rather forces me to critically examine my relationships within each group.

In autoethnography, it is important for the author to consider how immersion in a culture has changed him. Grenier (2015) noted that autoethnography is reflexive in that the author has to turn the gaze inward. This process involves self-critique (Marcus, 1994) and can be confessional in nature (Van Maanen, 1988). In this study, I will reflect on how organizational engagement changed me and also how I perceive my influence (or lack thereof) on organizational cultures. It is also confessional in nature as it exposes ways in which I was complicit in reinforcing White-dominated power structures.

The production of "field notes," which are notes taken in an attempt to capture experiences while engaged in research, serve as the data to be examined by the ethnographic researcher. Rather than traditional field notes, I analyze two sets of writing regarding my experiences at an organization I call Midwest Installation. These include autoethnographic writings composed between June 2016 and December 2016, and a journal I produced between January 2014 and March 2014 in which I attempted to locate my positionality by writing a

narrative biography exploring my Americanization process. When excerpts from the autoethnographic writings are included in the text, they are indicated with "(AE)"; excerpts from journals are indicated with "(J1)". In the journal, I reflected deeply on my experiences with the contemporary American melting pot. This led me to write about the most thought-provoking and revealing experiences that I experienced after relocating to the United States. For the dissertation, I analyzed this document from the perspective of CWS to contextualize my recorded personal experiences within the broader literature and develop new insights about White racial identity formation in the workplace. My autoethnographic writings were composed as I reflected on how privileges based in race, gender, and sexual orientation were operationalized at Midwest Installation. During these reflections, I realized that many telling experiences with high degrees of relevance to my topic were not included in my original journals.

I wrote my journal before beginning my doctoral program. I had been advised by a mentor that it would be personally and professionally important for me to answer questions of identity before embarking on a career as a researcher. I am grateful to Khaula Murtadha for her urging that I attempt to tease out the implications of my own positionality before immersing myself in doctoral study. In this journal, I attempted to avoid integrating theory (the little that I remembered from my master's degree) into my journal. After beginning my doctoral program, I would learn that the approaches to research that begin without a prior theory are called grounded theory. Thus, I came to see my journals as a form of grounded theory data production.

My autoethnographic writing differs in that by the time I began writing them I was deeply immersed in the study of social injustice in the workplace and working on a paper to fulfill the Early Research Project (ERP) requirement for my doctoral program. When I began writing this ERP, I had planned on only analyzing content from my journals about workplace

racism. However, as I worked with that material, I realized that my journals did not contain accounts of all the most salient instances of workplace injustice. I embarked on new autoethnographic writings to make up this gap.

In the composition of both my journal and autoethnographic writings, I relied heavily on what Emerson et al. (2011) called "head notes," which are essentially mental notes of interesting or significant experiences with the intention of elaborating in greater detail once the researcher is out of the field. The drawback to this method is that it places a great onus on my memory, and important details could have been lost or distorted before I took detailed notes.

Emerson et al. (2011) suggested some basic strategies for constructing field notes. I followed many of these suggestions in the composition of my journals and autoethnography. I followed their recommendation that the researcher write down in field notes what he considers to be personally significant. They also stress the importance of having the time and energy to devote to writing and note that most researchers will have a preferred space and method for drafting field notes. The composition of my journal came during a period after I had been accepted to my PhD program and had quit my full-time job but before my entrance into the program. In this period, I devoted myself to reconstructing memories of interesting and culturally significant experiences and writing them up in a 140-page journal. I composed autoethnographic writings during scheduled writing times that I built into my weekly schedule as a doctoral student.

Emerson et al. (2011) noted that field notes vary stylistically depending on the author's training and experiences as a writer. They noted that these stylistic choices are made implicitly by researchers but that these choices influence the end result. The majority of my prior academic work and writing was in history and biography, so for me a narrative-biographical writing style

was most natural for this project. Both my journal and autoethnographic writings are in this format.

When re-creating conversations, Emerson et al. (2011) suggested that researchers use a combination of paraphrasing, indirect quotations, and direct quotations. They recommended that only exact phrases noted or recorded in the moment should be placed in direct quotations, but other key content from a conversation could often be introduced using indirect quotations. Because I did not make recordings or transcribe exact conversations, I am not able to include direct quotations in my paper. I, however, do my best to re-create significant conversations that made particularly strong impressions on me and that have reverberated in my memory. When re-creating conversations, I will bend grammatical convention by using quotation marks to enhance the orderliness and clarity of the exchanges. This decision is based on feedback from an early reviewer who noted that the lack of quotation marks made it difficult to follow verbal exchanges and to tell whose voice was active when.

In addition to the journal and autoethnographic writing, my research draws on several other sources to enhance the clarity and overall rigor of the work. These include photographs, maps, past copies of my resumes, obituaries, letters, classroom notes, academic transcripts, Facebook posts, songs and comedy sketches that were popular among workmates, and lyrics from songs I wrote while I was in the field. In addition, I have consulted company and organizational websites where available. I have also consulted primary sources that shed light on organizational cultures. These include relevant local print media and audio recordings of mass media content frequently listened to while on the job. Mass media recordings will be subjected to linguistic analysis to allow for triangulation between media content and my autoethnographic writing.

To analyze my journal, I began by identifying passages that were relevant to my research. As my research focuses on workplace culture, I defined passages as relevant if they related experiences that transpired either at Midwest Installation or while socializing with coworkers from this organization outside of work. Extraction of project-relevant passages before proceeding with analysis was necessary both to focus the research on organizational life and to protect easily identifiable personal contacts from being represented in my writing. Limited amounts of non-work-related content was later reintegrated into the research in order to round out descriptions of the geographical region where the research was conducted. These passages were used to provide the reader with descriptions of myself, the region in which I worked, my organizations, and my coworkers.

Autoethnographic writing was often prompted when, while reviewing journals, I noticed that certain highly salient events related to workplace social injustice were not recorded in my journal. For example, I had not written about a workplace noose-tying incident in my journals or recorded jokes related to African American genocide. I recall making conscious decisions not to write about these encounters while I was journaling because I found the process to be too emotionally charged for me at the time. By the time I undertook writing autoethnographically about racism, I was more emotionally and intellectually prepared to confront the various ways in which I was implicated in deeply racist workplace behavior. Thus, my autoethnographic writings tend to contain much more detailed accounts of organizational racism than my personal journals.

In some cases, autoethnographic writing was used to provide the reader with contextual details I did not record in my original journals—such as descriptions of my relationships with people or places. I also did additional writing when a relevant passage from my original journal seemed unusable. Some passages were unusable because the way they were originally written

would have compromised the anonymity of a coworker. Others I deemed unusable because the relevant information was embedded in a journal entry that contained large amounts of irrelevant information that would have been confusing or distracting to the reader. These rewritten passages often contained words, phrases, or whole sentences from the original journal.

Emerson et al. (2011) also highlighted the importance of an ethnographer being aware of his own stance. He explains that a writer's stance "originates with her outlook on life, experience, training, and commitments" (p. 89). My stance affects the way I interact with the people around me and also influences what I am able to see and notice in a given social situation. Emerson et al. pointed out that stance can change over time and that longer field experiences can catalyze such a change. In my case, my stance changed dramatically over the course of my engagement with Midwest Installation and my subsequent reflection on the experiences I began work with the organization as a newly arrived member of an immigrant family who was gradually acquiring an American identity. While I worked at Midwest Installation, I had a two-part stance. On the one hand, I was new to American culture and was trying to learn to fit in. On the other hand, I often found myself in the role of an external critic challenging or judging American norms based on my Canadian cultural sensibilities. By the time I began my journaling and autoethnographic writing, my stance had changed. I no longer felt like an immigrant seeking approval from the American mainstream. Rather, I came to see myself as an American offering insider critiques of a dominant culture of which I had a strong intuitive understanding.

In addition to being aware of their stance, Emerson et al. suggested that ethnographers do not ignore their own presence in the observed situation. I am aware that I experience things from a particular point of view and that others who share the experiences have different viewpoints. Emerson et al. suggested a combination of first- and third-person narration to best capture events

in field notes. I use the first-person view to provide the narration from the researcher's perspective and agree with Emerson et al. that this can be particularly useful for a researcher like myself who was often in-group and able to explain things from that perspective.

Ethnographers "pursue members' meanings" and recognize that social realities do not exist in an objectively observable way; rather, they must be constructed and interpreted by individuals and groups who occupy that social space (Creswell, 2013; Grenier, 2015). I follow Emerson et al.'s suggestion that the ethnographer should do his best to understand how group members construct and interpret their own social realities. I am aware that social realities are in a constant state of change and that the meanings of language, symbols, and other socially significant phenomena will change over time.

I follow Emerson et al.'s suggestion that writers "identify threads" that they will use to weave stories and observations into publishable research. In this research, threads are woven together in four analysis chapters, each of which is organized around a significant theme in my research.

Emerson et al. noted that there are at least two good approaches to explicating ethnographic field notes. The first is an integrative strategy, which weaves together field notes and interpretations. The second is an excerpt strategy, which presents excerpts and then explains them (Emerson et al., 2011). The integrated strategy is most effective when an author wants to maintain a first-person voice and when "bringing together observations and occurrences scattered in different places in the field notes" (2011, p. 213). The integrative method stands in contrast to an excerpt strategy in which field notes are blocked off from the commentary so that a clear division between the two is easier to see. The excerpt strategy is useful for me when I want to create a distinction between the original observation and subsequent interpretation, or when I

want to use an excerpt as a piece of evidence for a proposition. Emerson et al. noted that many researchers combine these two approaches.

I use a combination of both approaches in the presentation of data from my journal and autoethnography but lean more heavily on the excerpt strategy. I gravitated toward this approach because it allows me to block off analytical writing from the journaling and autoethnographic writing. Given that my journals sometimes took on analytical tones—and in a few cases included citations to books I was reading while journaling—I wanted to provide as much distinction as possible. Autoethnographers sometimes use additional methods to explain their data. Grenier (2015), for example, suggested constructing narrative as a conversational dialogue. My original journals contained several attempts to re-create significant conversations. In several instances, I include these dialogues as they were recorded in my journals.

Excerpts from my journals and autoethnographic writings are typically explained by commentary, and it is this interplay that makes the writing more dynamic. To better explain an excerpt, I often use a commentary to present orienting information to help give the reader the background knowledge necessary to understand the excerpt (Emerson et al., 2011). Grenier (2015) referred to this technique as a "layered account that uses an authorial voice splicing together ethnographic and autoethnographic content, self-reflective voice, and researcher arguments" (p. 8). I sometimes found it necessary or useful to edit excerpts from my journal after writing commentaries, especially when those commentaries made certain parts of the excerpt redundant.

To address Guba and Lincoln's (1981) dependability, credibility, and transferability, Grenier (2015) suggested several strategies, which I followed. She argued that, given a sufficiently rich and thick description, a reader can judge the dependability for himself. She also

suggested seeking verisimilitude to address credibility. "Verisimilitude" is making the work

believable and lifelike in a way that will allow the reader to have a vicarious experience,

allowing him to feel the truth of the research. Grenier recognized that transferability is limited by

the uniqueness of the author's lived experiences but that readers should be able to see ways in

which the research connects to their own personal experiences. The way readers connect to my

material will naturally vary based on the readers' disposition, history, and cultural orientation.

To address validity, Forber-Pratt (2015) argued that autoethnography should be submitted

to seven phases of review. I followed this review method. Reviews should assess whether the

work makes sense to the following people: myself, someone who knows me well, someone in

my family, an academic in my field, an academic from out of my field, a non-academic, and

someone who does not know me well. After completing the first drafts of various chapters, I

submitted them to individuals who combined to cover the seven phases of review.

Linguistic Analysis

In addition to journaling and autoethnographic writing, I also conducted linguistic

analysis of content from *The Bob & Tom Show*, a radio show that enjoyed immense popularity in

my workgroups. At Midwest Installation, this program would play on our work radios for about

three hours each morning, and senior employees often silenced conversations so we could all

hear when favored comedic material was played. My coworkers frequently sang along to

comedic songs during the broadcast and would recite sketches or repeat jokes they heard on *Bob*

& Tom throughout the day. Given the pervasiveness of *Bob & Tom*'s comedy material, I believe

that a detailed examination of the show's content can provide an additional window through

which to view White-male workplace cultures. Analyzing *Bob & Tom* content is theoretically

interesting because much of the work looking at racialized discourse in White communities

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focuses on backstage conversations (Hughey, 2011; Picca & Feagin, 2007). Bob and Tom, as public figures broadcasting to roughly 5 million daily listeners in 37 states, offer frontstage discourse for analysis. By comparing autoethnographic observations about language from my field site with linguistic analysis of mass media, I use triangulation to construct a more nuanced understanding of how White males communicate marginalizing ideologies. Additionally, by looking at two sets of data, I was able to look for thematic and discourse-level connections between national-level broadcasts and my specific lived experience.

Language can be observed in all situations where humans communicate, and thus in one sense, it is infinitely observable. Formal analysis of verbal language, however, is a complicated undertaking that has been approached using a variety of methods. Furthermore, Hill (2008) noted the special difficulty in observing racist White language. This difficulty stems from the fact that many Whites only use racist language when they believe themselves to be in company who will not object. To address this difficulty, several different methods have been used to explore the ways Whites construct discourse around race and racism.

My methods are informed by the assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and will draw on approaches used by previous studies of racist language in the United States. Previous studies have approached the subject through analysis of mass media (Hill, 2008; Zerai & Banks, 2002), constructing field notes based on jotting or head notes that seek to re-create sections of conversations (Bucholtz, 2011; Myers, 2005), detailed study of White language in organizational settings (Bucholtz, 2011; Hughey, 2011), autoethnography (Ellis, 2007, 2009), and analysis of racist humor (Hill, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Myers, 2005). My approach to exploring White discourse around race and racism will combine elements of each of these approaches.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Machin and Mayr (2012) defined Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a loose collection of approaches to linguistics that aim to "reveal buried ideology" (p. 1). This approach looks for meanings that are not clearly articulated in a text but are nonetheless communicated through absence or implication. Key strategies include analysis of public texts based on lexical decisions, metaphors, nominalization, quoting verbs, representation of action, and aspects of identity that are foregrounded or backgrounded. In CDA, power relations are seen as being naturalized by speakers while being "transmitted and practiced through discourse" (p. 4). Core to CDA is the belief that better understandings of how power relations are reproduced through communication can lead to more successful attempts to challenge systemic injustice.

CDA has been criticized on a number of fronts, including that the selection of texts for analysis can appear to be arbitrary and that little effort has been made to connect the analysis of public texts to how language is used in everyday life or in institutional contexts. Machin and Mayr (2012) suggested that the first of these critiques can be addressed when researchers make efforts to use quantitative data to show that the texts they chose to foreground are representative of the larger body of work from a given source. To address the second critique, Machin and Mayr suggested combining CDA with ethnography as a useful strategy for assessing how discourses from analyzed texts inform, influence, or reflect daily institutional life. My work addresses the first critique by including quantitative representations of a large sample of material from my media source to demonstrate that selected texts are representative. Additionally, my autoethnographic work and analysis of journals allow me to speak to how ideology revealed in discourse analysis is pertinent to daily organizational life and language used in my field site. As I use CDA to make claims about Midwestern discourse patterns, I had five readers with deep ties

to the Midwest read my work and give me feedback on the extent to which my analysis resonated with them or reflected their experiences with White male discourse in the region. As my work makes claims about White male discourse patterns, I had four White men and one biracial man—Black identifying but who grew up in a predominantly White Midwestern community—read my work and give me feedback on my interpretations and conclusions. I also had one White man who worked with me at Midwest Installation and one White man who was a daily *Bob & Tom* listener for over 10 years read relevant sections of the work and give me feedback.

Organizational Ethnography

Bucholtz (2011) and Hughey (2011) both used organizational ethnography to explore White language use. Bucholtz conducted a year of field observations at a California high school and focused on understanding the experiences of the students. Her method included taking field notes and recording both formal and informal interviews. She was able to provide detailed transcriptions of the recorded interviews while depending on reconstructions of conversations that were not recorded. She acknowledged that reconstructions of conversations based on head notes or jottings from the field will be imperfect, but she argued for their value because of the theoretically interesting elements of language that were produced in natural—spur of the moment—social interactions. Hughey used a similar approach when he observed White male language use for over a year in two different all-White volitional organizations. My approach mirrors some elements of these projects but differs in that my field site is an employer and that I explore the language use of employees.

My autoethnographic approach presents both opportunity and challenges in analyses compared to the traditional ethnographic approaches of Bucholtz and Hughey. One advantage is

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that as a full-time employee I was a full participant in daily organizational life and thus can provide an insider perspective. One obvious drawback is that because I did not yet conceive of myself as a researcher while I was in the field, I did not create traditional ethnographic field notes; rather, I am relying on journaling and reflections on my time with the organization. Another drawback is that I did not make audio recordings of any of the conversations I had. However, my linguistic analysis of mass media consumed on the job site provides transcribed data that sheds light on the discourse patterns that were acceptable within this organizational context.

Daily Language Use

While not using ethnographic methods, Myers (2005) also sought to observe race-related talk in natural settings. Her method involved recruiting approximately 70 undergraduate volunteers and asking them to go about their daily lives, making head notes each time race or racism was addressed in normal conversation. She asked her students to react to the speech as they normally would but then to make detailed field notes about each incident when they returned home each night. Through this process, Myers developed her racial signifiers, which, as argued in chapter 2, made an appropriate theoretical framework from which to begin linguistic analysis.

My study bears some similarities to Myers' (2005) but also differs in significant ways. First, her methodology did allow her to draw examples from workplace environments, but it did not focus on this area. My study, on the other hand, focuses directly on workplace language and action related to race. Additionally, few of her examples came from masculinized settings, while mine will mostly come from masculinized organizations. Second, her methodology and the composition of her research team may have biased her results toward White middle-class norms,

while my study will draw more readily from working-class White environments. Third, her methodology pulled snippets of racialized discourse from many different sources, which did not allow her to provide deep contextualization of the language usage. My linguistic analysis will be deeply situated in an organization where I had a long-term commitment. This will allow me to provide deeper contextualization surrounding racist talk. Fourth, Myers' work focused solely on racetalk, while I am more intersectional in my linguistic analysis—by which I mean that I analyze how racist talk interacts with sexist, homophobic, classist, and nativistic talk.

Autoethnography and Whiteness

Some autoethnographers have explored racist language in White daily life. Ellis (2007, 2009), for example, analyzed offhand racist comments she encountered in her daily life as well as racist jokes made by her friends and neighbors. These instances were recorded outside of her organizational life but allowed Ellis to view racist discourse as part of the ebb and flow of daily life in her community. Compared to Myers' (2005) more eclectic approach, Ellis' autoethnographic method allowed her to give rich explanations of the people, relationships, and community contexts that supported or constrained racist discourse. On the other hand, it yielded smaller numbers of comments for analysis. My autoethnographic approach allowed me to provide similar levels of contextualizing information as Ellis. However, my approach differs from hers in two ways. First, I focus on discourse bounded within organizational life. Second, my data yielded more examples because I complemented daily conversation with relevant illustrations from mass media.

Mass Media Analysis

Zerai and Banks (2002) and Hill (2008) both conducted an analysis of mass media content from sources including newspapers, periodicals, advertisement, television, and radio.

These studies were able to point to broadly accepted discourse patterns pertaining to race and racism in America and also used additional data sets to triangulate between language in media and other aspects of American life. Zerai and Banks were able to connect dehumanizing discourse patterns to statistical analysis of public health data to provide a robust understanding of the connection between discourse, health policy, and health outcomes. Hill used a different approach to triangulation by connecting data collected from mass media to discourse culled from online comment boards. Hill's use of comment board data from local websites allowed her to get a taste for regionally situated daily language use around race and to compare it to the local and national broadcasts. This provided a nuanced view of the interaction between everyday local citizens and different media sources.

My study analyzes mass media content broadcast by *Bob & Tom* and consumed by over 5 million daily listeners. Like Hill (2008), I triangulate between mass media and local conversation styles. The mass media I analyze was produced in the same city where my field site was located and thus occupies a double significance to my research. It is both a local media source to my field site and also a nationally syndicated show whose broader national acceptance suggests that local discourse patterns resonate across the United States. My triangulation between broadcast media and everyday language use depends on analysis of radio broadcast recordings, my autoethnographic work, and online comments about *Bob & Tom*.

Study of Humor

The majority of the studies hitherto mentioned include some analysis of jokes or humorous talk (Bucholtz, 2011; Ellis, 2007, 2009; Hill, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Myers, 2005) as a method for understanding everyday racism. Jokes have been shown to enforce racial boundaries, transmit and teach stereotypes, make racism more palatable, facilitate bounding among in-

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groups, help speakers to accrue symbolic capital, and allow speakers to distance themselves from racist comments when challenged. While Myers made limited connections between these themes and workplace cultures, the majority of the extant research findings relative to racist humor are found outside of paid organizational settings. My research addresses this gap by focusing on humor produced or consumed in the workplace.

Proposed Approach to Studying Racist Discourse in Organizational Settings

Using a multi-method approach, I combine organizational autoethnography with linguistic analysis of mass media consumed at the field site. This combination of methodological approaches allows for triangulation (V. Anderson, 2017) between nationally circulated mass media and lived experience in the workplace. Additionally, I explore discourse-level connections between autoethnographic accounts and national media, which allows me to hint at transferability of findings to other workplaces with similar media consumption patterns.

Figure 5 represents my proposed methodological approach to studying racialized discourse in organizational settings. In this approach, ethnography or autoethnography is paired with linguistic analysis, and these methods are jointly deployed in organizational settings to understand daily life and language use. Bounding the research in the organizational settings allows the research to inform applied fields such as education, management studies, and human resource development.

Focusing on organizational settings also helps the researcher to focus on aspects of racist language that can easily be shown to affect the work lives of minoritized people. For example, if a joke centering on stereotypes regarding Black unemployability was told in private conversation between Whites in a racially homogenous region (as in Ellis, 2009), one might wonder to what degree the communication of this stereotype could diminish the prospects of a Black person on

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the job hunt. On the other hand, if a similar joke is told by a potential employer or a human resource professional, researchers can clearly analyze the joke with the aim of better informing how we understand connections between stereotypes and statistically observable differences in un- or underemployment rates between racial groups.

The ethnographic aspect of this approach allows for rich descriptions of daily life and organizational culture. Pairing this method with linguistic analysis allows for triangulation of ethnographic observations with fine-grained analysis of salient excerpts from the organization's cultural-linguistic landscape. The autoethnographic approach can strengthen the analysis by exploring the personal effect of racializing experiences in the workplace.

Including examples of casual workplace conversations strengthens the ethnographic element of the research by allowing the reader to be a "fly on the wall" and observe modes of discourse to which they might not otherwise be privy. Gaining understandings of these types of conversation can be helpful to both researchers and practitioners who are endeavoring to make workplaces more inclusive. Exploring mass media consumed in organizations is also important because it speaks to workplace climate and allows for connections to be made between workplaces with similar media consumption patterns. Additionally, when employees actively engage with racially charged media, it provides an additional lens to view how race is represented in language. Myers (2005) noted that many casual discussions about minorities began as White responses to media portrayals of a minoritized racial group. It is likely that similar patterns are repeated in response to media portrayals consumed at work.
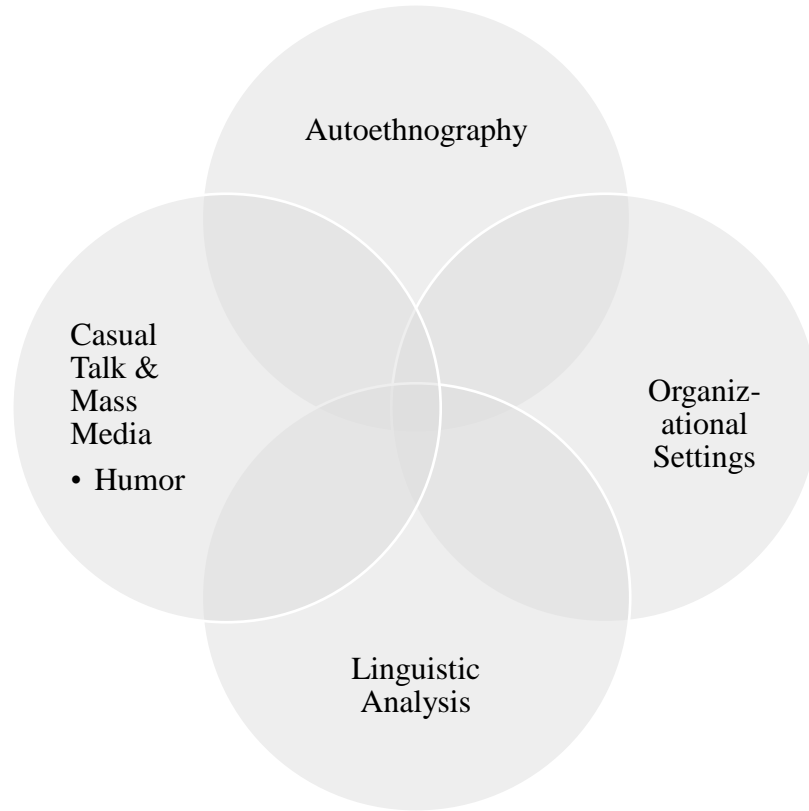
Figure 5.

Figure 5 is a Venn diagram showing the intersecting components that I will use to delineate the scope and methods for this study. In this work, I operate entirely within the sphere of the "organizational settings" while working within each of the various quadrants that overlap with this sphere. Significant amounts of my writing are at the intersection of these four spheres, but at other points, my work will operate at the intersection of only two or three of the spheres.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF SETTING AND SELF

In the forthcoming chapters, I explore my experiences at a predominantly White masculinized organization in the American Midwest. The goals of this chapter are to (1) introduce the reader to the historical and cultural context in which my research takes place and (2) to describe my myself and my relationship to Midwestern culture.

My discussion of Midwestern context focuses on the history and continued prevalence of racism in Indiana because my research focuses on experiences in that state, but I also draw on literature about the region more generally and about neighboring states. To a reader with no roots in the Midwest, my writing will serve as a basis for understanding the culture that is explored in the remainder of the dissertation. Additionally, I suspect that many White readers with roots in the Midwest will be surprised to learn how deep and pervasive racism is in our region. I know from experience that many Midwesterners prefer to imagine racial bigotry as something external to their lives and perhaps distinctly Southern. The reality is that the Midwest has a long and well-documented history of racism that in many ways rivals that of the Deep South.

My discussion of self is significant to this study because I, as the researcher, am also functioning as the research instrument. It is my perception of events and reflections on them that are the basis for the realities constructed in subsequent chapters. For this reason, it is important for readers to understand my rural Canadian upbringing, my family's progressivism on race, and how I came to reside in the Midwest. All of these factors combined to create an insider/outsider identity in which I was generally perceived as White and therefore enjoyed the conferred privileges of Whiteness, but was also often perceived as "other" or "foreign" because of my opposition to racism or my roots in Canada.

Racism in Indiana's History and Culture

In discussing the history of racism in Indiana, there are three threads of the state's history that must be addressed: its deep association with the Ku Klux Klan, the state's last recorded lynching that transpired in Marion in 1930, and the lasting effects of sundown communities. The tapestry woven from these threads provides the backdrop to my explanation of contemporary racial division and segregation in central Indiana and the greater Indianapolis metro area. To acclimate the reader to the racial climate in central Indiana, I will combine references to literature with autoethnographic notes and personal reflections about the spaces in which I worked. It is important to orient the reader to the prevalence of racism in Indiana's past and present because the larger cultural context influences workplace cultures and norms. I will start by discussing the impact of the KKK and lynching on Indiana's history and culture. Next, I will introduce the reader to the concept of the Midwestern sundown town. I will conclude with descriptions of Indianapolis' northeast suburbs and the city of Indianapolis itself.

Lynching and the Klan in Indiana History

In the 1920s, Indiana had the densest Klan membership of any state in the union with an estimated membership ranging between 20% and 30% among eligible Whites (Carr, 2006; Moore, 1991). Membership represented a cross-section of the White protestant male population of the state and included most of the state's political elite. Members included sheriffs, judges, mayors, prosecutors, and school board officials. Additionally, for most of the 1920s, the Klan controlled the governor's office, state senate, and the house. Many women and children participated as members of parallel women's groups that supported Klan activity (Carr, 2006; Moore, 1991).

In the 1920s, Klan Grand Wizard D.C. Stephenson exerted a massive influence on state politics and on the Klan nationwide, but he was eventually discredited by a rape/murder scandal at the height of his power. His fall led the majority of the state's Klan members to leave the organization. Carr (2006), however, argued that it is dangerous to associate exodus from the Klan as evidence of changed opinions regarding race and exclusion of others. It merely reflects a loss of faith in the organization and its leader.

Marion, Indiana, was the site of one of America's most well-known lynchings on August 7, 1930. In this act of racial terror, a group of between 25 and 50 active White participants murdered two Black men while between 10,000 and 15,000 people enjoyed the carnival-like atmosphere surrounding the event. Eyewitnesses reported that the two Black men accused of raping a White woman were killed and mutilated even before the nooses were tied around their necks and their corpses were hung. Many in the town sought souvenirs from the event, including strips of clothes ripped off the deceased men's backs and short segments of rope cut from the nooses used in the hangings (Carr, 2006). No one was ever arrested or tried in connection with the crime. In her work about the legacy of the hanging in Marion and surrounding Indiana communities, Carr noted the continued prevalence of the Klan, skinheads, and other hardcore White supremacist groups in Indiana. She also explained that those who remember the lynching continue to brag about it in circles where they feel safe to do so. Carr also noted that Marion is not an atypical central Indiana town, and it does not appear to be any more racist than similar towns in the region. It is just one example of the many sundown communities in the Midwest where Blacks and others were made to feel unsafe and unwelcome. Additionally, she explained that many in younger generations are blind to the racist history of the region or even their own

families. She cited herself as an example by relating a personal narrative about finding her grandfather's KKK membership card.

Sundown Communities

The homogeneity of most Hoosier communities, many of which have only gotten whiter since the golden age of the Indiana Klan, serves to protect the traditions, history, and culture of that period. While Indiana was not a slave state, it should be remembered that many Whites opposed slavery in Indiana, not because they were opposed to Whites holding Blacks as chattel but rather because they did not want Blacks entering the state at all or because they feared economic competition from slave labor. After the Civil War, many of the Blacks who had previously lived in Indiana were expelled as more and more Hoosier communities became sundown towns (Loewen, 2005).

Loewen defined "sundown communities" as communities that are all-White or majority-White and that actively discouraged Blacks and other minority groups from residing in their town, city, or suburb. Exclusion could be enforced through violence, including lynchings in the early 20th century, mob violence and threats in the middle 20th century, community-wide obstruction of investigations of White on Black violence as recently as the 1990s, and police harassment and unequal enforcement of laws into the present day. Other non-physically violent techniques such as restrictive covenants, thinly veiled threats, careful cultivation of racist reputations, semi-sanctioned schoolyard bullying of minority children, posting of signs demanding that all Blacks be out of the town by sundown, extra-legal ordinances enforced by police and local businesses, and a host of other measures were or are used to exclude Blacks and other minorities from sundown towns (Loewen, 2005).

In the present era, sundown towns continue to rely on their reputations to exclude Blacks and reinforce them by taunting Black athletes who enter the town to compete in high school athletics, supporting police departments with differential arrest rates that target minorities, using questionable real-estate practices, and socially shunning outsiders. Indirect methods of discouraging outsiders from entering the area include refusing to maintain public roads and maintaining private drives for residents only, making areas difficult to navigate through such tactics as refusing to post street signs and refusing to give directions to strangers, restricting access to parks and other public spaces to residents of the county, and refusing to zone areas for low-income or government-assisted housing. Hiring practices are also used to keep outsiders away. Some of these are formal, such as only allowing residents of the municipality to apply for jobs in the fire department, police force, or local civil service. Others are informal, such as giving preference to students from the local high school when filling customer service positions rather than giving jobs to outsiders.

Blacks are not the only group who have faced exclusion from sundown communities. Others have included Jews, Catholics, immigrants, lower-class Whites, hippies, cultural deviants, homosexuals, and "swarthy Whites." Loewen estimated that more than half of Indiana towns either are or at one time were sundown communities. Carr explained that her interest in writing about Marion, Indiana, stemmed from fond childhood memories of visiting her grandparents in this historic town. While she had long been aware that a lynching had taken place in the town, it was not typically discussed around her. It was not until she found her grandfather's Klan membership card that she questioned the supposed quaintness of the community's history. She questioned the quietness or apathy with which many White Indiana residents relate to their own communities' history of racism and wondered if this behavior is not "another hood to wear" that

perpetuates racism by failing to confront it (Carr, 2006, p. 78). Carr argued that the ignorance

and apathy among moderate and liberal Whites are exploited by White supremacists who work

tirelessly in central Indiana to advance their aims and who are paying attention when other

Whites are not.

In his online database of suspected sundown towns, Loewen (2016) listed 249 in Indiana

alone. This list includes the places of residence of many of the White coworkers and employers

that I have had over the years. However, I consider Loewen's list incomplete. An example of one

town left off his list is Knightstown. This virtually all-White community, commonly believed to

be named after the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, is noted by the Anti-Defamation League

as being the founding location of an influential White supremacist group called the Vinlanders

(Anti-Defamation League, 2017). The Vinlanders were founded by Brien James, a long-time

criminal and former Klan member, who brags about the hate crime allegations that he has been

the target of (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). James is also alleged to have beaten a man

nearly to death over his refusal to sieg heil. His group operates as an umbrella group that accepts

affiliations of other small skinhead and White supremacist groups (Southern Poverty Law

Center, 2016). The journal excerpt explains how Knightstown intersected with my work life and

the hostility the community directed toward Blacks.

> When it was announced that an organization I worked for would be relocating to
> Knightstown, Indiana, it kicked off a fury of discussion among Black employees who
> were aware of the city's reputation and historic connection to White supremacy. Some
> believed the past was in the past, others argued that the rural area we had been working in
> was already pretty racist and didn't expect things to be much worse in Knightstown, and
> others immediately began applying for new jobs out of fear. Most of the Black employees
> ultimately made the move with the company. When we arrived, our organization, which
> served large numbers of minority clients, was not greeted kindly by most of the residents.
> Conversations with community members revealed that many assumed that students
> taking GED classes through our organization were convicts. One way that Knightstown
> residents made our Black employees feel unwelcome was by refusing to give directions
> to local establishments. (J1)

In one incident that I witnessed, a Black man (who I'd later learn was in Knightstown to interview for a job at my organization) stopped at the local gas station to ask for directions to a diner. The two cashiers as well as several customers all insisted that there was no diner in town. The man left the station. When I realized what had just happened, I followed him out to his car to explain that he was only a block from the local diner. And that everyone in town knew where it was. He looked nervous and apprehensive. I tried to put him at ease by engaging in a little small talk, and found out that he was in town interviewing for a job with my organization. I wished him luck, and we parted ways. (AE)

While the effort to make this man feel uncomfortable and unwelcome was rather subtle, other examples are much more lurid.

One day, shortly after the move to Knightstown, a group of coworkers and I went for lunch at the town's only diner. Heads turned when I walked in accompanied by six or eight Black coworkers. We ordered and ate our lunch. When the meal was finished, I got up to go to the restroom. When I returned to the table, my coworkers told me we had to leave and nervously rushed out of the restaurant. After we left, one of my coworkers explained that a 20-something-year-old White man wearing camo and chains had walked into the restaurant, sat down at my vacated seat, and asked if he could serenade the table with a song he wrote. My coworkers could not remember the verses, but the chorus was, "*All dogs go to heaven, but all niggers go to hell*." (AE)

The City of Indianapolis

While the majority of the people I worked with at Midwest Installation lived in predominantly White communities, my organization also served more diverse areas such as the city of Indianapolis. My workmates and other Whites instilled in me a mental map of which areas of Indianapolis were dangerous and should generally not be visited by Whites. This mental map was developed based on admonitions from White coworkers who would say things like "What the hell were you doing there, trying to get killed?" after I had mentioned that I had visited some friends who lived on 40th Street and N. Butler Avenue. Or when former colleagues would hear that I bought a house near 25th and Post and asked if I was sure the area was safe for White people. My mental map was also developed through casual references to things like high crime rates and low-quality schools. To give the reader a general feel for where the boundaries of

perceived safety are among Whites, I produced map 1 by downloading a Google Map of

Indianapolis and using Microsoft Paint to black out areas of the map that I was taught to avoid. I

used solid Black shading to indicate areas that Whites regarded as highly dangerous and to be

avoided at all costs. The gray areas were still considered sketchy by many Whites, especially

upper-class Whites. Working-class Whites were more likely to speak fondly of childhood

memories in the gray areas while representing them as currently being "in decline." My

construction of ethnographic maps follows the recommendation of Murchison (2010) that maps

can be used to show human movement (or in this case, aversion to movement) and demonstrate

how people conceptualize space.
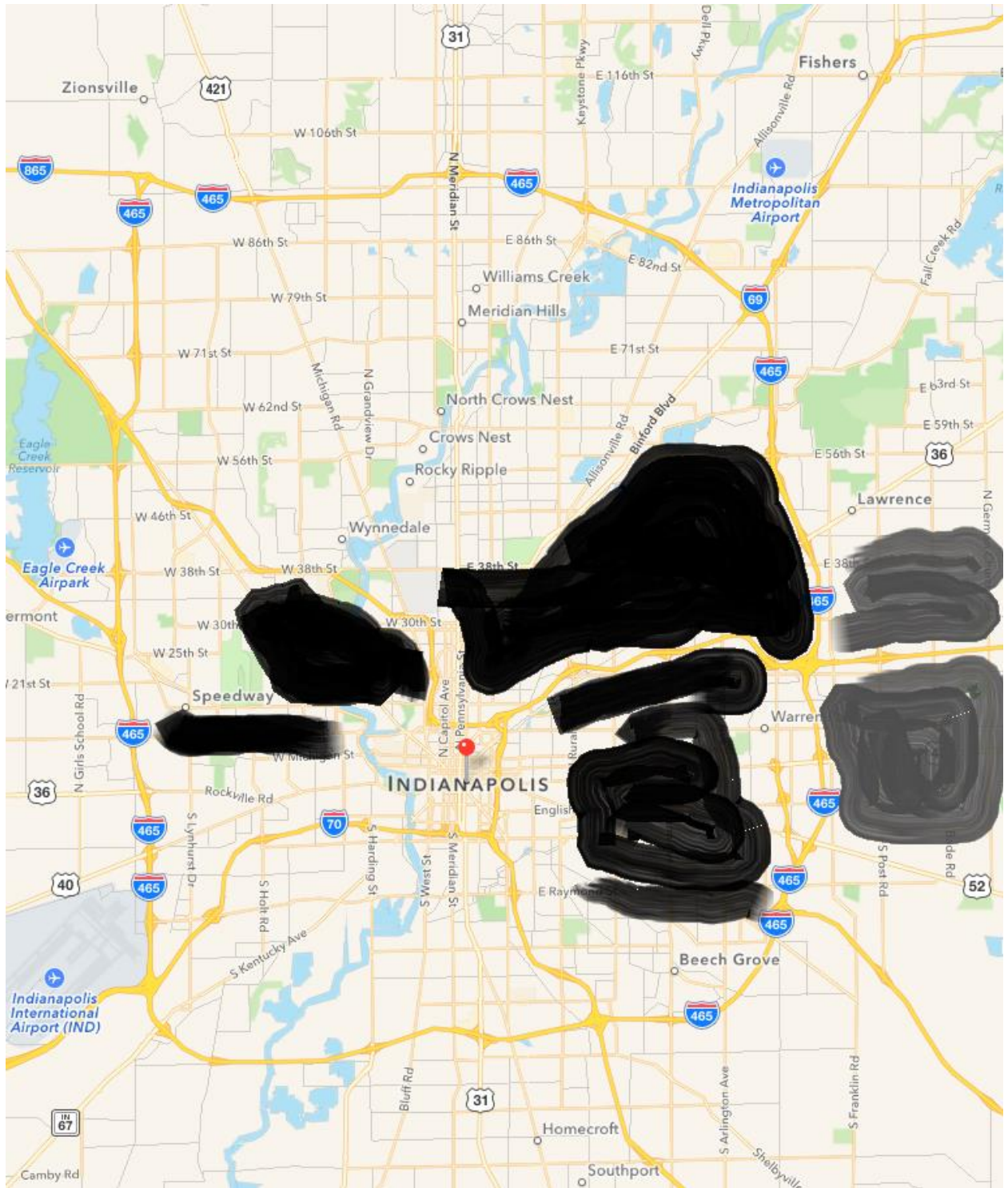
Map 1.

After drawing this map, I was sure that any long-time resident of Indianapolis would see

the racial implication of the shaded areas. But in order to make these implications clear to

outsiders, I decided to include map 2 and map 3. Map 2 was created as part of a University of

Wisconsin project to raise awareness about residential segregation in large U.S. cities (Maps of

the African American and White Populations in the Indianapolis, IN MSA, 2002). In this map,

blacked-out areas represent spaces that are 80% or more Black, while red spaces are at least 20%

Black. All other spaces are less than 20% Black. Map 3 is a cropping of map 2 to bring it into

roughly the same viewing area as map 1. By comparing my freehand representation of areas

generally regarded as dangerous by Whites to the statistical representations from the University

of Wisconsin, it is easy to see that the 80% Black areas of Indianapolis were all considered

dangerous and that many of the areas with 20% Black residents or more were also regarded as

dangerous.
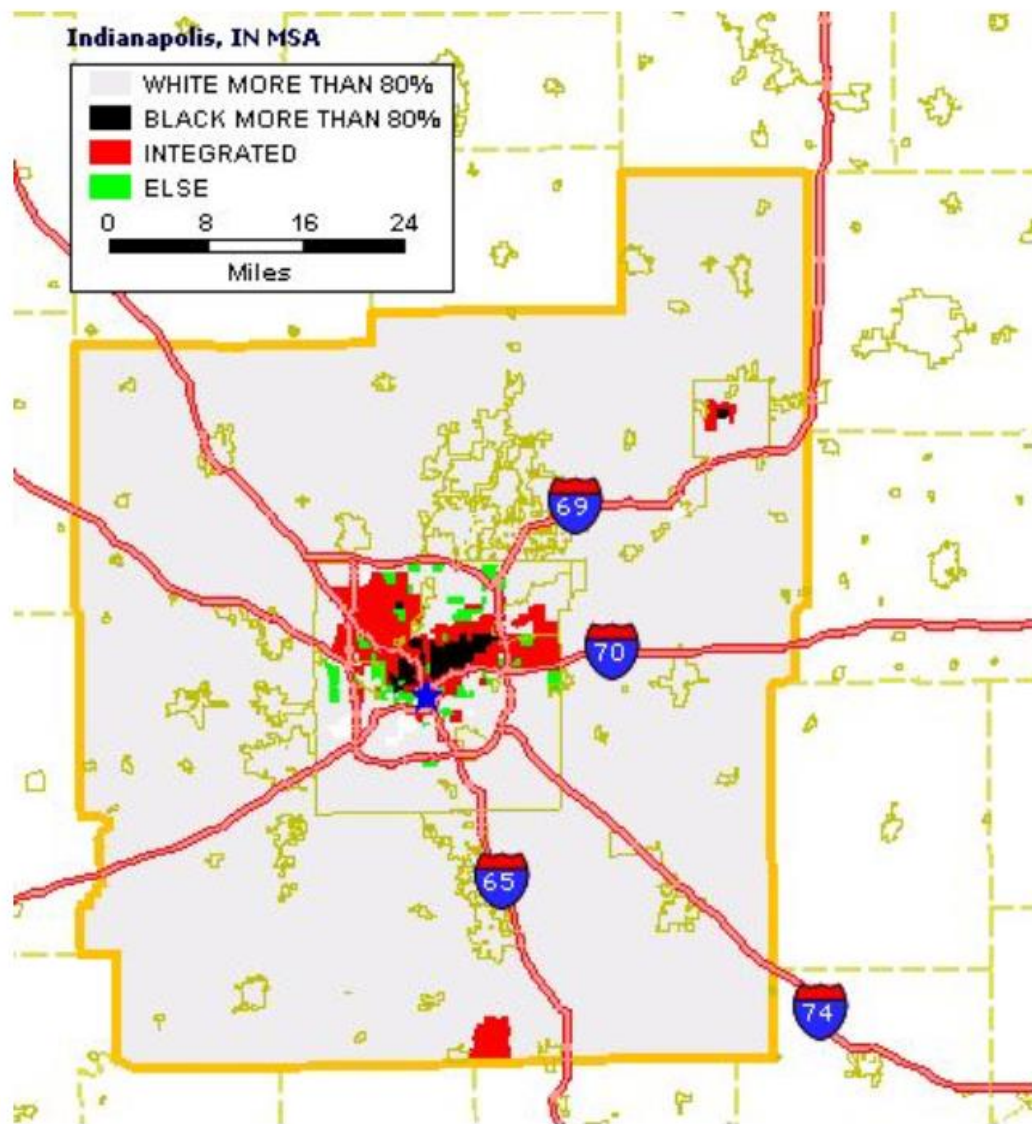
Map 2. Racial Mix of Block Groups in the Indianapolis, IN MSA (2002)
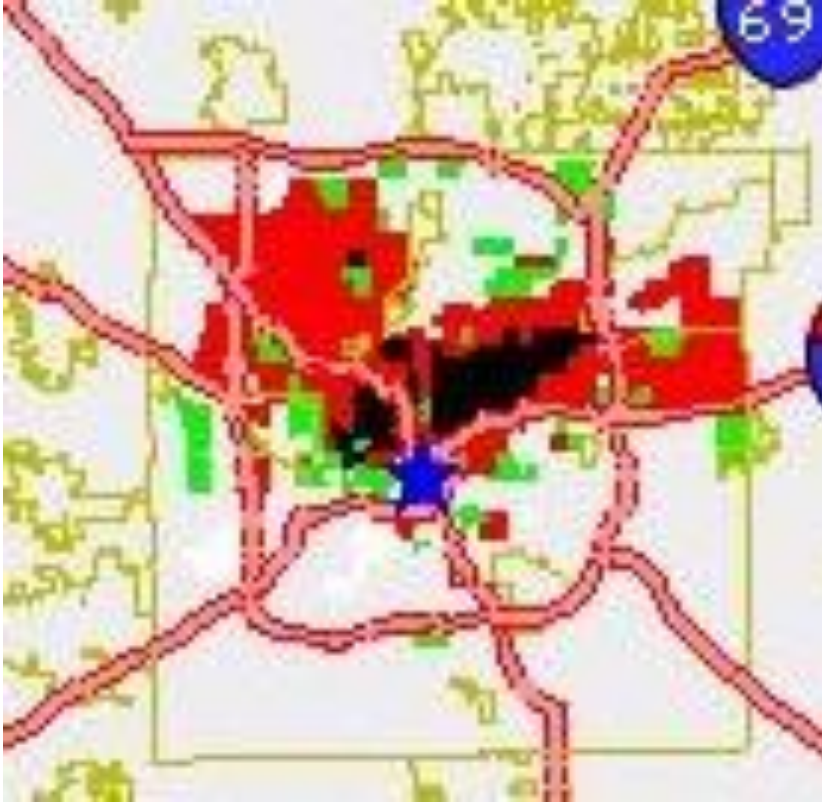
Map 3. Racial Mix of Block Groups in the Indianapolis, IN MSA (2002).

The official legend for map 2 designates it as a map of racial mixing in Indianapolis. To me, this map represents something different. Living and working in the 80% White areas, we learned that many of the red areas and all the Black areas were to be driven over, not stopped in, and ideally not thought about. Residents of Black areas were treated as if they did not exist or at least as if they should not matter to the lives of Whites. In the rare times when Whites planned trips into Black areas, their imaginations transformed residents of these areas into objects of fear and danger.

> Generally, White residents of the White areas only entered Black areas a few times a year (or less) to visit certain attractions such as the State Fair Grounds or the Indianapolis Children's Museum. Visits to attractions in Black areas were often accompanied by speeches about the "danger" or "seediness" of the area, and warnings about the importance of sticking together, keeping the car doors locked, not wandering off, and moving directly from the parking lot to the attraction without delay or deviation. (AE)

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To be fair, Whites were not the only ones who perceived some of the predominantly Black areas as being unsafe for White people. For example, when I was worshipping at an otherwise all-Black church near 25th and Keystone (the heart of a Blacked-out area), I was regularly walked to my car when evening services let out because my fellow parishioners feared for my safety. In another example, a Black coworker of mine demonstrated his understanding of White fears of Indianapolis' lower east side and played into them during my onboarding at a not-for-profit.

Mitchel was a cheerful middle-aged Black man and one of our program directors who stood about 5'3". He held a master's degree, was working on a PhD, and had been serving in both ministry and student service for his entire adult life. He had an infectious smile and contagious energy. He lived his life with a heart so full of love and light-hearted humor that it gave him a curiously buoyant gait. He was tapped so deeply into a source of incomparable joy, and I couldn't help but be happy when I was with him.

On our first meeting, he was to take me out to give me a tour of a few outreach centers in the Martindale-Brightwood area that our organization partnered with. Despite his obvious good nature, he appeared to be doing his level best to adopt the persona of Denzel Washington's character from *Training Day*. He talked about how dangerous the neighborhoods were where we were going. He warned me against visiting them after dark. He took intentional wrong turns getting to locations in an attempt to disorient me, and even went as far as to get on the phone with a friend and start ranting about how much he "hated White people."

I'd never been around someone working so hard to personify a stereotype. It seemed very important to him that he come off as a threatening Black man. I wanted to oblige him, so I tried to act scared. I also remained silent about the fact that in our circling around these "rough" neighborhoods I knew exactly where we were. As we passed them, I was mentally cataloging church after church that I had played at while working the quartet scene. We were about a quarter mile from my home church when he started talking about "not coming down here alone after dark." I visited the area after dark at least once a week for church band rehearsals or evening services.

While touring the neighborhood with Mitchel my biggest fear was actually that a community member would see me at one of the site visits and come out to offer me a hug. One of the locations was right beside my Minister of Music's apartment complex. If he had spotted me and come out of his home greeting me as "nephew," it would have spoiled my diligent efforts to act scared for Mitchel.

Mitchel seemed quite impressed with his scary Black man routine, and after he finished the conversation on the phone about how much he hated White people he grinned and guffawed, "I'm just messing with you man!"

He laughed hard. I had been holding wide eyes and a straight face for too long, I couldn't have held it back much longer. I laughed harder than I had in years. Did he think

my hilarity was heightened by surprise and relief of fear? If so, maybe I should head for Hollywood.

I am not entirely clear if Mitchel was trying to break down White stereotypes of these neighborhoods by using humor and thus trying to help me to feel more safe, or if he was trying to give me a good-natured warning about dangers that he perceived in hopes that he would inspire me to be careful when working in the neighborhood. It may have been both. Either way, my ride-along with him shows that he was at least aware of the perceived danger to Whites who enter the area.

Regardless of whether residential segregation and White fears of Black areas were presented as being deadly serious or the object of good-natured humor, they were pervasive. Given that much of my early career was spent in transportation and delivery, perceptions of neighborhood safety certainly affected the way business was conducted.

From central Indiana's history of racial violence to contemporary forms of exclusion and segregation, racism permeates every aspect of our culture. With patterns of racial division so deeply ingrained into our daily lives, it was a near inevitability that such patterns would evidence themselves in the workplace.

Self-Description

In order that the reader better understand the contexts for specific social interactions, I will provide a brief description of myself. In the following chapter, I will introduce the reader to my employer, Midwest Installation.

In this dissertation, I will act as the instrument of analysis, so I will include reflective descriptions of myself to help the reader understand my perspectives and potential biases (Creswell, 2013; Emerson et al., 2011). As an autoethnographer, much of this personal information is woven throughout the paper. In this section, I will provide details about myself

that are not necessarily germane to my research topic but are nonetheless important in

understanding my construction of self and how I represent the social spaces I occupy.

> I grew up in a Canadian hamlet called South Cooking Lake, which had a population of about 250. The community supported one barber, one church, one gas station, one K-9 school that serviced the surrounding area, and one on-call fire department. The most exciting thing that ever happened in South Cooking Lake was when a country music artist came to shoot part of a music video on location at our gas station. This successful corporate artist, when seeking a truly ramshackle town whose image would unmistakably cry out "Country" to anyone who saw it, came to my hometown.
> My mother had grown up a small-town girl from a forestry community whose father taught her to shoot and fish. Our family proudly displayed two bear hides and a giant set of moose antlers in our home. Grandpa had shot the moose and one of the bears, skinned them, and fed them to his family. The second bearskin was a gift from a friend.
> I spent most of my formative years exploring the wooded areas surrounding my house. Nature provided us with wood that we split to fuel our winter fires that we burned for heat, not ambiance. I never met my maternal grandfather. But I felt some connection to him when I split ricks of wood to help keep the family warm. He had been a heavy equipment mechanic at his brothers' forestry company. When we built our house, I got to drive nails and a bobcat. I helped my father and some men from church hoist framed walls into position. (J1)

My small-town upbringing would make it easy for me to relate to the rural White

working class in America who had experience with manual work and also with living in tenuous

economic situations. Another factor in my upbringing, the fact that both of my parents held

advanced degrees and spent parts of their careers in white-collar jobs, would set me apart. The

fact I was part of an immigrant family would also set me apart.

> After my parents' divorce, my mother remarried and moved with my siblings and I to live with her new husband in Hamilton County, an Indianapolis suburb located northeast of the city. She anxiously awaited legal resident status, which came after 18 months, after which time she was legal to work in the county. I had been born in the United States when my mother was an international student, and I was therefore legal to work upon arrival. So, I entered the American workforce before my mother could. As a 15-year-old living in the United States for the first time I could remember, I identified as Ukrainian-Canadian and would only gradually come to see myself as White. I was not color-blind in the way that many American Whites are color-blind. Color-blind Americans do not think twice about checking "White" on a demographic form but also do not think twice about being White the rest of the day either.
> I remember the first time I filled out an American form that asked me for my race. The options were White, Asian, Black, Native American, and Other. I used a process of

elimination to decide which best suited me. I held my arm up against a white wall and thought that I was too olive to be white, I wondered if Ukraine basically bordering Asia might qualify me as Asian, and I was sure I was not Black or Native American. My initial confusion about how I was supposed to identify racially was probably reinforced by White acquaintances who asked me how I got so dark in the summer, or who on at least one occasion referred to me as a "mongrel half-breed."

I checked "Other" and followed the prompt to the question about ethnicity, where the options were Hispanic or Non-Hispanic. I did not know what the words meant so I assumed that they did not apply to me. I scanned the form for a space to enter Ukrainian, or Canadian, or Immigrant but there was none. I was frustrated by the process and wrote "Ukrainian-Canadian" on the form. (AE)

I was not pretending that I did not see race and I was not denying or running from Whiteness. James Baldwin (1985) argued that European immigrants buy their ticket to real American Whiteness by willfully assimilating into a racist White American culture, and I had not yet bought my ticket. Noel Ignatiev (1995) would later use the term "becoming white" to describe how European-descended immigrants learn to define themselves in opposition to Blacks. To me, this process was only beginning, but it would take only a few short years for me to acquire a "White" identity.

Ezekiel (1997) when writing about neo-Nazi recruits in the Midwest, highlighted several attributes that make certain young men vulnerable to recruitment into the movement. These include young adulthood (age 17-22), families with few social ties, financial vulnerability, a lack of employment opportunities, a psychology dominated by fear, and estrangement from their fathers.

Reading this profile struck me to the core because of how well it described me when I arrived in the United States as a teenager and when I started working at Midwest Installation at age 19. My family had few social ties partially because we recently immigrated, partially because my mother was not eligible to work and thus could not develop a professional network, and partially because my mother's husband punished me when I attempted to participate in social

functions. In one such instance, I was grounded for attending Christian worship services at mainline denominations rather than attending services at his far-right evangelical congregation. I needed a job and feared the consequences of unemployment. My mother's husband required rent payments from me, and failure to comply would result in the locks being changed and threats of homelessness. He had proven his willingness to follow through on the threat to change locks by forcing me to bed down in the shed once while I was still a minor. Likewise, he had stated coldly after I purchased my first automobile that it was a good thing I bought a van so I would have somewhere to sleep if he decided to kick me out. At 18, I had no doubt that I needed a paycheck to have a roof over my head and feared the consequences of being unable to make rent.

The key difference between myself and Ezekiel's profile is that I had not lost contact with my father at an early age. A restraining order had, however, kept us from seeing each other for half the year preceding my move to the United States, and my home in Indiana was 1,600 miles from his in Edmonton, Canada. Like the young men in Ezekiel's profile, I was desperate for male role models, but unlike them I did have a loving father who maintained very progressive opinions about celebrating other cultures and races. The following is an excerpt from a song I wrote in my 20s that summarizes my feelings of longing for my Dad and also his commitment to his faith.

> I haven't been home now. In many a long year
> And my father's voice has grown strange to my ear
> But I still remember the cross that hung on the wall
> And when I think of that old church house, a teardrop does fall.

Something else that likely set me apart from those profiled by Ezekiel was that my father and mother had each taught a version of Christianity that celebrated the diverse range of practice and worship within the faith. They believed that Jesus inspired all the cultures of the world and the diversity of cultures and practices of worship were evidence of the glory and majesty of God.

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While my father's and mother's lessons regarding the celebrations of difference were likely instrumental in protecting me from the appeals of White supremacists, they could not protect me from the need to seek out financial security, a sense of community, and male role models. Thus, I was vulnerable.

Conceptual Map for Analysis Chapters

Intersectionality's demand that researchers attend to multiple forms of privilege and marginalization presents organizational challenges for this study. Given the large amounts of salient data related to different aspects of social identity, it would have been impossible to engage equally in discussions related to gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, citizenship, enabledness, and sexual orientation across each chapter. Thus, in each of the four analysis chapters, I chose to foreground certain areas of difference while explaining how different aspects of social identity affect the foregrounded area.

In chapter 5, I foreground social class by exploring the work lives of people who would generally be classified as "working class" or "blue collar." I do this while explaining how race and gender influence experiences of social class.

In chapter 6, I concentrate on how sexism, racism, and homophobia dominate certain media sources consumed at work. This discussion also connects marginalizing discourse in these three areas to the presence of ableism, ageism, and religious intolerance.

Chapter 7 foregrounds workplace sexism while showing how it supports—and is supported by—racism and homophobia. This chapter also hints at power distances created by factors such as age, citizenship, and years of service to a company.

Chapter 8 looks at how two different varieties of racism support one another through an exploration of discourse that dehumanizes both African Americans and Native Americans. This

discussion of different iterations of racism is conducted with consideration to gender and class effects.

Chapter 9 provides a summary of the research project as well as implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER 5: CAUTION MEN AT WORK: RACE AND CLASS IN A WHITE MASCULINIZED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Research portraying the lives of working-class White men has described the process by which young men are socialized into membership in the laboring classes (Willis, 1977) and a sense of disillusionment with the promises that hard work will be rewarded by upward mobility (Isenberg, 2016; MacLeod, 1995. Other works explore the challenges of surviving on the wages paid by American low-status occupations (Ehrenreich, 2010) and celebrate the intelligence, innovation, and creativity of laboring people (Crawford; 2009; Jacobs-Huey, 2006; Rose, 2005). This chapter draws on song lyrics, journals, and autoethnographic writings to explore my experiences as a blue-collar worker in an almost exclusively White-male construction company I have given the name Midwest Installation.

In this chapter, I seek to join discussions of working-class intellectual life and the struggle to make it as a blue-collar worker to research critiquing the ways in which working-class White men frequently find solidarity in racial (Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 2006, 2017; Du Bois, 2010) and gendered (Collins, 2013, 2015; Collins & Callahan, 2012) exclusivity. It is easy for academics and members of the White middle and upper-middle classes to vilify the racism of the working class (Isenberg, 2016). This vilification can be counterproductive when it serves to blind the middle class from their own prejudice or to salve the consciences of Whites who can say to themselves things like, "While I don't prefer the company of Blacks, at least I'm not like those White trash racists who use slurs." While racism can be a highly destructive force in masculinized blue-collar workplaces and must be analyzed in detail, I choose to avoid the temptation of an exclusive focus on racism that decontextualizes the phenomena from broader culture and life. I believe that any fruitful attempt to reform or uproot racist elements of a culture

must include understanding these elements in relation to broader trends. To do this, I attempt to present humanized portrayals of those who engage in dehumanizing rhetoric and practice. I hope that this chapter will provide a broad and humanized view of the culture of Midwest Installation that serves to inform the following two chapters that delve into the deeply dehumanizing discourse patterns in this organization.

For working-class White men, gender and racial privilege are powerful forces, but they are not reinforced by the same level of class privilege experienced by Whites who are at or above middle class. At Midwest Installation the almost exclusively White full-time staff were predominantly from the working class or the working poor, but some had experiences that ranged from underclass to middle class. Midwest Installation did not afford its Black temporary employees an opportunity to move above working poor. To move discussions about race, gender, and class forward, researchers need to combine often-siloed streams of literature on race and class while paying attention to the way privilege and marginalizations based on one aspect of identity manifests differently depending on other identity markers (Collins, 2016). In this chapter, I look at an organization staffed largely by White men who occupy positions of racial and gender privilege but who occupy a middle position in the American class hierarchy. These working-class men face marginalization at the hands of the middle, upper-middle, and capitalist classes but are privileged over the economic underclass. Their experiences raise questions regarding how White privilege is defined. McIntosh (1997) offered the following definition of White privilege:

> I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks. (p. 291)

I believe that most working-class Whites would find this definition so foreign from their experiences as to be laughable. While part of this laughability would stem from a failure to recognize certain forms of privilege they enjoy, it also derives from their complicated positioning below middle-class Whites but above certain groups including the underclass and working-class people of color. I will argue that McIntosh's definition reflects a middle-class (or higher) White experience of privilege, and I will offer a complementary definition that I believe is more reflective of working-class experiences.

Defining Class

There is a great deal of subjectivity involved in labeling and defining class groups. Some classification schemes depend largely on educational attainment to determine class and generally consider anyone who has completed college to be middle-class. By these standards, none of Midwest Installation's installation or warehouse staff could be considered middle-class. Gilbert's (2018) class definitions look beyond just educational attainment and are useful for my analysis partially because of the three class groups he identified as below middle class. Gilbert identified six class groups in America.

1) The capitalist class, which derives its income predominantly from income-generating assets.

2) The upper-middle class, which is comprised of professionals and managers with a college education.

3) The middle class, who enjoy loose workplace supervision while completing a diverse range of tasks. These can be blue- or white-collar employees. They tend to earn enough to have a mainstream standard of living.

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4) The working class tend to do closely supervised—often manual—work and earn a consistent wage that affords a lifestyle just below the mainstream.

5) The working poor tend to be employed in low-skills jobs that provide uncertain incomes and low standards of living.

6) The underclass, who have low workforce participation and who often rely on government assistances to maintain a subsistence-level lifestyle.

In this chapter, I will use Gilbert's definitions while exploring how Blacks and Whites working for the same company occupied different positions in the class hierarchy. When I utilize the term "upper classes," it refers to Gilbert's top three class groups. References to "lower classes" will indicate generalizations about the bottom three. The complicated class realities of working-class Whites are well exemplified by Bill, a supervisor who enjoyed some middle-class-like privileges but also had an underclass-like dependence on food stamps.

Methods

I will proceed with a description of work life at Midwest Installation and a brief sketch of "Bill," one of the organizational leaders. Bill was an organizational tone-setter who had a significant effect on my views of work, manhood, Americanness, and Whiteness. While this sketch stops well short of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) in its complexity, it does seek to blend the artistic (song lyrics) with the social-scientific. My sketch of Bill is also informed by the "portraitist as subject" sensibility, which suggests that the song Bill inspired me to write as well as my description of him are largely reflections of the lessons he taught me and my relationship to them.

I hope to demonstrate the complexity of Bill and the other men whom I worked alongside for three years in our predominantly White masculinized construction company. These men

loved, fought, joked, struggled with poverty, debated politics, discriminated, ate lunch, reflected

on their place in the world, looked out for their friends, and cared for their families. I hope that in

providing rich descriptions of them and our workplace, I will paint a picture that does justice to

the complexity and depth of my workmates. I believe that this more complete picture will also

provide a more nuanced understanding of how White privilege and class standing interact with

other aspects of culture. When "(AE)" appears in parentheses, this signals that the preceding

quote is from autoethnographic writing. Similarly, "(J1)" indicates that writing is quoted from

personal journals.

Evidence and Analysis

Midwest Installation

These prison walls are getting smaller
So is my heart so there's room
These dreams of mine are getting smaller
So is my mind and so are you

And I swear every day it gets harder
But I'm getting stronger, so it's okay
These arms of mine are getting larger
But they hold no one, so it's all in vain

So, I'll smoke another cigar on the highway
As my engine pushes down the road
And I tell myself I'm on the way home
But really, I'm just pushing another load
—From an original song composed in the cab of my work truck at Midwest Installation

While forklifts, post hole diggers, pickup trucks, trailers, and hand tools might not be

glamorous, the work I did with them pushed me over $11 an hour. Relative to the $5.85 per hour

minimum wage or the $7.25 an hour I had made working in chain restaurants, this was a strong

hourly wage. Access to 50- to 70-hour work weeks available during peak season at Midwest

Installation enabled me to sometimes earn as much as $3,000 a month during the summers.

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During the overlap between the busy season and the academic year, full-time work and full-time college course loads were certainly a strain. During the fall and spring, I worked an average of 10 hours a day Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday while taking a full academic load on Tuesday and Thursday. Both the strong wages and flexibility in scheduling helped make my post-secondary education possible. These wages were more than sufficient for me as a young man who split a three-bedroom house with five tenants and who was free of dependents. However, the majority of the men at work struggled to provide for their families, partially during the slow seasons when hours were cut and especially through the layoff months. My 2004 tax returns indicate that in 12 months at Midwest Installation, I earned just under $20,000. This figure would put my coworkers with families of four almost exactly on the federal poverty line.

Once classes let out for the summer, I would work 10 or more hours a day Monday through Saturday. This summer income was vital because it allowed me to save money for tuition, books, and the layoff months of the slow season (November to February). I worked this job from 2003 to 2006 with a few winter layoff periods. The long hours I worked for Midwest Installation gave me a strong sense of kinship and camaraderie there. Even now, a decade after the business closed its doors, it is one of the first places that I most associate with images of home and a sense of belonging. It was while working at the job when I first began to think of myself as a man (rather than a boy or teen), and facing the physical and mental challenges of the job helped me to develop a sense of independence, competency, and security. The following autoethnographic description can orient the reader to daily life on the job:

> Showing up to work on an average summer day, our warehouse would bustle with our virtually all-White male staff and our parking lot would be filled with a mix of employee vehicles and company trucks. Our regular fleet consisted of a couple of used panel vans bought at auction, a white Ford F-150, a golden Chevy Silverado, and an Isuzu flatbed. All of these trucks were dinged up, but they were considered to be in good shape compared to the trucks parked in back. These included a Ford F-250 that looked

like it survived a side impact collision and had probably been an insurance write-off. We also had an old box truck that was considered such a death trap that it was only used when one of the "good" trucks was in the shop. (AE)

After six weeks on the job I was informally promoted to crew leader, and because I was the low guy on the totem pole my crew usually had to drive the F-250, which was in severe need of bodywork. This vehicle had its passenger side door held closed with a bungee cord. Members of my crew got a kick out of climbing into the truck "Dukes of Hazzard style" or "bro duking it." I hadn't seen the show, so I had to have the reference explained to me. In the *Dukes of Hazzard* television show, the protagonists regularly enter their car (nicknamed the General Lee) by jumping through the side windows rather than opening the door. In the show, this move was often preceded by a character sliding across the Confederate flag painted on the hood of their sports car. The guys at work tried to effect similar slides a few times, but the hood of the truck was too high. (AE)

We generally referred to the F-250 as the "cab-and-a-half" because it had a second row of seating. I liked it because I was able to have a relatively large crew when I was assigned that truck, and also because I was just learning how to drive a truck and trailer combination. It took me a while to learn how to back up a trailer, and I certainly jack-knifed the trailer into the side of that old cab-and-a-half a few times before I got the hang of it. The damage I did to the truck was laughed off by my supervisor. But it was understood that when I moved up to a better truck, I'd have to be more careful.

Assembling playground equipment and basketball hoops provided my introduction into the rough and tumble masculinity of Midwestern semi-skilled blue-collar work. At this job I learned to drive big trucks, back up a trailer, use hand tools, smoke a cigar, talk shit, catcall women, mix concrete, and generally what it means to be a man in a room full of good ol' boys. I worked as part of a delivery, installation, and maintenance team that would swell to as large as about 30 during the summer and would cut down to about 8 guys in the winter. My job was to assemble high-end modular playsets and to install basketball hoops. Our equipment was top end, and some of our larger playset orders topped $10,000. I had the honor of installing playground equipment at the home of NBA All-Star Jermaine O'Neil. Other installers put up hoops for the likes of Larry Byrd and Reggie Miller. It was a thrill to work at the homes of famous athletes, but even aside from that, I found the work enjoyable. Part of what made the job fun were the long rides we took to job sites because we serviced our entire state and also did work in three neighboring states. We often drove two or more hours from one job to another, with some far away trips requiring us to get hotels in places like Nashville or Chicago to complete large jobs out of state. The time in the truck, typically with one or two other coworkers, provided a stage for us to tell jokes and tall tales, brag (or lie) about sexual exploits, and discuss philosophy or politics.

The work itself had elements that required thought and creativity but also aspects that required nothing more than physical exertion and toleration for monotony. When engaged in a monotonous activity we talked. Once, while I was digging a hole, I asked a coworker why he didn't go to college or try to get a better job. He explained that he enjoyed the intellectual freedom that digging afforded him. When I questioned him further, he explained that if he went to college and got a job in an office, he would be paid to think, which means the company would own his mind. In contrast, while digging holes for a living the company owned his body, but he was free to think about anything

he wanted. I hadn't seen *Roots* at this point in my life, but I wonder now if the miniseries had influenced his thinking about the relationship between manual labor and intellectual freedom. It was probably this type of freedom that drew people to the job and encouraged them to stay. The freedom to smoke as much weed on the job as we wanted was another attractive aspect of the job to many. (AE)

Most of the installers and our warehouse manager were basically high all day long. I have never particularly enjoyed marijuana, so the fact that I rarely smoked on the job made me stand out. Once, when I declined to smoke, a coworker expressed surprise and asked me why I even worked at this crummy job. He explained that the leniency toward weed was the only reason he stayed at the job. To me, there were three reasons to stay at the job: the money, the opportunity for career advancement, and the social benefits. The job paid well mostly because I could work all the overtime I wanted during the summers. This enabled me to save for school and work significantly fewer hours in the winter months while I worked on term papers for my history degree. My previous job at the gas station typically had only yielded 300 dollars a week. In addition to the wages, there was also a real possibility of being hired into a professional position within the organization after I completed college. On a social level, I loved and respected the men I worked with and valued the time we got to spend together. (AE)

My three years with this organization were the closest thing I've ever experienced to brotherhood. There were several sets of brothers who worked together over the years, but more importantly, there was a core group of men who treated each other like family. As the youngest full-time staff member, I often felt as though I occupied a "kid brother" role, and I also accepted frequent ribbing about my Canadian upbringing. Both of these factors contributed to feelings of subordination to my older American-raised coworkers. This subordination made it difficult for me to disrupt practices I was not comfortable with because my idealistic objections were frequently met with rebuttals citing my youthful naivete or lack of familiarity with the realities of life in America. Like any family, we frequently squabbled among ourselves and had good times together, but most importantly we looked out for our own.

One event we looked forward to every year was Carburetion Day at the Motor Speedway. This event is part of the leadup to the city's famous auto race. I was told that years ago it was the day when Indy cars tested their carburetors, but the name stuck even after the adoption of electronic fuel injection. In the city, Carb Day was treated as a redneck holiday for White good ol' boys from across the state to come to the track to get drunk while watching the Indy cars. Every year we took a team-building field trip to Carb Day. We would start the day by shotgunning beers at the company warehouse and

loading the crew into the back of our flatbed truck. We drank beers out of coolers as we drove the nearly 20 miles to the Speedway.

One Carb Day tradition is for men to offer women cheap beaded necklaces and request that in return she "show us your tits." Some women would oblige, while others would not. The tradition was well established enough that often the phrase "I've got beads" would be enough to get a woman to lift her shirt. In one such exchange, a woman counteroffered and said she would show her tits in exchange for a beer. My coworker responded to the woman by stating that he wouldn't give her a beer and that, "I don't want to see your nasty titties anyway." At this, a large man turned around to confront my coworker. This man was viciously cold-clocked in the temple by a second member of our crew. He crumpled into unconsciousness and was carried away on a stretcher by event staff. I was briefly afraid that my crewmate might get arrested, but more than that I knew we could walk confidently in the rowdy crowds because we had each other's backs. (AE)

Another rough and tumble incident occurred in our warehouse when a new hire was disrespecting some long-time staff members. A senior employee responded by choking the new hire to unconsciousness and leaving him temporarily lifeless on the concrete floor. While I felt on edge around this senior employee for a few days after the altercation, the long-term effect of the violence in our workplace culture was that it made me feel safe and strong. I was a member of the family, and I could count on my big brothers to look out for me if I was in trouble. To this day there is no one I would rather have my back in an altercation than the man who choked out the new hire. (AE)

Bill

Bill, a middle-aged White man whom I deeply admired, inspired a few verses to a song I

wrote back when he was my boss.

Got more to do than can ever get done
So, I'll keep on working 'til there's no more sun

Got more love to give than I can afford to lose
So, I'll keep on losing 'til they think I've paid my dues

I've got nothing left to complain about
Because life's been so good to me
At least the part that I'm here to tell you about

I've drove down country roads
And I've lifted heavy loads
And I've met people who were a lot like me

The smartest man that I ever met
was smoking on a cigarette

He never finished what he started
If he ever started school

I've lost too much time
Trying to figure out why
When all I need to know was that
he did

I've got nothing left to complain about
Because life's been so good to me
At least the part that I'm here to tell you about

      Bill personified the "American" man better than anyone I have ever met. Not only did he look like a real-life Marlboro man, but he was hard-working, dedicated to his family, and always fascinating in his complexity. He was also a master storyteller. When we worked together, he spoke, and I listened. (J1)

      We called him Big Bill, but big did not refer to his size. He possessed average height and a wiry frame. "Big" referred to his stature in our community and to his intelligence. He held the title of warehouse supervisor but also functioned as a trainer who taught me and many others how to quickly and efficiently assemble our products. He also maintained the HVAC units in the various company showrooms and was our resident front-line mechanic who made jerry-rigged repairs to keep trucks out of the shop as long as possible. He held a GED and had attempted an HVAC certification that he was unable to pass because the written portion made no sense to him whatsoever. He had attempted the course after years of working successfully as an HVAC maintenance person. Bill believed he understood HVAC systems better than the man who had taught the course; he just couldn't demonstrate his knowledge on paper. In addition to his full-time job assembling playgrounds, he also had a side business as a handyman and a long history of employment doing apartment maintenance. Bill hired several family members to work alongside us over the years, including his oldest son.

      Bill was one of the smartest people that I've ever met, especially in terms of spatial-mechanical reasoning. He taught me to use hand and power tools, and he taught me how to troubleshoot. The most difficult thing I tried to learn from Bill was how to see third- and fourth-order consequences of my actions. "If you don't get the base of this thing level and square now, after you install the floor and walls, you'll find the roof don't fit." At first, I was bewildered by how he recognized such things. Over the course of three years working alongside him I got better at this.

      Learning to anticipate problems based on foundational error and innocuous mistakes pushed my chess game to another level and helped me in my philosophy courses where students debated the complexity of moral and cultural interconnectedness. I was never able to explain to Bill how his construction-based lessons were transferable to so many other aspects of my education.

      Bill didn't talk much about abstract concepts. But, when he did, he always challenged my assumptions as deeply as anyone ever would. Once, while taking lunch at Steak 'n Shake, Bill talked about how hard the times were. I responded with a cliché I

had learned on the news. "But the economy is in a record growth stage. Some economists are wondering if, with expanding markets abroad, we will be able to sustain economic growth for another decade." Bill laughed so hard I wondered if I should try my hand at standup comedy. Problem was I didn't get the joke. "Ha," he said, "stuff they talk about on the news doesn't affect people like us."

He was right; he was experiencing hard times. He had a job and worked long hours, and so did his wife. But he still relied on his adult daughter's food stamps from time to time. The recession would hit a year after I lost touch with Bill. I know he didn't share in the prosperity of the "boom" years. I wonder how he was affected by the crash.

Bill lived in a trailer house, and we did our installations in the most affluent neighborhoods in Indiana and the surrounding states. We built children's playsets made from California Redwoods. Parents often paid more for these toys than Bill could have sold his trailer for. At the end of a long day, while driving out of one such gated community, he said something that would always haunt me. "Jeremy, I love my kids. I'd never want to send them away. But I wonder what they could learn if they could live like these kids for a few years. These kids' parents must know things I never learned and are teaching their kids. Someday my children will work for the children sleeping in this neighborhood, because I can't teach my kids what it takes to be successful in America. I don't know how to be successful myself."

Was Bill expressing a need for a domestic exchange program? Rich families in America used foreign exchange programs to send their children to see how rich students live overseas. How much could be learned if children in America could learn how others in their own country lived? (J1)

One thing that Bill and other core employees at this job shared was a deep commitment to hard work, in spite of the reality that it never seemed to pay off. Bill shared his commitment to hard work in the form of a cautionary tale about his cousin,

"He didn't have any money saved so he figured he would try to get some workman's comp. He knew if he injured his upper body he'd probably just be sent back to work with light duty restrictions. So, cousin figured he would hurt his feet. So, one day at work he doused his shoes in lighter fluid and gasoline. Then he dropped a match. His plan would have worked too, if he had just kept a cool head and taken his shoes off when the burning started. But, once his feet were on fire, he panicked. He got a little more workman's comp than he wanted to. Had burns covering half his body and was in the hospital for months."

Bill laughed, "What an idiot!"

Working hard might not pay off, but cheating the system had its own peril. (J1)

I worked with Bill through the majority of my college career. Several other students worked with us in the summers for beer money. They were regarded as interlopers by the full-

time staff. I was not. Maybe it was because I was working to pay rent and buy groceries. Or maybe it was because I took the time to learn as much as I could from people like Bill.

The other college students often asked me to "translate" Bill's instructions, and they marveled at how well I understood the man. They called his way of speaking "Billanese." I called Bill's way of speaking "working class." (J1)

Complicated Relationships With Class

As the previous passage indicates, workers at Midwest Installation had a complicated relationship with social class. Driving into gated communities with million-dollar homes could be fun or even awe-inspiring, but even then, it underscored the distance between us and members of the upper classes. Things were made worse by the ways rich people sometimes treated us when we did work at their homes.

> The wide disparity in the way workers are treated by the upper class is remarkable. Some people would make us sandwiches and tip us. Others would bring out jugs of water and lemonade. It was also frequent from customers to indicate a spigot, in case we were thirsty. Others expressed disgust that we drank out of their garden hoses when our water ran dry.
> Once as Bill was stooped over his toolbox, a suburban four-year-old picked one of our hammers off the grass and hit Bill on the crown of the head with it. It baffled me that a child would act that way; maybe the upper-middle class child had watched too many cartoons where hammers fall on construction works without consequences. Maybe those cartoons and his life experiences were reinforcing each other in the devaluation of members of the lower classes. This child was learning that it's okay to watch another man do labor on your behalf and that it's okay to wander through another man's workplace like you own it. Maybe the kid learned to feel entitled to grab anything he wanted and do anything he pleased, regardless of how it affected others. (J1)

As children from the upper classes played in our workspaces or tagged along as their parents directed our work, they were observing how their parents managed economic subordinates. This provided early socialization into the middle-class realm of management. Bill's children's experiences on job sites were much different. His son completed projects with him around the house until he was old enough for paid employment. Then Bill helped him get a job at

Midwest Installation where he applied the skills he learned working alongside his father. The difference in experiences between Bill's son and the children from the upper classes who visited our job sites underscores class differences between them. Bill's son was being socialized and educated for construction or semi-skilled labor, while children from the upper classes were being socialized to manage. Bill's position as a manager—with hiring authority—also highlights differences between the experiences of his children and the children of the Black temps who sometimes worked at Midwest Installation. While these Black men may have been teaching their children the same skills Bill taught his son, they lacked the power or privilege to grant them employment.

Treatment of Black People

>   When I hired on at Midwest Installation, it did not strike me as odd that the entire staff was White. In fact, I did not notice this fact until one day I showed up to work and there was a group of Black people standing around the time clock. I asked my boss about them. He explained that when we got big deliveries of heavy parts we hired temporary workers to help unload the trucks. I asked where the rest of our regular crew was, and my boss explained that they had loaded up all the hand tools in the warehouse and were moving them to another location. This was being done to prevent the Black temps from stealing property that could easily be resold at a pawn shop. (AE)

In this instance, my boss worked to socialize myself and other employees toward a distrust of Black people and taught me to stereotype Black males as criminals. Given that we were perpetually short-staffed during the busy season I asked my boss why we did not keep some of the temps as permanent employees. He said that whenever the company tried that, the employees ended up getting fired. The fact that Whites were generally hired as full-time employees to do semi-skilled labor, and Blacks were almost exclusively hired as temporary laborers to do menial work, underscores the way that race shaped the opportunities and experiences of working-class men at our organization. My bosses' racial stereotyping of Blacks as thieves who could not hold long-term employment marginalized in a way that demonstrates

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that members of the Black working class can enjoy less class-standing than Whites, despite the

fact that they may work in the same space, for the same company, with similar levels

qualification.

> The next time I saw a Black person in our warehouse was the only time during my employ that the company hired a Black person as a full staff member, and not just a temp. It was only a few weeks before he was fired for accidentally damaging a few work trucks. It is worth noting that this Black man was the only employee who never drank alcohol on the job (we often drank in the presence of management and even the company owner), and that this Black gentleman and I were the only installation staff who did not regularly smoke marijuana on the job.
> White employees would "no-call-no-show" without facing serious discipline. White employees would even sometimes get leaves of absence to serve jail time and be allowed to return to the job. In the most extreme case, I watched a White coworker choke another coworker into unconsciousness on the shop floor and in full view of a manager (the employee was promoted to a management position shortly after). With all this permissiveness shown to Whites the only Black person we hired was fired within a few weeks for causing damage to some beat-up old work trucks. All of my coworkers could have seen this obvious inequity, but not a single one openly objected. (AE)

Looking back, it seems clear that there was a double standard that allowed White

employees who damaged company trucks and abused drugs to be retained when a sober Black

man was fired for damaging a truck. It also appears that when the all-White status quo was

altered by the hiring of a Black man, there was a quickly executed corrective impulse. When I

asked my supervisor why the man had been fired for such a minor offense, he rationalized the

firing by stating that, "James was costing the company too much money by dinging up the

trucks." This manager was, of course, White and working class, but he enjoyed middle-class-like

access to the power to make staffing decisions. He used this power to enforce workplace

discipline in ways that clearly privileged Whites while marginalizing Blacks.

Racial Backlash and Class Resentment

While at least one of my coworkers may have sought refuge from class domination

through physical labor and Bill expressed a sort of envious admiration for the rich, overt class

resentments only surfaced when interacting with upper-middle-class people of color.

> I will never forget the first time Larry and I did a job for a Black customer. After parking the truck, my boss looked at the name on the paperwork and exclaimed, "Damn! I think this customer is going to be Black."
> I replied, "So?"
> "Have you ever had a Black customer before?"
> I responded, "Yes."
> "Aren't they always the worst?"
> I rejoined by saying, "No."
> My boss replied, "I don't know, man, maybe you don't pick up on this stuff like the rest of us do. Whenever I do a job at a Black person's house, they treat me like dirt. It's like because they are Black and rich and can afford an $8,000 playhouse for their kids, they feel the need to rub it in my face that I'm White, poor, and I'm working at their homes for shit wages."
> I replied by stating, "I've never seen it that way. Black customers have always treated me fine."
> "Just watch, and pay close attention."
> "Okay," I agreed.
> Larry approached the home with his fists balled, and his face flushed red. As soon as the homeowner opened the door, the two of them blew up at each other and started yelling. Despite the fact that, per my boss's instructions, I had been watching very closely, I could not tell who drew first blood in the verbal altercation. It seemed like as soon as they both laid eyes on each other they knew conflict was the only possible outcome, and their shared belief made it a reality. (J1)

Entertaining Ourselves at Work

The equipment my company installed always required two or more people to work

together. For this reason, we spent many long hours each week working alongside different

White male coworkers. We would pass the time by roughhousing, telling jokes or stories, and

listening to the radio. Favorite roughhouse activities included aggressively flicking someone in

the penis when they looked distracted and "slug bug," a game that allowed an individual to

punch his coworker in the shoulder as hard as he could each time he saw a Volkswagen Beetle.

Senior employees knew about a used car dealership that always kept vintage Beetles in stock, and we would often direct new employees to drive past it. Once the dealership came into view, we would repeatedly yell "SLUG BUG!" while pummeling the unsuspecting new guy. (AE)

We also enjoyed joke-telling rituals, which could be initiated at any time by one member of the crew telling a joke. Once the first joke was told, other members of the crew were expected to share a joke, and from there we would take turns telling jokes until either we ran out or we got distracted by something else. While the first jokes tended to be relatively clean, the pattern of the ritual was that jokes tended to get either more sexually explicit or more racist as the game progressed.

The radio held special significance in our workplace because whether it played on a work-truck radio or a boombox out at the job site, it was almost always on. This meant we had a constant one-way stream of opinions and information that sparked and informed our conversations. While musical preferences differed slightly, the local classic-rock station dominated our radios.

The devotion to the classic-rock station was particularly strong when their signature morning show *Bob & Tom* was on the air. Describing this program as a favorite would be a dramatic understatement; it was essentially required listening from the time we clocked in at 7:00 until the time it went off the air at 10:00. At Midwest Installation, senior employees often silenced conversations so we could all hear when favored comedic material was played. My coworkers frequently sang along to comedic songs during the broadcast and would recite sketches or repeat jokes they heard on *Bob & Tom* throughout the day.

Proudly broadcasting out of our company's hometown for over 30 years, the show has a special place in the hearts of local blue-collar listeners. So much so that it was essentially required listening on my job as senior employees explained that we "had to" listen to *Bob & Tom*

and refused to allow a change of station while the show was on the air. After going off the air at 10:00 each morning the local station would continue to rebroadcast the "Best of *Bob & Tom*" throughout the day, so we rarely went more than an hour without hearing from the hosts. The show has been described as "built around comedy and talk" that "features news, sports, lifestyle content, and interviews with today's top actors, authors, and newsmakers" (Bob & Tom Show, 2016b). I would add that the show also mixed in a fair portion of marginalizing discourse in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Discussion

As in many blue-collar occupations, manhood and hegemonic forms of masculine self-expression were highly prized and associated with in-group position, professional competency, and trustworthiness. There were several ways in which work at Midwest Installation helped me to develop a sense of manhood, a concept that I—at the time—associated with competence, independence, and freedom from parental authority. The development of this sense of manhood was facilitated by the acquisition of hard skills, the cultivation of fraternal acceptance, and access to the cash necessary to assert independence away from work. Another key finding about this organization is that class consciousness manifested itself in a variety of ways.

Learning Hard Skills as a Pathway to Manhood

From learning to back up a truck–trailer combo to handling power tools, learning demonstrable skills was a rite of passage. In future blue-collar pursuits, I can count on gaining the acceptance and confidence of my peers and supervisors when they see me demonstrate such competencies. It is difficult to explain the way a relationship can change when a senior employee first sees a new younger employee handle a large trailer with ease or make quick work with a power tool. In a matter of moments, one can go from being treated as a boy or "new guy" to

being respected as a man and thereby trusted with many responsibilities not directly related to hard skills. At Midwest Installation, I had forgiving mentors who laughed it off when I jack-knifed a trailer, leaving a permanent hole in the sidewall of a company truck. I and other Whites received such favorable treatment, while Blacks working alongside us were marginalized. Thus, White privilege gifted me with the opportunity to learn to exemplify the competencies of working-class manhood and the leeway to make mistakes as I learned.

It is important to note organizational leaders excluded women and men of color from the opportunities to develop the skills necessary to prove their manhood/competency. By blocking the path to acquiring these skills, women and men of color were hampered in any attempt to be regarded as a competent employee or even a full member of the organization. In my three years at Midwest Installation, women were only employed as secretaries, and there was only one Black male who my supervisor gave a chance at permanent employment. He was fired for damaging a work truck in a manner similar to my jack-knifing of the trailer. This demonstrates that even when given a rare opportunity to build and demonstrate competency, Black men were given much less leniency in which to grow than Whites.

Fraternity, Exclusivity, and Manhood

The cultivation of a sense of fraternity was a key element in developing masculine identities. By closely identifying with a group of other men whose masculinity was not in doubt, one could exercise a degree of vicarious strength and confidence that was a scaffold to a more secure sense of manhood. This sense of fraternity was cultivated by the fun we had roughhousing, telling jokes, and abusing drugs and alcohol, as well as through the exclusion of "others." Exclusion based on both race and gender combined to help develop strong masculine identities.

Racial Exclusivity

Virtually all the Black men who ever worked with us came through a temporary staffing agency, and nearly all temporary workers provided were Black. This created a clearly delineated status difference between White "full-timers" who did more skilled work and Black "temps" who were mostly relegated to manual labor. When temps were called in—usually for no more than a day at a time—full-timers were instructed to hide expensive tools for fear that temps would steal them. While it was not apparent to me when I worked the job, I have come to see that the sense of fraternity I so enjoyed at this job was strengthened by—and perhaps even built upon—the exclusion of racial others and the clear hierarchy established based on the division between Black temps and White full-timers. Racism in working-class White organizations will be taken up further in chapter 8.

Gender Hierarchy

The fact that our annual team-building outings to Carburetion Day included members of our staff drunkenly demanding that women show us their breasts in exchange for beads clearly indicates the degree to which we cultivated a sense of fraternity through the sexualization of women. The complete exclusion of women from the ranks of the warehouse and installation team provided safe spaces for us to engage in what Donald Trump would call "locker-room talk." In our conversations and jokes, women were routinely objectified, and nude photographs of girlfriends were passed around from time to time. Additionally, men regularly used stories of sexual conquests to entertain each other and to establish in-group status. Sexually degrading discourse regarding women and its contributions to the maintenance of gender hierarchy will be taken up in greater detail in chapter 7.

Manhood in Cash and Hard Work

I opened my description with an excerpt from a song in which I wrote about my "prison," my "heart," my "dreams," and my "mind" all growing smaller. This speaks to the diminishing effect the long and often monotonous work done in dirty and sometimes dangerous conditions had on my sense of self. It's painful to recall the exhaustion of leaving a job site after dark and knowing that a multi-hour return trip would get my crew to our warehouse with only a few hours before our shifts began in the morning. The lyric "every day it gets harder, but I'm getting stronger, so it's okay" confirms the argument that working-class men develop mystiques around the difficulty of their work and go on to define their masculinity by them (Willis, 1977). The pride I took in the strong wages I received also confirms findings that young working-class men take pride and begin to define manhood based on cash earned from hard labor (MacLeod, 1995; Willis, 1977). The money that I brought home allowed me to become financially self-supporting, which enabled me to assert independence from my family and also greatly contributed to my sense of manly competence.

Class Consciousness

The fact that our work regularly took us into the gated communities of our state's wealthiest residents underscored our lower socioeconomic condition. Several encounters with my coworkers demonstrated the degree to which class status was regarded as essentially permanent. Bill's sense of failure about his inability to teach his kids the lessons they needed to be successful in America reveals how deeply he had internalized the American Horatio Alger mythology that argues that hard work, thrift, and intelligence are all a person needs to climb the socioeconomic ladder in America. Bill perceived a lack of knowledge in himself and blamed his inability to find a path to upward mobility for himself or children on this lack. However, Bill's

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ability to climb was limited by both the privileging of certain types of knowledge in our society and his lack of capital. Bill would have been able to command stronger wages and better living conditions if his hands-on knowledge of HVAC and other mechanical systems was more highly valued and if the pathway to certification was less dependent on book learning and written examinations. In this way, the privileging of traditional forms of literacy and high-stakes testing limited Bill's ability to succeed in America. Additionally, Bill's lack of capital prevented him from participating in market-driven wealth-building strategies. He noted his exclusion from stock market success when he explained to me that "stuff [market growth] they talk about on the news doesn't affect people like us."

When one coworker explained he preferred physical labor to knowledge work because of the mental freedom it afforded, his explanation revealed that even the possibility of upward mobility into the middle class would still leave him in a subordinated position in which he would be required to sell his intellectual autonomy for a wage. He was more willing to sell the fruits of his bodily exertions than the workings of his mind. This stance belies a class consciousness in which subordinate status is permanent, but the willing surrender of the inner-self for domination is resisted through the rejection of knowledge work.

Middle-class college students also revealed their awareness of class differences when they asked me to "translate" Bill's directions. These middle-class students struggled to follow conversations with their working-class coworkers, which reinforces the previous findings that the working and upper classes utilize different linguistic codes (Bernstein, 1975; Heath, 1983). By denigrating Bill's speech as "Billanese," these middle-class students used a suffix most commonly found in English names for Asian languages to "other" Bill by associating his speech

with foreignness. This linguistic turn belies a sense of White middle-class American superiority that refuses full status to racial minorities or working-class Whites like Bill.

The deployment of the term "Billanese" served as a reminder to Bill that his managerial authority over middle-class college students was both limited and temporary. The fact that these college students—who were the same age as his oldest son—could marginalize their boss by imposing class privilege must have served as a poignant reminder of the permanence of the American class structures. Perhaps it was partially the fact that Bill perceived the upward career trajectories of these college boys that he mused to me that "Someday my children will work for the children sleeping in this neighborhood because I can't teach my kids what it takes to be successful in America."

Class Envy and Class Resentment or Both

Bill expressed envy for rich Whites. His belief that they must know more than he about how to make it in America demonstrates his assumption that they earned the positions of class privilege. Larry, on the other hand, was willing to express full-out class resentment toward those at the intersection of Black and the upper classes. Larry's position could easily—and correctly—be characterized as White backlash. Seeing this backlash as solely about race, however, risks obscuring the class-based issues intersecting with Larry's backlash. As political conservatives, Larry and most other employees at Midwest Installation harbored deep distrust for socialism, which made expressions of overt class-based resentment taboo. On the other hand, the corresponding tolerance for overt racism provided a safe release. I believe that, for politically conservative working-class Whites, people of color in the upper classes are safe targets on which to vent simmering class-based frustrations. In this way, the well-off Black man Larry had an

adversarial interaction with served as a scapegoat for half-acknowledged class-based resentments.

Class Privilege Among the Lower Classes

Social class is often conceived of in terms of economic hierarchy, with the lower classes occupying positions below members of the middle class. My research, however, demonstrates that lived experiences of individuals do not necessarily fit easily into existing definitions of class. For example, high-achieving Whites at Midwest Installation, who were otherwise working class, enjoyed certain middle-class privileges from which Blacks were entirely excluded. These privileges included access to supervisory roles with attending power to hire, fire, discipline, and train. These powers were executed in ways that provided opportunities to Whites and largely excluded Blacks.

While it was a minority of working-class Whites at Midwestern Installation who enjoyed some middle-class trappings, all White employees were granted privileges that facilitated the maintenance of working-class status. These privileges included access to full-time permanent positions and permissiveness regarding negative workplace behaviors such as absenteeism, violence, and substance abuse. Blacks, on the other hand, were barred from full-time positions that would allow them to rise above working-poor status.

The working- and middle-class privileges enjoyed by Whites at Midwest Installation consistently positioned them above Blacks working at the same organization. While it could be argued that this is simply White racial privilege manifesting itself at the low end of the socioeconomic spectrum, it appears to create a reality in which working-class Whites have access to some of the trappings of middle-class power and a certain degree of protection from

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descent into the ranks of the working poor or underclass (although this descent does happen to some White men).

As long as Whites retain access to working-class jobs unavailable to members of the Black working poor, they will enjoy privileges that situate them above people of color they work alongside. While this may provide a sense of superiority to Blacks positioned beneath them, it will come without the experience of true upward mobility. In this way, the racial privilege of the White working class can be parlayed in a quasi-form of middle-class privilege, which pays the psychological dividends of middle-class social status in lieu of wages that would afford middle-class lifestyles. This provides a contemporary explanation for a belief long held by historians that the psychological benefits of Whiteness encourage White members of the lower classes to maintain commitments to both the racial and economic hierarchies in America. The ultimate winners, so long as working-class Whites continue this pattern, are the middle, upper-middle, and capitalist classes. Whites from the upper classes benefit psychologically by the opportunity to scapegoat working-class Whites as the real racists. In so doing they are free to construct themselves as non-racist or even anti-racist while remaining complacent regarding aspects of structural discrimination they could work to reform. Additionally, the class privileges of all members of the upper classes—which are not uniform—are maintained as long as Whites and people of color in the lower classes fail to make common cause.

Defining Working-Class White Privilege

In President Obama's farewell address, he argued that the liberal coalition should seek to better understand and "tie their struggles" to the struggles of the working-class White man "who's seen his world upended by economic, cultural, and technological change" (Obama, 2017). It is my hope that my probing of working-class White privilege will facilitate this process.

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As I worked to construct meaningful representations of Midwest Installation and the men who worked there, I have had to wrestle with the reality that many of these men were struggling to make it in America. Bill, myself, and others worked long hours and multiple jobs—often in dirty and dangerous conditions—just to make ends meet, and many still relied on government assistance. To these men, their lives did not feel privileged. For this reason, I wonder to what extent McIntosh's definition of privilege applies to working-class Whites.

I wonder if her definition might be better understood as the description of the intersection of middle- or upper-class privilege with White privilege. Bill's comments about wishing that his kids could learn from the rich Whites for whom we worked suggests that he did not feel that he had the "tools, guides" and "codebooks" that were the purview of the upper class. He was poignantly aware that he could not teach his children how to be successful in America. Likewise, he fully anticipated that his children would someday work for the children of the rich. Thus, he did not have the "map" needed to help his children navigate out of poverty or to even navigate himself out of the lower classes.

Put another way, it is hard to imagine that McIntosh's claim that all Whites have access to "blank checks" would resonate with men who—too tired to drive home after a double shift of physical labor—assemble makeshift beds by stacking cardboard boxes on concrete floors of their company's warehouses. For these men, I would like to suggest this definition:

Working-class White-male privilege is the expectation that you will be fully considered when you apply for low-status jobs and the opportunity to work hard in poor conditions for subsistence-level wages. Working-class White men may also enjoy some trappings of middle-class authority and an assurance that there will be "others" beneath them in the social order so long as they do not meaningfully challenge the existing racial, gender, and class hierarchies.

To some, this definition might read like a sarcastic denial of White privilege, but it is not intended to be. I strongly believe that access to hard work for low wages is preferable to the staggering rates of incarceration (Alexander, 2010) and unemployment faced by members of the lower classes who are also immigrants or people of color. During my time at Midwest installation, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports in showed unemployment rates for Blacks between 18 and 24 years old as 17.8%, more than double the rates for Whites (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). The increased likelihood of finding low-level jobs gives lower-class Whites access to the first step on a ladder that may provide upward mobility and that affords them the luxury of believing that they should be able to pull themselves up by their bootstraps—even when their life experiences do not bear this out. Their assurance that "now hiring" signs apply to them provide lower-class White men with the opportunity to demonstrate a willingness to work hard and some protection against descent into the underclass. This is a form of privilege, although it may not always feel like it to men who are trapped in a cycle where hard work does nothing to alleviate near-poverty living conditions.

When defining working-class White-male privilege as I do, I am forced to consider that the racism and misogyny so germane to my working-class organization might be a defense mechanism. It might be easier to exclude minorities from our privileged spaces than embrace them as allies in pushes for systemic reform. As it was in the antebellum and Jim Crow South, and as it frequently was in the early days of Northern unionization, it is still easier for Midwestern Whites from the lower classes to scapegoat minority groups than it is to develop a class consciousness that cuts across racial lines.

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Implications for Future Research and Advocacy

Recognizing that there are differences in how White privilege manifests depending on class standing should encourage researchers and activists to reflect more deeply on their own intersectional positions. Most White researchers, for example, reflect on White privilege from the vantage point of middle- or upper-class standing, which is conferred with attainments of advanced degrees and faculty positions. With educational and class privileges intersecting with White privilege, we risk blinding ourselves to the struggles of lower-class Whites. In so doing, we may be setting ourselves up to fail in our attempts to communicate the need for racial justice advocacy—or simply setting ourselves up to fail in our attempts to communicate with poor Whites at all.

With intersecting privileges come nuanced sets of responsibilities. Those of us who are White while also middle-class or higher should begin to look reflexively along the dual axes of race and class. For people of color and their allies, understanding the reality of class divisions among American Whites will be a crucial aspect in preventing the future President Obama warned of in his farewell address where "workers of all shades are going to be left fighting for scraps while the wealthy withdraw further into their private enclaves" (Obama, 2017). While my autoethnography scratches the surface of class disparity among Whites, it probably raises more questions than it answers. Additional scholarship is needed exploring the intersection points of race and class in the contemporary American workforce. In particular, future research should further explore the lived experiences of the lower classes with an eye for better understanding the degree to which racial difference influences how individuals are sorted into working-class, working-poor, and underclass lifestyles. This research should push the discussion beyond the Black-White binary by observing organizations with more diverse workgroups. Future research

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should also strive to better understand the economic, social, and cultural relationships between members of the upper classes and members of the lower classes.

CHAPTER 6: MASCULINIZED RADIO: WHEN INJUSTICE DRIVES PROFIT

Masculinized Radio Programming

Radio broadcasting continues to reach more people each day in the United States than any other form of mass media. With 93% of people over 18 listening to the radio each day, it is a powerful industry as well as a key driver for the advertising efforts of companies across economic sectors (Kelly, 2018). While radio broadcasting broadly defined does not fit most conventional definitions of masculinized industries, certain sections of it are indeed masculinized spaces. Masculinized workplaces have been defined as "historically dominated by men embodying masculine, heterosexual work styles" (Collins & Callahan, 2012, p. 455) in which there are "hegemonic expectations for overtly masculine embodiment of gender" (Collins, 2013, p. 258). Collins argued that these spaces privilege straight men while marginalizing women, gay men, and others who do not conform to ideals of hegemonic masculinity. My research confirms Collins' assertions and explores how marginalization based on race can also be a prominent characteristic of a masculinized workspace.

Previously identified examples of such masculinized industries include law enforcement, military, defense, manufacturing, aviation, transportation, and natural resource extraction (Collins, 2015). Certain subcategories of radio broadcasting should be included in this list. Classic-rock format stations, conservative talk radio, "shock jocks," sports radio, or any other programming specifically targeted at male listeners could be understood better if analyzed as masculinized subdivisions of the communications industry. These types of programs are significant areas of study because they inform and entertain millions of Americans each day. In addition, the frequency with which such radio programs are played at job sites on boomboxes or work-truck radios suggests that studies of masculinized radio can provide insights into workplace

climates and cultures in other masculinized industries. In this chapter, I will use historical inquiry, descriptive statistics, linguistic analysis, and autoethnography to explore the rise of *The Bob & Tom Show,* a nationally syndicated morning radio program that rose to prominence amid controversy for content deemed offensive by many.

I will begin my discussion of *The Bob & Tom Show* by highlighting some key literature exploring male-targeted radio programming before proceeding to the show's history.

When Bigotry Pays

While there is a growing body of research calling for deeper organizational commitments to social justice, researchers must grapple with a difficult truth: sometimes bigotry pays. In industries where profits are driven by advertising revenues, maintaining an audience is a key component of profitability. While some radio programs and formats seek to reach the broadest possible audience, others target narrower demographic profiles in hopes of selling targeted advertising (Crider, 2014). Radio is one segment of the ad-driven economy that thrives on appealing to audiences with narrowly defined demographic characteristics. While producing radio shows for a particular demographic is not inherently problematic, the competition to engage male listeners frequently creates toxic broadcast programming that deploys the marginalization of women, gays, racial minorities, immigrants, and the disabled to drive audience engagement.

Rock-Format Radio and Masculinity

Crider (2014) described rock-format radio as an arena where hegemonic hypermasculinity persists in the forms of bawdy humor, marginalization of female voices, and overtly masculine themes. This is driven by the targeted nature of radio formatting wherein stations subdivide the total radio audience by demographic characteristics in order to provide

target marketing opportunity to sponsors. When targeting men, radio stations exploit gender stereotypes and utilize male imagery, male voices, masculinized music, and aggressive appeals to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Many times, these appeals are presented as a direct pushback against feminism and alternative forms of masculinity. For example, one study of a male-oriented morning show (Darnell & Wilson, 2006) pointed to repeated calls for the reclamation of "guy-ness" (p. 451). *Bob & Tom* broadcasts frequently express similar devotion to hegemonic masculinity. One example is their comedy piece "The Man Song," which denigrates a man who fails to "wear the pants" and be the "king of the castle" as having been "neutered." The song ends with a female voice delivering a bluesy "you da man," which combines mock blues and mock Ebonics to imply that Black women take a special delight in the emasculation of White men.

Morning shows on rock-format radio stations tend to contain large amounts of sexual content (Crider, 2014; Soley, 2007), aggressive themes (Allen, 2011), tokenized deployments of female voices, and the demeaning of "other" masculinities including homophobia and criticisms of women they perceive as masculine. Station managers defend these practices as research-based decisions used to drive advertising revenue (Wollman, 1998). This leads Crider to conclude that "contemporary rock radio wants no part in equality" and that "radio, as an advertiser-driven medium, must hold to patriarchal expectations of industry in order to make money" (Crider, 2014, p. 268). My research will explore how offensive programming, "bad boy" images, reifications of hegemonic masculinity, and conflicts over censorship can grow the brand for a masculinized and predominantly White radio show. This chapter will explore how negative publicity and campaigns to have *The Bob & Tom Show* censored affected the show and its growth; to what extent attempts to curb the show's offensiveness were effective in reducing the

amount of bigoted content on the show; how Bob and Tom responded to tightening regulations and corporate policies around indecency; and, in addition to sexism and homophobia, to what extent other "isms" can be seen as core aspects of a masculinized workspace in America.

Overview of *The Bob & Tom Show*

The Bob & Tom Show is a comedy radio morning show that was syndicated from 1995 to 2014 by Premiere Radio Networks, which is a Clear Channel subsidiary. In 2014 the show switched syndicators by affiliating with Cumulus Media. The show is produced at classic-rock station WFBQ in Indianapolis, which is also a Clear Channel subsidiary (Dick, 2015; Soley, 2007). Bringing in millions of dollars a year, the show has been described as the "financial foundation" of its home radio station. In 2009 *Bob & Tom*'s four-hour daily broadcast was directly responsible for 40% of the station's daily revenue. Other estimates indicate that up to 75% of the station's revenue may be driven by the show's influence (Schoettle, 2009).

At its peak, the *Bob & Tom Show* was broadcast in 37 states and listened to by over 5 million people per day. It has been carried by as many as 150 radio stations at one time, and over 400 stations nationwide have broadcast the show at some point (Klemet, 2016). While this audience is well below long-time talk radio leader Rush Limbaugh (14 million), it is in the same range as Alex Jones' *Info Wars* (5.9 million) and much larger than that of current top television cable news programs hosted by Sean Hannity (3.3 million viewers) and Rachel Maddow (2.9 million) (Joyella, 2018; Talkers, 2017) The *Bob & Tom Show* coexisted in the Indianapolis radio market for many years with a radio show hosted by current Vice President Mike Pence.

The Bob & Tom Show has been most frequently carried by classic-rock stations that target middle-aged White men but has also been carried by alternative-rock stations that target younger White men. It has also been carried by the Armed Forces Radio Network. *The Bob & Tom Show*

provides humorous commentary on news, current events, and sports combined with sketches, "call-ins" from show personnel who impersonate celebrities, song parodies, and humorously constructed fake commercials.

Key cast members

The Bob & Tom Show's team has included many comedians and radio personalities in its run. The *Indianapolis Star* identifies the show's "core four" as Bob Kevoian, Tom Griswold, Kristi Lee, and Chick McGee. These four were the show's primary on-air talent during its rise in the 1980s and 1990s and through its peak years in the late 1990s and 2000s. Each of these members is briefly introduced below.

Bob Kevoian: Founder and star of the show, the Los Angeles native is often praised by fans for his cutting, risqué, and bawdy commentary on current events, sports, and popular culture.

Tom Griswold: Hailing from Cleveland, Ohio, Tom is the show's cofounder who primarily plays the role of sidekick to Bob. Tom is a graduate of Columbia University.

Kristi Lee: Officially the show's news director, the Indianapolis, Indiana, native is also the show's only consistent female voice. She is described as a "den mother" as she frequently expresses tongue-in-cheek disapprovals of the males' sexual humor.

Chick McGee: Carrying the title of sports director, the London, Ohio, native frequently bears the brunt of Tom's jokes or is the purveyor of self-deprecating humor, such as insinuations of his own homosexuality, which are greeted by derisive chuckles and disapproving non-lexical vocalizations (e.g., "Indians and Submarines" from Bob & Tom Show, 2006b).

Reception

  The Bob & Tom Show is one of the longest-running morning radio shows in America. It has maintained high ratings while racking up multiple awards. *Billboard Magazine* has recognized Bob and Tom seven times with "Personality of the Year" awards, *Radio & Records Magazine* has bestowed the show with 11 awards, the National Association of Broadcasters has bestowed its highest honor on the show five times, and they have been inducted into both the Indiana Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame and the National Radio Hall of Fame (Klemet, 2016). In addition, they enjoyed decades of ratings dominance in the Indianapolis morning radio market, multiple wins in the *Indianapolis Star* "radio personality of the year" awards, and strong ratings in markets across the United States. They have also been recognized by the State of Indiana with the Sagamore Award for their fundraising efforts and by the Indiana Chapter of Women in Radio for their "humanitarianism and fundraising" ("Broadcasting group honor Bob and Tom," 1997).

Methods and Analysis

Analysis of Local Print Media Coverage

  The show's website, multiple Indianapolis-based periodicals, and websites of relevant professional organizations were consulted to gather historical information regarding *The Bob & Tom Show*. I relied most heavily on the *Indianapolis Star*'s reporting on *Bob & Tom* from 1984 to 2018, because it was the leading newspaper in the show's host city for that time span and has covered the show in detail, publishing over 200 articles about it and its stars. Other publications consulted included the *Indianapolis Business Journal, Nuvo*, and *Inside Indiana Business*.

Founding, early complaints, and rising popularity

After hitting the airways in 1983, *The Bob & Tom Show*'s popularity in Indianapolis rose through the 1980s as a concerned citizens group launched a media and lobbying campaign against the show. This campaign against *Bob & Tom* started in 1984 under the direction of attorney Tom Price and his self-described watchdog group, Decency in Broadcasting, Inc., and local citizens filed multiple indecency complaints about the show to the FCC, including accusations of discourse around bestiality and sex with children as well as use of a racial slur. Bob and Tom attempted to defend some of their statements. For example, when confronted afterward about a bit in which he defended adults pursuing sex with children by stating that "in some countries the age of consent is 8 years old," Bob deflected by insisting that he was talking about South America (Hall, 1988). In this defense, Bob attempts to avoid accountability for condoning pedophilia by pushing stereotypes of racial others from the global south.

The resolve of Decency in Broadcasting, Inc., grew throughout the 1980s, and they began taking out full-page advertisements in the *Indianapolis Star* condemning the show while urging sponsors to boycott the program. At the peak of this campaign, 31 advertisers joined the boycott. These included four car dealerships, three department stores, a telephone company, a grocery store, a restaurant chain, a medical insurance company, a bank, a jewelry store, and a real estate firm (Ford, 1985). The boycott proved ineffective because the demand for advertising spots continued to grow as the boycott proceeded (Schoettle, 2009).

After their initial FCC complaints went unheeded, Decency in Broadcasting, Inc., advertised in *The Washington Post* in an attempt to bring national attention to their fight. The effort to have *Bob & Tom* sanctioned for indecency helped to drive interest in the program as the local paper frequently reported on updates in the campaign and published letters from citizens on

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different sides of the issue. Reports also surfaced that a female radio personality was fired by the show's radio station after getting "on the wrong side of Bob" for challenging his on-air sexism ("Broadcast blues," 1989). The mantra "all press is good press" seems to have prevailed as *Bob & Tom* moved into the top spot in local morning show ratings shortly after being targeted by Price, and the show grew in local popularity as the campaign progressed, eventually securing national syndication.

By 1989 other Indianapolis-area DJs were openly expressing jealousy about the media attention that Bob and Tom garnered, and the duo were reported to be the highest-paid and most-listened-to DJs in the state of Indiana (Hall, 1989a, 1989b). In 1990 the FCC did fine *Bob & Tom* $10,000 for indecency, but by that time local media were already crediting Price and his group of moral crusaders with making Bob and Tom household names.[1]

When the leader of the anti-*Bob & Tom* campaign ran for state senate, the show shot back at Price by leading demonstrations against him. In 1990 Bob and Tom were briefly suspended for live broadcasting a protest of Tom Price's primary bid for a Republican nomination for state senate. The protest included the cast leading over 75 demonstrators in Nazi salutes and chants of "Sieg heil" outside of Price's campaign headquarters (Hall, 1990).

After the Price incident, *Indianapolis Star* coverage of *Bob & Tom* waned, with only a few stories a year published between 1991 and 1997. Most of these were confirmation of the show's ongoing ratings dominance, notices of awards won by the group, and letters from readers complaining about the show's content. In 1998 coverage picked up again when shock jock Howard Stern entered the Indianapolis morning radio market. Representatives from the *Howard Stern* and *Bob & Tom* shows, as well as columnists and local readers, contributed to debates over

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[1] *Indianapolis Star* reporting on *Bob & Tom*, 1984-1990

which of these controversial shows would prevail in Indianapolis. Bob and Tom and their supporters argued that their superior wit, musicality, and commitment to local charity made them the better option than Stern (Allen, 1998). When Stern entered the Indianapolis market, *Bob & Tom* was already syndicated in 30 markets nationwide, and it appears that the attention they garnered in their battles with their nationally recognized nemesis raised their national appeal as they added 60 markets to their brand within 18 months (Hall, 1999). Stern exited the Indianapolis market in 2000. As in their battle with Price, Bob and Tom seemed to have benefited greatly from media attention that was either overtly disapproving or painted them as the lesser of two evils. After Stern's exit from Indianapolis, local reporting on *Bob & Tom* again mostly dried up until 2004, when a new national controversy regarding decency in broadcasting affected the show.

Tightening regulatory environments and corporate zero tolerance

The exposure of Janet Jackson's breast during the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show led to tightening of FCC enforcement. In response to this tighter regulatory environment, Clear Channel instituted a zero-tolerance policy on indecency (Lindquist, 2004; Soley, 2007). The continued broadcasting of degrading sexual, homophobic, and racist content on *Bob & Tom* after this point demonstrates a clear disconnect between official corporate policy and its implementation.

Despite frequent protestations from radio personalities regarding censorship, talk radio contains more graphic sexual content than other broadcast types or forms of print media (Soley, 2007). Indecency complaints are not forcefully pursued by the FCC, and fines are rarely levied (Ahrens, 2005; McConnell, 1997). When fines are enacted, the FCC frequently fails to collect them or negotiates lower payments that allow the offending party to avoid admitting

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wrongdoing. Along with other talk-radio hosts who enjoy presenting themselves as champions of free speech who are fighting "big brother," *The Bob & Tom Show* frequently postures as victims of censorship and plays to its politically conservative base by presenting FCC regulations as onerous.

Response to corporate zero-tolerance policy

After Clear Channel announced its zero-tolerance policy in February 2004, Tom Griswold explained that he had no intention of testing the policy and went on to say that "we're going to do a show that a soccer mom can listen to with her kids in the car" (Lindquist, 2004). Despite this claim, *Bob & Tom* continued to produce objectionable content such as "L.A. Girlfriends," which suggests that men have their girlfriends' lips stapled shut; "The Business of Living," which suggests men should pimp out their wives; "Garey Busey's Basement with Dennis Rodman," in which a monkey chews on Rodman's penis; "Indians and Submarines," which jokes that the true test of someone's Indian heritage is whether or not they can receive a government check; and "Midget with a Club," which promotes the human trafficking of little people. If these sketches do not violate a zero-tolerance edict on indecency, it is hard to imagine what would.

From a corporate perspective, this raises serious questions about the effectiveness, and even the intent, of Clear Channel's zero-tolerance policy. If this style of discourse was prevalent in backstage spaces within Clear Channel, one might only question the effectiveness of the zero-tolerance implementation. However, when a flagship program publicly broadcasts such material on a regular basis, it seems to confirm arguments that nominal efforts at addressing organizational injustice often amount to insincere window dressing. Given that *Bob & Tom* continued to produce obviously objectionable material after pledging to comply with their

organization's zero-tolerance edict, it raises the question as to whether the new policy environment had any effect on the show at all. To answer this question, I will present data regarding the frequency of which objectionable content was broadcast both before and after the zero-tolerance edict. I will also perform a qualitative analysis of a comedic song that is a direct response to the tightening regulatory environment.

Statistical Content Analysis

Previous statistical content analysis

Previous content analysis of *The Bob & Tom Show* (Soley, 2007) assessed sexual discourse on the show in the post-zero-tolerance environment by examining 10-minute segments of broadcasts and assessing whether or not they contained sexual content. Soley found that 78.6% of 10-minute segments contained sexual content. This approach to analysis differed from mine in that it focused on sexual content rather than sexist or homophobic content. Soley clarified by stating references "to someone as a 'bitch' or 'queer' were not coded as sexual" unless combined with other sexual references (p. 85). My coding process would have coded both references to women as "bitches" or degrading uses of the term "queer" as misogynistic and homophobic, respectively. Soley argued that because the frequency of sexual discourse on the show exceeds the frequency of sexual discourse in daily life, researchers should not assume that such discourse reflects norms but rather that hypersexualized discourse is used to attract male listeners.

Original content analysis

In addition to their daily radio show, *Bob & Tom* produces several compact disc albums per year for sale to their fans. Proceeds from many of these discs were donated to charity, leading *Bob & Tom* to be credited with raising millions of dollars for causes including the

Leukoma & Lymphoma Society and Gleaners Food Bank. The albums are filled with recycled content that was originally produced for the daily radio broadcast. These CDs were often double or triple albums and contained a combination of scripted sketches, comedic songs, and unscripted banter between the radio hosts and their guests.

For my analysis, copies of 10 albums—17 CDs—released by *Bob & Tom* between 2001 and 2007 were procured, which combined to contain over 32 hours of content spread over 459 tracks. Recordings from this timeframe are of particular interest because they allow for comparisons of content from three years before and four years after Clear Channel's zero-tolerance policy. Procurement was stopped after a saturation point (V. Anderson, 2017) had been reached where clear patterns had been identified. Additional listening surely would have uncovered increased variation, but the patterns would not have changed. Analysis used focused coding (Emerson et al., 2011) to identify content related to the matrix of domination (Collins, 2010) as well as the category of "shutdown of social justice allies and advocates" based on the occurrences of such behavior in masculinized workplaces (Bohonos, 2017).

The audio was coded by creating tables in a notebook that listed track names in the left column. Each time a given track displayed evidence of a certain theme, a hashmark was added under the respective column. The major themes identified through this process were misogyny, homophobia, racism, ableism, ageism, religious intolerance, and the shutdown of social justice allies and advocates. If one theme was hit several times in a track, additional hashmarks would be added each time the theme was revisited. Most tracks were coded under multiple themes. For example, on one track entitled "Harry and Gloria," in which a caricature based on Gloria Steinem was interviewed on the show, 17 misogynistic quips, 2 instances of homophobia, 1 ageist comment, and 8 shutdowns of social justice advocates or allies were recorded.

In table 2, I present four sets of statistics based on my focused coding of the full data set. The first set labeled "Number of Tracks" shows the total number of tracks out of the 459 coded that contained at least one joke relevant to the theme indicated in the corresponding column. The second is the percentage of tracks that contained each theme. The third, labeled "Total Quips," indicates the total number of distinct jokes or barbs that I coded for each theme. Finally, "Quips Per Hour" provides an approximation of how many marginalizing jokes a listener could expect if they were to consume one hour of *Bob & Tom* comedy material. I calculated Quips Per Hour by dividing the total number of quips by the total number of minutes coded (1,967) to determine quips per minute and then multiplied by 60 to generate a per-hour figure.

Table 2.

	Misogyny	Homophobia	Racism	Religious Discrimination	Ableism	Ageism	Shutdown of Allies and Advocates
Number of Tracks	264	136	117	26	40	25	9
Percentage of Tracks	57.5	29.6	25.4	5.6	8.7	5.4	1.9
Total Quips	1,008	345	159	103	139	60	37
Quips Per Hour	30.7	10.5	3.5	3.1	4.2	1.8	1.1

A look at these numbers suggests that a listener could expect to hear some sort of marginalizing quip for nearly every minute of comedic material. The majority of these jokes would be misogynistic, but the prevalence of other forms of discrimination demonstrates the interconnectedness of power relationships in the matrix of domination (Collins, 2010).

Table 3 shows the percentage of tracks produced before and after Clear Channel's implementation of its zero-tolerance policy, which were coded as containing different forms of intolerant content.

Table 3.

	Misogyny	Homophobia	Racism	Religious Discrimination	Ableism	Ageism	Shutdown of Allies and Advocates
Before (2001-2003)	61.5	39.8	34	8.6	9.4	5.7	2.8
After (2004-2007)	55.6	25.1*	21.7*	5.2	8.3	5.2	1.5

*Statistically significant P = .05

While averages suggest a general decline in the amount of objectionable content on *Bob & Tom*, only the decreases in homophobia and racism were statistically significant. While corporate executives could attempt to argue that statistically significant reductions in racism and homophobia represent wins for both decency and inclusivity, I would argue that in the case of hurtfully marginalizing comments, a single example can be of grave practical significance. Thus, even these marginal gains should be interpreted as a complete failure of the corporate policy to eliminate indecency from its programming. To further demonstrate this failure, I have elected to proceed with qualitative linguistic analysis to demonstrate how *Bob & Tom* responded to the tighter regulations. I also include some autoethnographic writing to connect this mass media content to workplace cultural norms in the construction industry.

Qualitative Content Analysis and Autoethnography

Qualitative content analysis is undertaken in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012) where the researcher analyzes lexical, iconographic, and semantic

linguistic cues to uncover ways that ideology and power relations are coded in the text. This linguistic analysis will be complemented by autoethnographic reflections about my time working at a masculinized construction company I give the name Midwest Installation, where I and fellow coworkers regularly listened to the show on our job sites.

Responding to the tighter regulatory environment

In contradiction to their official commitment to not challenge the FCC or Clear Channel's policies on indecency, *The Bob & Tom Show* also broadcast tongue-in-cheek responses to the tighter regulatory environment that more authentically captured their feelings on the matter. One example is the comedic song "You Can't Say…" (Bob & Tom, 2004a), which protested recent changes in FCC regulatory policies. The song invites the listener to join in their frustration with the FCC by scapegoating a Black woman, appealing to White male victimhood, and bemoaning that they are now prohibited from playing their hit parody song "Camel Toe" on the radio because of its multiple direct and degrading references to vaginas (Bob & Tom, 2004b).

Scapegoating a Black female celebrity

After an analysis of almost 460 comedic songs and sketches, it is clear that *The Bob & Tom Show* uses references to Black celebrities to thinly code stereotypical and derogatory comments about Blacks generally. Most commonly they do this by presenting Black male celebrities as being violent, mentally deficient, or over-sexed, but in the example of "You Can't Say…" they pin stereotypes about the supposed sexually irresponsible behavior of Black women onto Janet Jackson and blame her sexual impropriety for precipitating a—mostly imagined— infringement of White male free speech. By blaming Jackson for bringing on a tighter regulatory environment, *Bob & Tom* placed the blame for increased FCC regulations onto a Black woman and in so doing presented themselves—White men—as victims. A reader might object to my

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argument on the grounds that the White male Bono is also blamed for bringing on the tighter

regulations for the use of an expletive on a live television broadcast. But I would contend that

Bono's noted stance as a social justice advocate and his self-identification as a feminist makes

him a target of attack in the same vein that other feminist allies are attacked on *The Bob & Tom*

Show. Regardless, the result is the same. *Bob & Tom* blamed Black women and feminist allies

for bringing about a regulatory environment that kept them from playing their hit "Camel Toe"

on the radio.

While laying the groundwork to scapegoat Jackson, they provide a sexually degrading

portrayal with the line, "Ever since Miss Jackson exposed her hoochie coo, you can't say…" The

term "hoochie" typically refers to a woman reputed to have multiple sexual partners and is

frequently used to invoke images of sexually irresponsible Black women (Collins, 2010).

"Cooch" or "coochie" typically refers to a woman's vagina. In misrepresenting Jackson's

wardrobe malfunction by stating she exposed her vagina—rather than her breast—on national

television, the song further sensationalizes Jackson's supposed sexual impropriety.

Bob & Tom presented a clearly unfavorable, hypersexualized portrayal of Jackson that

draws on the Jezebel image so often deployed against Black women (Collins, 2010) while

scapegoating her for ushering in a more restrictive regulatory environment. Collins noted that the

over-sexed Jezebel image is often portrayed as having a corrupting effect on White men. In this

context, it is presented as having a corrupting effect on the regulatory environments in which

White men operate. It is also interesting to note that *Bob & Tom* targeted their protests against

the FCC, rather than Clear Channel, which allows the duo to stake out an anti-government

position that would play well with their largely conservative listenership. This approach relates

their protest to the concept of White male victimhood, which is when White men see themselves as being unfairly discriminated against by the government.

Mock blues and White male victimhood

White males often feel victimized because they believe themselves to be losing ground in American society relative to women and people of color (Ross, 1997). Personal interactions with White males in masculinized workplaces have revealed to me that some White men identify with blues music because it speaks to this sense of victimhood. The connection between White victimhood and the blues was first brought to my attention in a conversation I had with a supervisor who expressed his belief that Blacks were losing interest in blues music because they had it too good, and that Whites were making most of the music in that form now because we are the ones who really have the blues.

This view is reflected in the *Bob & Tom* song "You Can't Say…" which is written in a style and format that follows a traditional 12-bar blues pattern. I argue that using traditional African American musical forms to create comedic content is a form of racetalk that functions similarly to comedic uses of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (Hill, 2008; Myers, 2005). The connection between mock AAVE and mock blues is further suggested in the lyrics of "You Can't Say…" when the singer invokes the term "hoochie coo," as the term is an appropriation from the famous Muddy Waters/Willie Dixon blues standard "Hoochie Coochie Man." Thus, at the lexical level the invocation of "hoochie coo" can be seen as a humorous deployment of mock AAVE, and the fact that the term is used as a lyric in a 12-bar blues song strongly indicates that the appropriated musical form and the appropriated words are intended to reinforce each other in assertion of White male victimhood. By using a blues format to carry their protest, *Bob & Tom* implicitly connected the hardship they perceive themselves as suffering

to the oppressive aspects of Black American history, such as slavery and Jim Crow, that shaped

the blues as a musical form. Thus, we can view the appropriation of blues music as both an

appeal to White victimhood and a trivialization of Black suffering in American history.

"Camel Toe" as a symbol of hegemonic masculinity

The song "Camel Toe," which includes 16 different terms used to reference and degrade

the vagina, holds powerful symbolic value to *Bob & Tom* and their fans. So much so that, over

15 years after its original release, Camel Toe t-shirts are still advertised on the front page of the

Bob & Tom website.

Despite the obviously objectionable content, *Bob & Tom* shot back against the song's

censure because the freedom to play "Camel Toe" symbolizes their freedom to control

representations of females' bodies and present degrading hypersextualizations of a woman's

anatomy. A challenge to this control cuts to the core of the hegemonic masculine ideals that are

core to the show's distinct flavor. To *Bob & Tom*'s 5 million daily listeners, "Camel Toe"

functioned as a thesaurus that gave listeners access to a wide range of terms that could be used to

thinly code degrading references to female genitalia. Several of these terms, including "biscuit,"

"taco," and of course "camel toe," were in regular circulation at Midwest Installation. It is

difficult to determine if employees of this organization learned these terms from *Bob & Tom* or if

they were in circulation within the community before they were broadcast on the radio. The

distinction, however, is probably not important because hearing the terms on the radio served to

legitimize, standardize, and normalize sexually degrading vaginal references.

Repetition of these degrading words and phrases contributed greatly to the normalization

of sexism at Midwest Installation. Faudree (2013) argued that songs are distinct modes of

linguistic practice that when combined with spoken and written language can create dynamic and

appealing linguistic landscapes. Bob and Tom are masters of creating rich linguistic landscapes as they deploy a wide variety of expressive styles to communicate "isms," including poetry, song lyrics, monologues, unscripted banter, fake radio commercials, one-liners, mini radio dramas, sound effects, non-lexical vocalizations, and laughter itself to code discriminatory intent. By demonstrating how each of these linguistic practices can be deployed in the service of racism, sexism, and homophobia, Bob and Tom provide their millions of listeners with a toolbox for communicating bigotry in ways that can range from bold and jovial to covert and malicious.

At Midwest Installation, *Bob & Tom* materials like "Camel Toe" and "You Can't Say…" were coupled with misogynistic conversations and jokes to form a dynamic sociolinguistic environment where misogyny was normal and virtually unavoidable. In this context, misogyny is bolstered by the repetition of degrading sexual language in various linguistic modes.

Discussion and Conclusions

The historical aspect of this chapter reveals that local efforts to curb the indecency of *Bob & Tom* served to accelerate the show's rise in popularity. The press generated when 31 sponsors boycotted the show seems to have helped drive ratings success, which made advertising spots on the show even more valuable. Thirty years later, advertising firms still see *Bob & Tom* as a reliable platform for marketing (Schoettle, 2016), and companies such as hardware stores, jewelry stores, plasma donation centers, fast-food chains, big box retailers, and human resource recruitment services continue to market on the program. As long as other organizations seek to drive their own profits by advertising on the show, they encourage *Bob & Tom* to produce marginalizing content.

Campaigns to move the FCC to investigate and fine the show helped to propel *Bob & Tom* to the top of their home state's broadcasting hierarchy as well as into out-of-state

syndication. Similarly, "bad boy" press generated from their competition with national shock jock mogul Howard Stern appears to have been helpful in the expansion of *Bob & Tom*'s national reach. At each step in *Bob & Tom*'s rise, "bad" press generated from their offensive programming turned out to be good press that assisted their ascendance. This pattern should serve as a warning for moral crusaders who believe that government censorship or public shaming will be effective tools in limiting the growth in popularity of media personalities whose target audiences openly embrace racism and hegemonic masculinity.

Zero Tolerance or "Zero Tolerance"?

The statistical and qualitative components of this research show that humor based on "isms" was core to the appeal of *The Bob & Tom Show*, and also that tighter FCC regulations and corporate zero tolerance did not eliminate the show's commitment to bigoted content. Marginal gains from a zero-tolerance policy suggest that more substantial changes were needed. Given that marginalizing language appears to be essential to the show's profit model, the only viable solution to creating an inclusive version of the show would be a fundamental change in the show's tactics for appealing to men as well as a shift toward a broader demographic appeal. Essentially the very premise of the show and most of its approaches to comedy would have to be jettisoned, at risk of losing its traditional listeners and sponsors. The fact that Clear Channel did not enforce this "policy" raises questions about whether it should be considered a policy at all, as it appears to have been more of a publicity stunt to placate protestors and regulators.

A vigorously enforced zero-tolerance policy would surely have affected Clear Channel's bottom line, as indecent jokes are a bedrock of *Bob & Tom*'s financially successful business model. It does not appear that Clear Channel was willing to risk profit margins in order to increase the level of decency in its programming.

The fact that the zero-tolerance policy appears to have produced statistically significant but practically worthless changes raises questions about the ethical reporting of statistical data. For example, my statistical data could be used to substantiate a press release stating that "zero-tolerance policy curbs racism and homophobia." Based on the assumptions of the math, this statement would be "honest" but not at all in keeping with a credible social justice orientation.

Advocates should remain wary of the potential for other similarly misleading representations, such as the reporting of successful inclusivity trainings or minority recruitment initiatives that fail to acknowledge and address systemic and cultural factors that have historically made the organization unwelcoming to minoritized people. Without addressing the latter part of this equation, a "more inclusive" culture could still be incredibly hostile. The statistically "less racist" and "less homophobic" post-2004 version of *Bob & Tom* can stand as an example, because I am sure that most people of color or members of the LGBTQ community (or allies) would perceive the discourse on the program as *qualitatively* offensive, hostile, and inappropriate in an inclusive workplace.

Additional Characteristics of Masculinized Industries

This chapter also suggests that—in addition to sexism and homophobia—racism and ableism may also characterize masculinized workplaces. Quantitative data show that *Bob & Tom* frequently use each of each of these forms of degrading language to appeal to White male audiences. Evidence for religious discrimination and ageism was also detected. Future research into masculinized industries should dig deeper into possible connections between all of these "isms." A variety of qualitative methods could be deployed to explore how these "isms" reinforce one another and how various members of masculinized organizations respond to different forms of workplace discrimination.

Early Signal of Change in White American Conservatism

Decency in Broadcasting, Inc.'s failed boycott of *Bob & Tom* highlights a tension that existed in Reagan-era conservatism, foreshadows recent changes in American conservatism, and highlights gaps in the moral vision of the boycotters.

The anti-*Bob & Tom* boycott was led by morally conservative Republican Tom Price. While racism was mentioned in their protests, the boycott was energized by objections to what they perceived as vulgar sexual content. This pitted Price and his organization of moral conservatives against a show that appealed to a different ilk of the conservative base.

Price and his group resorted to appeals to a federal agency aimed at curbing *Bob & Tom*'s sexual jokes. A libertarian critic would condemn Price for undermining bedrock American principles by appealing to "big government" in a manner that undermined individual liberty to free speech. Here we see the largely conservative community of Indianapolis, Indiana, engaged in a battle that demonstrated a clear fissure point between libertarians and moral conservatives. In this contest, moral conservatives lose spectacularly. While they were successful in having a nominal fine levied against *Bob & Tom*, the moral crusade ran out of steam by the 1990s while the show grew in local and national popularity.

The battle between Decency in Broadcasting, Inc., and *Bob & Tom* foreshadowed recent shifts in American conservative politics. In the 2016 presidential election, an entertainer with a reputation for vulgarity took on the morally conservative Republican establishment and won spectacularly. As in the rise of *Bob & Tom,* candidate Trump's morally objectionable discourse raised fierce resistance while garnering him unprecedented coverage in the media. This media coverage raised his profile while criticisms of his degrading comments facilitated his appeal in discourse communities where such language is prevalent. In this way, we can see both Trump

and *Bob & Tom* as benefiting from their public personas that appeal to normative standards of hegemonic masculinity.

The focus of the anti-*Bob & Tom* protests raises questions about the moral vision of its leadership and members. For example, the group primarily focused on building a case that the show broadcasted "indecent" sexual content, while it largely ignored the possibility that racist, sexist, and homophobic content might have been hate speech. This apparent tolerance for discriminatory discourse among moral conservatives undermines the claim that their objections were moral at all. It additionally foreshadows outcomes in the recent elections where many moral conservatives supported Donald Trump in spite of his discriminatory discourse, and where others appear to have supported him because of it.

Future research should compare the ways that moral outrage propelled the success of *Bob & Tom* to the rise of other celebrities, and also to the political rise of Donald Trump. Identifying patterns exploited by media personalities and politicians to gain advantage from moral outrage against sexism, racism, and ableism could be important for future political strategizing.

Implications for Future Research

Findings in this chapter should inspire future research regarding potential disconnects between organizations' stated ideals and actual practices. The work also raises questions about the relationships different organizations have between unjust action and profitability. *Bob & Tom*'s profit model can clearly be seen as based on degrading "others" because of the public nature of the broadcasting industry, but potentially oppressive or exploitative workplaces operating outside the public eye are equally deserving of scholarly interrogation.

Given that Clear Channel's zero-tolerance policy appears to have been more a publicity stunt than an honest commitment to changing organizational culture, future research should

explore the effect of zero-tolerance policy announcements on other organizations. Ongoing sexual harassment allegations at Fox News provide an interesting parallel because this predominantly White and arguably masculinized broadcast channel announced a zero-tolerance policy regarding "behavior that disrespects women" less than a year before a barrage of allegations were brought to light (Kludt & Byers, 2017). Future research should explore what, if any, enforcement measures are taken after the announcements of such policies. Additionally, researchers should work to ascertain what types of culture change initiatives are undertaken to support bombastic policy announcements.

CHAPTER 7: CATCALLING AS RITUAL IN A MASCULINIZED WORKPLACE: LINGUISTIC MARGINALIZATION ON THE AXIS OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND RACE

Research exploring masculine identity and performance in masculinized organizations (Collins, 2013, 2015; Collins & Callahan, 2012) has rarely intersected with research pertaining to how Whites construct racial identities in their organizational lives (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gallagher, 1997; Roithmayr, 2014). This has left a void of understanding related to the formation of White masculinities. Additionally, research exploring the discursive strategies Whites use to communicate racism (Hill, 2008; Myers, 2005) has rarely been connected to paid organizational settings. This chapter seeks to address both gaps by exploring how workplace catcalling appeals to both hegemonic masculinity (Collins, 2015; Connell, 1987, 2005) and coded racist language (Hill, 2008; Myers, 2005) to marginalize women, gay men, people of color, and especially those at the intersections of those three identity markers.

This chapter seeks to continue in the tradition of Critical Human Resource Development (CHRD) (Baek & Kim, 2017; Bierema & Callahan, 2014; Fenwick, 2004) by critiquing organizational practices that serve to marginalize racial and gender minorities, as well as to answer the call of Rocco, Bernier, and Bowman (2014) that CHRD begin to "move race front and center" (p. 457). This need to move race to the forefront of analysis in CHRD stems from the fact that reviews of the literature have continually found that little about race or racism has been published in HRD journals (Bierema & Cseh, 2003; Bohonos, 2016; Rocco et al., 2014). HRD research that has foregrounded race in its analysis (Byrd & Stanley, 2009; Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009; Lloyd-Jones, 2009) has used the framework of intersectionality to address the particular forms of marginalization faced by individuals who are both Black and female. In this

chapter, I employ intersectional analysis to explore the organizational experiences of straight-presenting cisgender White males. I pursue this strategy in answer to the call of Alfred and Chlup (2010) that "discourses on race and racism must be explored for its impact on the everyday experience of those categorized as White" (p. 336). Through this intersectional analysis of straight White working-class males' experiences, I hope to challenge the perception of White racelessness (Alfred & Chlup, 2010; McIntosh, 1997) and to explore how cultural practices in masculinized workplaces (Collins, 2013, 2015) produce patterns of behavior that marginalize people whose identities intersect with gayness, womanhood, or membership in a racially minoritized group. Through this intersectional analysis, I also hope to address the critique that the majority of extant CHRD research is constructed to focus on the marginalization of a single minority group (Baek & Kim, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

White Male Linguistic Practices

In a rare work focusing on White-male language use in organizational settings, Hughey (2011) compared the role of language in reproducing White masculinities in two voluntary organizations in an effort to better understand "how groups of white men, across varied context, make meaning" (p. 133). By comparing language use in two voluntary organizations—one White nationalist and one White anti-racist—he found that "despite the variety of white experiences in radically different white activist groups, these shared discursive expectations helped to reproduce white male group positioning" (p. 133). Shared discourse patterns included associating people of color with biological pathologies, cultures of poverty, hypersexuality, and dehumanizing caricatures. Hughey also noted that White men in each organization expressed that they "know how to act" in public but will resort to racial slurs in private spaces.

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Additionally, research regarding White linguistic strategies for addressing issues of race (Bucholtz, 2011; Hill, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Myers, 2005) teaches us that Whites often signify racist thoughts or feelings through the use of coded language called "racetalk." Morrison (1993) defined "racetalk" as "the explicit insertion into everyday life of racial signs and symbols that have no meaning other than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of the racial hierarchy" (p. 57). Myers (2005) broadened this definition to include "any talk that demeans on the basis of race or ethnicity" (p. 2). Similar insertions of symbolic privilege serve to position women and gay men in subordinate positions to straight men (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012). This chapter will explore how racist, misogynistic, and heterosexist language intersect to create organizational cultures that are inhospitable to women, gay men, people of color, and—to a much lesser degree—straight White males who attempt to challenge or disrupt marginalizing patterns of speech.

Methods

This chapter depends primarily on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of mass media, which is complemented by autoethnographic writings that provide context aimed at allowing the reader to understand how employees at one masculinized and predominantly White Midwestern organization related to demeaning mass media content. The mass media material under examination is a sketch produced by *The Bob & Tom Show*, a radio program predicated on appealing to men through appeals to hegemonic masculinity (see chapter 6). Quantitative content analysis of *Bob & Tom* material has demonstrated that the show depends on high degrees of sexual content as well as overwhelming amounts of bigoted jokes that hinge on sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, and the shutdown of social justice advocates and allies (chapter 6; Soley, 2007). In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the way catcalling was practiced at Midwest

Installation before proceeding to analyze a *Bob & Tom* sketch that captures many of the behaviors associated with workplace catcalling.

While catcalling has been defined as "a loud, sexually suggestive call or comment directed at someone publicly" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catcall), my definition and discussion of catcalling will include actions taken by the catcaller and his social group immediately before and after a catcall is made. I believe that actions surrounding a catcalling incident are important for understanding the social power of the action in White male work groups.

Autoethnography: Catcalling at Midwest Installation

Humor was used to enforce misogynistic and homophobic norms in the workplace. With long hours spent on the road in my delivery job, stops for fuel were a welcome respite from driving. My coworkers typically used this time to stretch their legs, leer at women, crack sexual jokes about nearby women, and engage in catcalling. Given that these behaviors were often conducted while standing next to company trucks with our logos decaled on the door, our actions often left me feeling personally embarrassed and certainly reflected poorly on our company. If our company owner wanted this behavior to change, I never would have known as he made no effort to protect women from the harmful words of his employees. If he had wanted to address the behavior, then he would have needed to first understand the deeply ingrained patterns of misogyny and their cultural roots. Then he would have needed HRD interventions designed to address deep-seated patterns of racism and sexism that permeated our workplace culture.

Leering and catcalling were not isolated behaviors engaged in by a few employees. Rather they were norms that were enforced through verbal admonishment. Refusal to participate in these activities would lead to the questioning of one's manhood, crude jokes about one's

sexual orientation, and other forms of bullying. I recall admonishing an employee once for a particularly lurid catcall and was rebuffed by a senior employee who said, "What are you, some kind of queer?" Even passively resisting by refusing to stare at, and comment on, women's breasts would be admonished with statements like, "Turn off your gaydar, Jeremy" or "If you don't start noticing tits like that, everyone will think you're a homo!" These statements enforced the expectation that employees would participate in the degradation of women under threat of being accused of gayness. Given the social risk of being labeled gay, these accusations felt like a bludgeon used to enforce misogyny and hegemonic hypermasculinity. In this way, the organizational culture required participation in public displays of inappropriate behavior, which certainly resulted in pain and discomfort for the women who were victims of our harassment.

Some readers might wonder why men even bother with practices like catcalling. Part of it is probably ritualistic male-bonding behavior, and this theme will be taken up in my analysis of the *Bob & Tom* sketch. But another part of it is that catcalls sometimes lead to sexual encounters. It does not happen often, but I believe that the rare occasions where women give phone numbers or sexual favors to catcallers function like a variable ratio reward system that gets men hooked on the game. Like going to a casino, catcalling is exciting. Like a casino, a man can brag about his victories while remaining silent about his losses. But unlike a casino, a man appears to lose nothing when he is rebuffed by the women he targets with catcalls. The following excerpt from my autoethnographic writing demonstrates the nothing-to-lose-but-everything-to-gain mentality that provides the rationale for catcalling.

Once after leaving a gas station where a coworker had unsuccessfully tried to get phone numbers from a few different women, I asked him why he even bothered. The woman had rebuffed him (as they usually did), and we were a long way from his home, making the chances

of a successful liaison even more unlikely. He responded that hollering at women was like

baseball, except there was no striking out and each woman was like a new ball. He explained that

in baseball there are three strikes and you're out. So you only swing at balls you think you can

hit. But when hitting on women, it was better to swing no matter how low the odds of hitting the

ball. He explained that my strategy of only approaching women with whom I had a shot might

yield higher percentages of hookups, but that his approach was superior because it would yield

higher numbers of hookups. This reminded me of the old Wayne Gretzky quote, "You miss 100

percent of the shots you don't take."

This coworker simply did not care if he was offending women, damaging the company

reputation, or making me feel uncomfortable. His only motivation for catcalling seemed to be a

minuscule chance he might score a casual hookup, a phone number, or even just a wave of her

hand. As long as his chances were not zero he would continue to try.

> While our crew was rarely successful in gaining positive attention from women, I did see
> guys get numbers from women a few times. I know that at least one of my coworkers
> talked a woman into having an encounter with him in the back of one of our dirty, beat-
> up work vans, and other guys were successful in bringing women back to our company
> warehouse or showroom for liaisons. So as long as they believed there was a chance, the
> guys would try. (AE)

When it was clear that there was no chance of receiving positive attention from the target,

then even negative attention could be relished. A middle finger or a fake phone number would

incite jocular laughter. If a woman made a verbal repost of any kind, it was reinterpreted to be

positive. For example, if a woman yelled "Back off, creep," a catcalling ringleader would likely

say something to the effect of "Damn, she must want this cock hard." Such acts of

reinterpretation were largely face-saving devices employed to protect egos and to put on a show

for fellow coworkers, who would typically offer support to the catcaller by portraying the

woman as a snob ("stuck-up bitch") or as someone who was bitter because she was incapable of finding a man.

Linguistic Analysis of Media Portrayal of Catcalling

Introduction of sketch

In the following sketch entitled "Super Bowl Play-by-Play with Randy" (Bob and Tom Show, 2006b;), Bob and Tom use two reoccurring characters to provide a fictional play-by-play broadcast for the Super Bowl. The main character, Donnie, was one of the most popular reoccurring characters among my coworkers at Midwest Installation. His character is a masculinized caricature of a Midwestern redneck. His character frequently makes sexually inappropriate comments to or about women. Donnie's voice actor gives him a rich, confident, and authoritative-sounding baritone voice. This contrasts with Randy's voice, which is presented as a weak and whiny-sounding tenor.

Randy is typically presented as Donnie's direct supervisor. He is the only reoccurring male character on *Bob & Tom* who sticks up for women and tries to disrupt sexist discourse. Donnie always scornfully rebuffs Randy's ally behavior, and in so doing usually either questions Randy's manhood or accuses him of being gay. The way Donnie attacks Randy closely mirrors my workplace experience in which I was rebuffed and told to "turn off my gaydar" or when I had my sexual orientation questioned when I refused to participate in catcalling or other practices that degraded women.

Analysis: Catcalling as a social ritual

One of the reasons I selected this sketch for analysis is because—aside from the fact that it happens in a play-by-play booth rather than next to a work truck—this portrayal of catcalling is exquisite in its authenticity. For me, listening to this sketch transported me back to the gas

stations, work trucks, and job sites where I was a reluctant participant in this social ritual. In my analysis of this sketch, I will explain the aspects of it that reflect my lived experience in a community that relished the opportunity to catcall. These similarities include (1) the expectation that all coworkers will participate, (2) frontstage catcalling that often links to backstage discussion of rape or sexual assault, (3) workplace misogyny that is often closely related to racism or other forms of workplace marginalization, and (4) the intermingling of hegemonic masculinity and racism.

Expectation of participation

The first major similarity between my lived experience and this sketch is that while men are supposed to be working, one member of the team notices an attractive woman nearby and points her out to his workmates. The instigator does this with the full expectation that his coworkers will drop what they are doing and leer. He does this because he is trying to secure a supportive audience for his display of hegemonic masculinity. Donnie exemplifies this when he says, "Aw, check it out, man, there's a cheerleader picking the wedgie. I swear to God, I feel like cutting her in half. Check it out, man, she's right there on the 45. The brunette right there on the 45! Randy!" In this excerpt, Donnie is urging Randy to take his attention off the task at hand and look. Randy responds by insisting that he needs to focus on the job by stating, "Donnie, they're getting ready to run the play." Randy's insistence that the work is more important than the chance to leer at a woman is treated as taboo. Donnie immediately goes on the offensive by questioning Randy's heterosexuality: "Are you that damn queer anyway?" After insulting Randy, Donnie goes on to clearly articulate his previously unstated assumption that Randy should stop focusing on his work and start leering at the woman: "I swear to God, I've never seen a hot chick go digging for a wedgie that long and you ain't even looking!" After chastising Randy for his

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perceived lack of manliness and his refusal to join in the ritual, Donnie proceeds to begin catcalling by urging the woman to look at his penis: "Hey, baby, stop digging and come check out this stalactite [euphemism] anyways." He then tries to get her to engage in sexual contact with another nearby woman ("Hey, why don't you let that blond next to you help out?"), offers to pay them to sexually entertain them ("Hey, if it rains I'll pay you both to mud wrestle."), and then tries to convince the women to let him join them for an orgy ("I'll jump in, too. You can call me the catfish because, I swear to God, I'll bring the mud bank."). It is important to note that Donnie has little or no expectation that these women will take an interest in him and that they do not respond to any of his catcalls. I believe that he continues to hurl degrading statements at the women as a performance of hegemonic masculinity that has as much to do with dominating Randy as it does with his interest in the women.

When we consider Randy as an interlocutor, the next sequence in the sketch comes into focus. First, Donnie interrupts Randy's play-by-play at a key moment by yelling "Touchdown!" This assumption of Randy's duties is a slight that clearly implies a lack of faith in Randy's competency, which is tied to a lack of faith in Randy's manliness. Second, Randy points out how rude Donnie was to him while asserting his workplace competence: "Donnie, that was rude. I was making the call just fine without your help." This is a plea to be respected for his work despite his refusal to participate in catcalling. Third, Donnie silences Randy and then addresses him like a dog while assigning him the marginal task of "fetching." Telling Randy to "shut up" and "go fetch" disrespects him both personally and professionally. In this example, Randy's refusal to participate in catcalling is treated as taboo and leads to the questioning of his qualification, manliness, and heterosexuality and also leads to a temporary banishment from the workspace.

By focusing on Randy as the primary interlocutor and examining how his refusal to participate in the catcalling ritual leads to loss of credibility and eventual banishment, I do not mean to imply that women are not victims of catcalling. And I certainly do not want to suggest that the pain, discomfort, and fear these incidents can evoke are marginal. From the perspective of a misogynistic all-male workgroup, however, these women and their feelings are marginal. Given their marginality to the group, it is unlikely that objections or protestations from women will disrupt catcalling. In fact, it is my observation that when women do confront groups of catcalling men, the offending group tends to relish the attention. Ringleaders of catcalling circles will often reframe the offended woman's protestations as evidence that "she must really want it."

When we see catcalling as both a social ritual and a mode of hypermasculinized discourse, the depth of the problem comes into focus. We see speakers alternating between backstage discourse, where the expectations of the ritual are outlined between men, and frontstage discourse assaulting women. Catcalling will not be curtailed by simple efforts to modify behavior; rather, it will require major changes to organizational cultures as well as shifts in discourse styles. Furthermore, the ease with which Randy is silenced and dismissed demonstrates that it will take more than a single advocate in a workgroup to successfully disrupt catcalling.

Casual discussions of rape as facilitated by euphemism and indirectness

Donnie's sexualized comments are sometimes thinly veiled through euphemism. In the context of a radio broadcast, some of the use of euphemism could be attributed to the need to satisfy FCC requirements for a morning radio show. However, euphemisms disguising marginalizing discourse are common in masculinized White male workplaces. Creative use of euphemism is praised and appreciated for its cleverness and artistic appeal. In fact, I believe one

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of the core appeals of *Bob & Tom* is the skill with which the writers generate innuendo. Even as a researcher committed to disrupting marginalization, I sometimes find myself impressed by the deftness with which Bob and Tom code misogyny and racism. One way this is done is by creating sexualized catchphrases for reoccurring characters. On first listen these phrases may seem innocuous, but regular listeners will understand the subtext. Donnie's reoccurring status allows him to establish the term "pork" as a euphemism that will be familiar to frequent listeners but which may seem nonsensical to a casual listener. In a sketch featuring Donnie, any reference made to "pork" or a "pork sword" is a reference to a penis, typically Donnie's. This usage of "pork" is similar to usages I've observed among White males who frequently use verb forms of "pork," such as "porked" or "porking," to refer to sex.

When we consider that these indirect methods of referring to sex are being operationalized in the workplace context, the use of euphemism increases in significance because it codes inappropriate comments in ways that may be unrecognizable to supervisors, human resources professionals, or diversity officers. This veiling could make it difficult for a concerned employee to bring a complaint regarding inappropriate sexual content on the radio or in personal conversations. The euphemisms introduced on *Bob & Tom* also provide listeners with an extended vocabulary of coded sexually explicit language (see chapter 6).

A rather complex euphemistic use of "pork" is found in the transcript. The term is introduced when Donnie explains that the Steelers are a "pork sword away" from a first down, and subsequently it is alluded two twice more in the sketch. The original usage can roughly translate to "a penis length away" from the first down. While describing distances in penis lengths is probably inappropriate in most workplace settings, this quip appears relatively benign, at least until Donnie describes his intentions to copulate with a cheerleader by saying "I swear to

God, I feel like cutting her in half." In this phrase, it appears that Donnie is expressing a desire to slash her with his "pork sword." Additionally, at the close of the sketch, Donnie exclaims that "I'm saving my extra point for that cheerleader. I'll put it straight through her uprights. I swear to God, I will." In this sequence "point" appears to be a triple entendre referring to the extra point of a football game, the point of his "pork sword," and the tip of his penis. Given the violent implications of referring to the penis as a stabbing and slashing weapon and the nonconsensual implications of the phrase "I swear to God, I will" in reference to his desired sex act, the listener is left with the impression that Donnie has no regard for the woman's desire, permission, or safety. Essentially, Donnie is using indirectness and euphemism to express his willingness to rape the cheerleader. Permissive attitudes toward rape are found in other *Bob & Tom* sketches such as "Invisible Bob," in which Bob gains the power of invisibility and uses it to creep into a locker room and fondle cheerleaders without consent.

Another reference to "pork" occurs when Donnie insists that he "ain't afraid to pin the hog in front of people." Given that the preceding sentence contains "adjust their junk"—which is an established euphemism for handling one's testicles or penis—this phrase appears to reference an undefined sex act, most probably public masturbation. Donnie goes on to talk about committing this act in front of his friend's mother. This act also appears to be nonconsensual as he "made her blush."

Both on *Bob & Tom* and at Midwest Installation, men sometimes engaged in discussions that normalized sexual aggression against women. For example—as discussed in chapter 6—Bob Kevoian received negative publicity for appearing to defend adults' liberty to have sex with minors. Statutory rape was similarly condoned at Midwest Installation when grown men used the phrase "if there is grass on the field, play the game," which euphemistically expresses the belief

that once a girl grows pubic hair, she should be considered sexually available. Likewise, *Bob &*

Tom endorsed violence against women in bits like "I Love Swearing" when guest comedian

Daniel Tosh jokes about punching his pregnant girlfriend in the kidney, before quipping about

how women's deaths from use of the morning-after pill are the equivalent of "two birds with one

stone." Similar jokes hinging on violence against women were told at Midwest Installation when

men would talk about giving women "strawberry shortcakes," a sex act that was explained to me

as requiring the man give the woman a nosebleed by punching her in the face before ejaculating

into the gushing blood. In this euphemism, the white semen is the shortcake, and the red blood is

the strawberry. In a final example, the *Bob & Tom Show* produced a sketch called "Invisible

Bob" in which Bob gains the power of invisibility and uses it to follow cheerleaders into the

shower and fondle their breasts and buttocks without their consent. Employees at Midwest

Installation echoed a desire for invisibility for use in pursuing nonconsensual sexual excitement.

These examples reflect the reality that deeply misogynistic backstage discourse coexists in

organizational cultures with frontstage acts such as catcalling.

I want to underscore that this sketch connects frontstage catcalling with backstage

references to both sexual assault and rape. This should serve as a forceful warning to

organizations regarding the dangers of taking permissive stances toward catcalling and other

degrading sexual talk. Catcalling is a form of sexual harassment that is connected at the level of

discourse to rape and other forms of sexual violence, and for this reason, it should never be

treated permissively or dismissed as "male-bonding" or "boys being boys." This type of rhetoric

is violent in its nature, and when it occurs in organizational settings, it needs to be addressed

through purposeful and sustained HRD and Organization Development interventions.

Black hair, Black people, and fecal matter

Along with the misogyny and homophobia, this sketch also includes some casual racism when it equates Black hair with human excrement. After expressing his desire that a Black player defecate on the field, Donnie says if it were him he would say "Check out these corn rows" after defecating. This is an obvious degradation of Black hairstyles that reinforces arguments about the politicized scrutiny to which Black hair is subjected in the workplace (Jacobs-Huey, 2006). The connection of fecal matter with Blackness is common in White-male discourse. One example of this connection that I have encountered in organizational settings is the phrase "dropping little Black kids off at the pool" as a euphemism for defecation. In slightly more polite company, this same phrase is often adapted as "dropping the kids off at the pool." The second rendering of this phrase codes the racialized nature of the euphemism in such a way that it allows White men to indirectly exchange degrading messages. By omitting "Black" from this phrase, White males can participate in a form of racism that appears color-blind (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). It is also important to note that while misogyny is the driving force behind this sketch, other aspects of the matrix of domination (Collins, 1999) are invoked as well, including homophobia, religious intolerance (a dismissive quip about speaking in tongues), and racism.

Black names as a target for microaggression

A microaggression is a marginalizing action that is small enough to go unnoticed by most people in the dominant culture and opaque enough to leave the target unclear as to whether they are being discriminated against or not (Brookfield, 2014). When Donnie first mentions the name "Duce" during the sketch, *Bob & Tom*'s on-air talent laughs at the name. This laughter reflects the common practice of Whites laughing about African American names and treating them as objects of ridicule. The laughing at Black names is a form of microaggression, and negative

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biases around Black naming conventions have been shown to decrease the chances of well-qualified Black applicants receiving calls for job interviews (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). It is common in *Bob & Tom* sketches to introduce characters with stereotypically Black names and then have them personify negative Black stereotypes. These sketches reinforce negative stereotypes of Blacks, connect them to Black names, and normalize the practice of laughing at African American naming practices. HRD professionals should be aware of cultural practices that denigrate names associated with Blacks and other minority groups. It will take interventions at the level of culture to reduce the effects of name bias in the screening of job applications and to curb name-related microaggressions.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

Allies need support

In this sketch, Randy is rebuffed for refusing to participate in the catcalling ritual, and in my autoethnographic writing—as well as other *Bob & Tom* sketches such as "Pork It or Cork It—Britney Spears" and "Pork It or Cork It—Paris"—we see that conversational confrontation of men engaged in sexually degrading discourse can bring the ally under verbal assault through which he can lose status, trust, and perception of competency. Likewise, we see that forceful confrontations of sexually degrading language can lead to physical altercations. Additionally, research is needed to determine if there are safe and effective ways that men can disrupt misogynistic discourse. Efforts in this area would likely start with identifying the most common ways that men defend themselves when accused of inappropriate comments and preparing allies for those responses. My research indicates that, when challenging misogyny, a potential ally should be prepared to have his masculinity, heterosexuality, and professional competency questioned. He can also expect to be threatened with a lack of social acceptance or even

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banishment from the job site. Future research should develop and test reposts to these attacks that

seek to reframe discussions about gender. Once workable reposts are generated, trainings should

be implemented that allow potential allies to learn and practice different approaches to disrupt

marginalizing discourse and move the discussion in more fruitful directions.

Catcalling is a form of violence

By considering the discourse preceding and following a catcalling event, we can see that

catcalling and other forms of degrading sexual language are clearly linked to rape and other

forms of violence. This becomes apparent in the sketch when Donnie reveals his complete

disregard for the sexual consent of the women he is catcalling, as well as through the violent

slashing and stabbing language he uses to describe his desire for sexual conquest. It is important

to recognize the connection between catcalls and the expression of violent intent. Without this

recognition, it is easy for some to dismiss catcalling as harmless. For example, at a recent poster

presentation on this topic, a professor from a prestigious research university spoke dismissively

of my research while arguing that hard-working men deserve an outlet and that women should

consider catcalls to be compliments. He believed I was "taking away all our workplace fun," and

that I was "doing away with another American institution." He went on to concede that years ago

he had pause about whether he should "let" female student-interns on the shop floor of a

manufacturing plant. In this he acknowledged the pervasiveness of the issue, but rather than

confront the behavior he considered curtailing educational opportunities of female students.

Given that some professors who are preparing the next generation of workplace leaders still

believe that catcalling is "fun," it is important to emphasize its violence and the dangers of taking

a permissive stance about it. The violence inherent in catcalling that contributed to institutional

marginalization of women, people of color, and LGBTQ communities occurred through practices

of maintaining White heteronormative, hypermasculine space through violence and threats of violence.

Movement from backstage to frontstage and back again

While the catcalling act is a frontstage linguistic practice, the discussions before and after the event are typically backstage. This movement from back to front and back again demonstrates the fluidity with which a conversation can move between the two stages. In the lead-up before and wrap-up after the catcall, we can see how backstage discourse encourages and legitimizes the catcalling act, and we can also see the effect of the catcalling ritual on male allies. The basic continuity in the catcalling project as it moves from back to front shows that the speakers are comfortable with expressing derogatory sexism in the frontstage but may reserve discussions of rape for the backstage. Evidence from my autoethnography also suggests that allies can expect different types of censure depending on whether they intervene in the front- or backstage. As I discussed in this chapter, Randy's and my backstage confrontations of catcallers lead to derogatory comments about our manhood, sexual orientation, and professional skills. These admonishments stand in sharp contrast to the events recorded in chapter 5 in which one of my coworkers knocked a man unconscious after he attempted a frontstage disruption. The difference in reactions to public versus private challenges should be considered when male allies are encouraged to disrupt catcalling, as a frontstage attempt could place the ally at considerable physical risk. The physical risks of frontstage confrontations should also be considered when organizations consider disciplinary actions against non-ringleaders who were present for catcalling events. While in a sense all men who failed to disrupt the activity might appear complicit, frontstage compliance with the catcalling ritual could be a reluctant act of self-preservation.

The frontstage dynamics of catcalling also serve the function of demarcating public spaces as the domain of straight men. By exerting hegemonic masculinity into apparently neutral spaces, the men at Midwest Installation insisted their ideologies on women and members of the LGBTQ community. The violent impulse in catcalling and the marginalizing force of its supporting ideology can transform routine activities—such as pumping gas—into disquieting experiences.

CHAPTER 8: WHEN BLACK AND NATIVE LIVES DON'T MATTER: RACIALLY

MOTIVATED VIOLENCE, KILLING, AND GENOCIDE IN MASCULINIZED WHITE

WORKPLACE DISCOURSE AND HUMOR

The Black Lives Matter movement started as a way to raise awareness and concern about

unchecked violence against Black people in America. Blacks are more likely to be killed by

police than Whites (Beer, 2018; Tate, Jenkins, & Rich, 2018), and the many documented

instances of killings of unarmed Blacks have energized this social movement. While less highly

publicized and rarely addressed in popular discourse, the Native Lives Matter project has also

sought to draw attention to police violence against Native peoples who—relative to total

population—are killed by police at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group (Males,

2014).

The slogan "Black Lives Matter" has been met with resistance and hostility by many

Whites who do not see the need for Blacks (and allies) to make assertions regarding the value

and worth of Black lives. Those who seek to disrupt the emerging discourse around the value of

Black lives tend to regard instances of White violence against Blacks as individual incidents that

do not reflect larger societal patterns. According to this line of reasoning, each instance of

White-on-Black violence needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis, even when the violent

acts are expressly racially motivated. This chapter addresses these objections to the Black Lives

Matter (BLM) movement by demonstrating that violence against Blacks is a permissible, normal,

and even celebrated area of discourse in some masculinized White communities. The White

communities I explore that embrace this type of discourse are not fringe communities of White

supremacists. The sites I explore are twofold. First, there is a community of listeners comprised

of the millions of fans who regularly enjoy the *Bob & Tom Show*, and in so doing choose to

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consume comedic material that includes jokes about the killing of Blacks and Native Americans. Second, I examine workers in a small business I call Midwest Installation, which operates in the construction industry. The predominantly White male employees of this masculinized organization tend to enjoy punchlines that hang on degradation, murder, and genocide of racial "others." The second community is nested within the first; *Bob & Tom* was the favored morning radio show on the job at Midwest Installation. In this chapter, I will draw connections between the discourse patterns broadcast nationwide by *Bob & Tom* and the jokes told through the day on the job site. My analysis reveals that in some varieties of White-male discourse, Black and Native lives don't matter.

By casting a broad gaze at White discourse around racialized violence, I refute claims that individual instances of White-on-Black violence should be treated as isolated instances. Rather, I argue that they are physical enactments of violent acts that have been conceptualized through language and rehearsed through the repeated retelling of dehumanizing jokes. I argue that instances of White police brutality against Blacks is not solely a law enforcement issue, because such acts of violence are reflections of a broader cultural acceptance of violence against Blacks and Natives.

Methods

This chapter continues the analysis pattern of previous chapters in which I analyze journals, autoethnographic writing regarding my three years of employment at Midwest Installation, and comedic material from the *Bob & Tom Show* that was consumed in this workplace. I also include social media analysis of YouTube comments on a video posted by the *Bob & Tom Show*. I begin by exploring several comedic sketches and songs that demonstrate the pattern of degrading African Americans on the *Bob & Tom Show*. I then provide a detailed

analysis of a single sketch from the show in which stereotypes about the violent nature of Blacks are used to rationalize a White man's threat to shoot an unarmed Black man in the head. Given that some readers may wonder if the rise of the #BlackLivesMatter movement would have caused the show to relent in the use of humorous anti-Black humor, I also discuss purposefully selected post-BLM *Bob & Tom Show* material that follows the pattern established in my data set. I then analyze additional material that trivializes Native American genocide while linking racial violence to sexual domination. After discussing examples of media content that were consumed daily in my workplace—and that are consumed by millions of listeners at work each day across America—I will present passages from my journaling and autoethnographic writing that reveal discourse-level connections between national media and daily conversations about race and sexuality. Through these writings, I also explore the process by which stereotypes communicated in racial jokes affect workplace behavior toward minorities and how discourse about violence against minoritized people can be translated into hate crime–level threats of workplace violence.

CDA of *Bob & Tom*'s Mass Media Content

Representations of Black Celebrities on *Bob & Tom*

In my analysis of over 450 comedic sketches and songs released by the *Bob & Tom Show*, a clear pattern emerged whereby Black characters are crafted in such a way as to consistently affirm stereotypes. As I explained in chapter 6, over 25% of these sketches included some sort of racist content. While jokes that hang on violence against people of color are relatively rare on *Bob & Tom*, even a single instance of such content being enjoyed in the workplace is cause for concern. Moreover, the prevalence of dehumanizing representations of people of color—even when they were not overtly violent—served to develop or reinforce worldviews in which Black and Native lives were valueless. Valueless, that is, aside from the

monetary *value* upon which *Bob & Tom* so readily capitalized. In this section, I introduce the reader to a variety of approaches used by *Bob & Tom* to dehumanize Blacks before drawing connections between these misrepresentations and celebrations of anti-Black violence.

The most common strategies used by *Bob & Tom* to signify a character's Blackness are the use of mock Ebonics (Ronkin & Karn, 1999) and the creation of caricatures of Black celebrities. Representations of Black celebrities in *Bob & Tom* sketches include Janet Jackson, Louis Armstrong, Dennis Rodman, Magic Johnson, Malcolm X, Barry Bonds, Morgan Freeman, Jesse Jackson, Greg Lloyd, Albert Belle, Sammy Sosa, O.J. Simpson, Kobe Bryant, James Earl Jones, and Rosa Parks. These celebrities are used to invoke Black stereotypes pertaining to unemployability, lack of intelligence, gang life, misogyny, excessive cursing, murder, rape, AIDS and other STDs, hypersexuality, sex with married White women, absentee fatherhood, large penises, hypersensitivity to racial slights, drug use, violence, gunplay, all-night parties, anti-White and anti-Asian racism, violence against Whites, exploitation of other Blacks, and engagement with the criminal justice system. Several of these bits also present African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as an unintelligible bastardization of English through the deployment of mock Ebonics.

While one might argue that connecting certain celebrities with the associated stereotypes—such as associating Kobe Bryant with rape—could be non-racially motivated reactions to pop culture news reports, the same cannot be argued in all cases. For example, portrayals that link James Earl Jones to STDs, anti-White racism, a lack of professionalism, and criminal behavior are not reflective of his life history or public persona (e.g., the *Bob & Tom* sketches "Candy Hearts Wisdom" and "Bumper Sticker Wisdom"). I believe that, when convenient, the *Bob & Tom Show* uses images of Black celebrities who have fallen from grace to

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push stereotypes. However, they also use images of Blacks who are generally regarded as respectable by Whites, unnamed Black characters, Black music forms, mock Ebonics, and other references to Black culture to conjure stereotypes.

Black celebrities were deployed in relation to demeaning stereotypes regardless of the standards of behavior they maintained while in the public eye. Those who faced serious allegations such as Jesse Jackson, Kobe Bryant, and O.J. Simpson were trotted out for jokes about sex scandals, rape, and murder/violence. On the other side of the spectrum, the *Bob & Tom Show* was able to derive humor from scandal-free Blacks generally held in high esteem by Whites. In fact, jokes about Black celebrities such as Rosa Parks, James Earl Jones, and Morgan Freeman turned on the respectability of these figures' public personas. For example, *Bob & Tom* introduced a White-male mock political candidate as "the Rosa Parks of public masturbation" and then joked about masturbating on a bus. In a separate sketch, Parks violently "picks up George Wallace by the gonads and slams him against the back of the team bus" (Bob & Tom Show, 2004). In the first of these jokes, it was Parks' eminent respectability contrasted with a presidential campaign predicated on public masturbation that *Bob & Tom* used to create comedic tension. Likewise, it was Parks' association with nonviolence that created the comedic tension on which the latter was based. Similarly, it was James Earl Jones' reputation as a consummate professional and his many roles as a gentle and sympathetic figure that allowed humor to be derived by presenting him as boorishly unprofessional and by associating him with hostility against Whites and murder. Finally, Morgan Freeman, a committed father of his biological children and committed adoptive father to a child of his second wife, is presented as an absentee father of a child conceived with a White woman who was cheating on her husband. Again, the comedic tension between Freeman's commitment to the nuclear family and his representation as

a homewrecker and absentee Black father is what gives life to the joke. Clearly no amount of "good behavior" exempts Black celebrities from being represented as personifying stereotypes.

Black Stereotypes as a Rationale for White Violence

Introduction of "Albert Belle" sketch

When the *Bob & Tom Show* deploys Black caricatures, they typically confirm Black stereotypes. This allows *Bob & Tom* to regularly portray Black stereotypes under a guise of personal critique of individual Blacks. In the case of the "Albert Belle" sketch, *Bob & Tom* developed a caricature of the famous baseball player. Belle's violent public persona and stereotypes about Black male violence are combined to create a fiction in which the White character sees himself as justified in threatening to murder Belle.

While highly productive on the baseball field, Belle became infamous for his antagonistic relationship with the media as well as violent outbursts that included using baseball bats to destroy team property and the personal property of his teammates (Olney, 2004). Through the repeated use of caricatures based on Black celebrities linked to violence, *Bob & Tom* keep stereotypes about the violent nature of Black men at the forefront of their listeners' imaginations under the pretense of satire.

In the sketch, a caricature of Albert Belle is portrayed as sitting for an interview with a caricature of long-time baseball announcer Harry Caray. The caricature of Caray is a reoccurring character on *Bob & Tom* who gives voice to degrading comments about women, gays, and racial minorities. (Bob & Tom, 2003).

"Albert Belle" sketch analysis

Association of Blacks with mental illness, violence, and lack of professionalism

In the introduction of this sketch, Caray introduces his interviewee by reducing his professional identity to a stereotype of Black male violence ("He's currently serving a five-game suspension for beating the bejesus out of that little fart Fernando Viña") before asking his guest if he is "retarded." This phrasing is at once a demeaning use of an ableist slur and a play on stereotypes of Black mental illness and lack of intelligence. In this view, Belle is not treated as a professional deserving of respect and dignity but as a violent, mentally incompetent "other." While this chapter does not provide a detailed examination of ableist discourse, I will be taking up this issue in future research.

Belle declines to answer Caray's first question and protests its unfairness. As Belle confronts additional accusations from Caray that he has a violent and uncontrolled nature, Belle asserts his focus and diligence as a professional: "When I'm on the field, I am totally focused on one thing. Winning." Caray's response dismisses Belle's claim to professionalism by insisting that Belle must have intended to say "whining" rather than "winning" and invoking the stereotype that Black men prefer to play the victim at work rather than ply their trade.

Sexualization and dehumanization

Caray makes a rhetorical move that shifts the discourse from demeaning Belle to fully dehumanizing him. He does this by combining a stereotype about Black male penis size with a racist trope in which Whites equate Blacks with monkeys. "Right, and I got this penile implant just so my pants would fit better. Back off with that load of monkey marble!" This move has the effect of casting Belle (and all Blacks) as something less than fully evolved humans. Black penises are connected to monkeys in other *Bob & Tom* sketches as well, such as in "Gary

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Busey's Basement with Dennis Rodman," when Busey's monkey is instinctively drawn to Rodman's exposed penis. Additionally, many *Bob & Tom* sketches attempt humor by invoking the stereotype that Black men have huge penises.

White victimhood

The demeaning and dehumanizing portrayal of Blacks in the sketch's opening sets the stage for Caray's expression of White victimhood and also his rationalizations that allow him to make a threat on Belle's life. When Belle discusses his aspiration to break a record that had long been held by a White player, Caray vents unmitigated rage while playing on the undeserving Black trope by asserting that Belle does not "deserve to roll in Roger Maris' spittle." By arguing that Belle is undeserving of his earned professional achievement, he is assuming a position of White backlash in which White males assume that White male achievements are the product of virtue and hard work, while the achievements of minoritized peoples are regarded as unearned and undeserved. Caray further attempts to undercut Belle by invoking a pun that both accuses Belle of cheating to get ahead and insults Belle's hair.

Belle eventually tires of Caray's insults and shifts from being conciliatory and conversational to verbally confronting Caray and asking him to end the barrage of insults: "Listen, old man, I'm getting a little tired of your attitude." Caray responds by calling him "psycho boy," which represents a circling back to his initial stereotype of Belle as mentally unsound combined with the pejorative use of "boy," which has a long history of being used to undercut the manhood and full citizenship of Blacks. By calling Belle "boy," Caray harkens to slavery and Jim Crow—times when White men's violence against Blacks went virtually unchecked—as he produces a gun that he uses to threaten Belle's life. In this example, Belle's reasonable expression of offense is cast as violent aggression and used as a rationalization to

threaten Belle's life. In this exchange, Caray threatens that "you come out of that chair in my direction and I'll put three hollow points into your brain before your ass clears the cushion." This threat puts Belle in an impossible position as Caray will shoot him if his "ass clears the cushion." This means that even if Belle stands with the intention of retreating to safety from Caray's imminent threat, he would be killed. The specific threat to shoot Belle in the head three times with hollow-point rounds clearly demonstrates that Caray is not interested in merely defending himself and that he has no regard for Belle's well-being or even survival. Furthermore, the fact that Caray has a weapon at the interview at all suggests that he came to the interview expecting violence.

Presenting such demeaning and dehumanizing portrayals of African Americans as comedy and connecting them to "justified" threats on Black lives normalizes stereotyping, degradation, and violence against Black people. Furthermore, listening to such content on a workplace radio establishes such discourse as acceptable on the job. As I will demonstrate later, once established as acceptable, this type of racist language spills over into conversations between coworkers. When this happens, the discourse often becomes even more overtly racist than what was permissible for *Bob & Tom* to broadcast and can lead to real threats of racially motivated violence.

Continued Humorous Invocations of Death for Blacks

While much of the degrading humor about Blacks did not hang on violence or threats of violence, each degrading representation lays the discursive groundwork for jokes that do. Jokes that do hang on violence against Blacks have been part of the *Bob & Tom* repertoire since at least 1990 when a bit was performed in which two White guests on the show expressed a desire to get some guns in order to raise the murder rate in Detroit (Malone & Nootcheez, 1990). This quip

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was followed by the duo creating an audio landscape of downtown Detroit that invoked

pervasive Blackness through the use of nonsensical fast talk, mock AAVE, and a mock version

of street-corner doo-wop-style harmony singing.

In order to demonstrate the ongoing appeal of such jokes, I have selected two sketches

from 2016 in which a *Bob & Tom* character quips about the demise of Black celebrity Colin

Kaepernick; "Donnie Baker" takes center stage for this performance. Donnie is a reoccurring

character on the show who is a racially insensitive personification of hegemonic masculine

ideals. In the first of these monologues, Baker callously quips about Kaepernick's death, and in

the second he expresses a desire that Kaepernick's head be blown up by a rocket. These bits

demonstrate that jokes predicated on Black people dying are of continuing appeal to *Bob & Tom*

listeners. In addition to presenting material from these two monologues about Kaepernick, I also

analyze YouTube comment data from the more popular of the two videos.

Kaepernick came under fire from many conservative media figures, including Bob and

Tom, for taking a knee during the national anthem before NFL football games. Kaepernick's

goal in this effort was to raise awareness regarding police brutality against Blacks and other

social justice causes. *Bob & Tom* used their character Donnie Baker to deliver monologues

dedicated to Kaepernick, whom Baker calls "Kaeperdicks." In his "Final Farewell to Colin

Kaeperdicks," Baker maligns the NFL quarterback for his play, his hairstyle, and his efforts as a

"social justice warrior" and jokes about his death by quipping that "I heard even your own

bobblehead tried to break its neck." Donnie signals the racial overtones of his death wish for

Kaepernick by quipping about his characteristically Black hairstyle later in the monologue,

describing it as "the only world's afro that can fit in a football helmet" (Baker, 2016b).

In another monologue, Donnie sings the following words to the tune of the *Star-Spangled Banner*: "Oh, say can you see, what a dumb dick you are, making millions a year, and singing about your oppressions. And the hawkers' red glare, aimed right toward your hair, I swear to God we hate you, complaining about your oppressions" (Baker, 2016a).

In the original anthem, the "red glare" Donnie wants "aimed right toward your hair" is the red of rockets exploding. So, in this spoof of the national anthem, Baker appears be calling for Kaepernick to be murdered. The call for the killing of Kaepernick is even more blunt than the threat to Albert Belle's life in that it is not even delivered under the pretext of self-defense. Based on the evidence in the comments section of this video, we can see how this performance resonated with many fans.

This video was viewed almost 350,000 times as of July 30, 2018, receiving approximately 2,000 likes and 200 dislikes. As one would expect given the number of likes, the majority of the comments were resoundingly positive. Most of these were very general affirmations such as "I wish I could grow up to be Donnie…" and "One of the best yet! Thank you, Donnie!" Some of the affirmations, however, provide insight into what aspects of the monologue most resonated with fans. The portions of the monologue that commenters most responded to were constructions of dissent as unpatriotic, a homophobic quip about Kaepernick being sexually violated in Japan by "Fister Miyagi," Baker's claim that Kaepernick's beard makes him look like an Al-Qaeda terrorist, the desire to see Kaepernick and other Blacks dead, and general criticisms of Black culture.

In the video, Baker claims that Kaepernick's facial hair makes him look like a terrorist: "I hate your beard, too…can't tell if you are playing quarterback for the 49ers or Al-Qaedas." The way that Baker's connection of Kaepernick to terrorist organizations resonates with YouTube

commenters points to shared animosity many Whites feel toward Blacks and Middle-Eastern

Muslims. It also demonstrates the ways in which conservative Whites appear to feel that their

lifestyles and traditional beliefs are under assault from both social justice advocates and

Muslims.

One comment, in which the author portrays Kaepernick as a suicide bomber, states that

"…you ain't the only one that was waiting on him to detonate" and provides a linkage point

between the disregard for Black lives and the association of Kaepernick's social justice advocacy

with terrorism. This comment could be seen as directed just at Kaepernick and not Blacks more

generally; however, the following comment at least extends sympathy for the murder of Black

NFL players: "Bunch of uneducated Neanderthals whom have no clue of the noose they are

placing around they're own necks! DEATH TO THE NFL!!!" This comment not only calls for

the death of a predominately Black sports league but also associates Blacks with lower states of

evolution and harkens to America's history of racially motivated lynching.

An additional comment provides a linkage point between comments calling for the death

of Blacks and comments criticizing Black culture: "blacks oppress themselves. this country

needs a war badly, we gotta weed out the weak asap, then start over..." Given that this comment

addresses both the belief that Blacks oppress themselves and the need to "weed out the weak"

through war, the implication seems to be that war should be used to kill off Blacks. This raises

the question voiced in a response by another commenter: "Are you calling for genocide?" An

additional response to this comment calls for patience, stating that "diseases will eventually weed

out the weak and worthless," which makes a Darwinian appeal under the assumption that Blacks

and other inferiors will be selected out naturally and eventually become extinct as races.

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Other comments stop well short of calling for the death of individual Blacks or the extinction of their race but take the opportunity to deny claims of White-on-Black oppression while blaming the individual choices of Blacks for the group's lack of success: "black people aren't oppressed, look at statistics white people are even killed by the police more. if you can succeed in todays world its because of you and your choices not your skin color our presidents black i mean come on." Black culture is also criticized through a stereotypical association with gangs and criminal activities in another comment: "The black society is raised to hate cops through music, local gangs, and the fact that some make money by selling illegal products themselves."

Perceived deficits in other non-White racial and ethnic groups can also be inferred based on a statement made about Whites:

> The great thing about the white race is you can't point the finger at whites we argue at the dinner table about everything we are democrate we are Republican we are socialist we are dictators we are raciest we are not raciest we are everything we don't all do anything the same we could never have a white spokesmen for the white race it would take like a thousand different men with different views and that many still wouldn't be enough

According to this logic, the very ubiquity of Whiteness leaves it invulnerable to criticism. This comment also appears to take reductionistic views of other cultures, which the author seems to believe can each be easily represented by a single spokesperson.

While Baker does not pursue this line in the sketch, commenters also frequently questioned Kaepernick's Blackness, referring to him as a "half-breed" or a "mulatto" in attempts to undermine his credibility in speaking about injustice against Blacks. The top-rated comment of this ilk states that "after colin met his wife to be from black lies matter he went from colin kapernick to colin wishes he was a darker nig." It took me a few readings to realize that "wishes

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he was a darker nig" was supposed to be a comedic reworking of "Kaepernick." This comment expresses contempt for the Black Lives Matter movement while invoking a racial slur.

Laughing About Genocide

In addition to joking about the prospect of murdering Black people, the *Bob & Tom Show* does not hesitate to joke about murder on the much larger scale of racial genocide. I provide two examples of such jokes. The first is a parody song that equates White male heartache with massive Native American death tolls resulting from European colonization. The second suggests that White men can atone for the Native American genocide through their sexual prowess, which again trivializes the sufferings of American Natives during the colonial era. These two sketches are the only two in my data set that joke about Native American genocide, and also two of only three sketches that present any substantive representations of Native Americans. The fact that I identified two genocidal sketches regarding Native Americans, despite the fact that *Bob & Tom* almost never mention this people group, makes the matter that much more disturbing. It is as if the entire cultural legacy of diverse Native American peoples has been reduced to genocide— and laughed at.

Example 1: Genocide and dehumanization

"Your Love Is…" introduction

This song is a gentle ballad with fingerstyle guitar accompanying a male vocalist who sings in a style reminiscent of James Taylor. The lyrics portray the love of the singer as pure and innocent and contrast this with the love of his lover, which is presented in morbid terms. (Paul & Storm, 2006.)

Analysis

By presenting his lover's cruelty to the "wiping out of the indigenous population," the singer equates his emotional suffering to the carnage and devastation that European colonialism wrought on Native American populations. This rhetorical move dismisses and belittles the devastating effects of colonialism and disease by equating it with temporary emotional discomfort. By presenting this comparison as comedy deserving of hearty laughter from the show's on-air talent, the Native American genocide is further belittled. The laughter of the hosts sets the example that it is okay to laugh at genocide. Native Americans are further belittled in the next verse of the song when the singer equates his heartache with the death of deer and eagles. We can follow a syllogistic connection that demonstrates the dehumanization implied when Native American genocide is equated with the accidental deaths of animals.

$$\text{My heartache} = \text{deaths of Native Americans}$$

$$\text{My heartache} = \text{deaths of animals}$$

$$\text{Deaths of Native Americans} = \text{deaths of animals}$$

$$\text{Native Americans} = \text{Animals}$$

Example 2: Native American genocide, transphobia, and White forgiveness

Native Americans are the primary target in another bit where Bob and Tom laugh about genocide. Rather than compare them to animals, this time *Bob & Tom* created a situation where reoccurring character Donnie Baker is portrayed as able to atone for the Native American genocide through his sexual gusto. In this sketch, Donnie is being interviewed about his experiences with the 1984 Super Bowl. This sketch also includes Donnie's boss, Randy, who is the only male character on the show who consistently challenges sexism. The third character in this sketch is an interviewer whose goal is to get Donnie to recount his experiences at the 1984

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Super Bowl. He can be seen encouraging Donnie to discuss the game as Donnie digresses (Bob & Tom, 2006.)

Analysis

In this sketch, Donnie introduces Native American stereotypes by claiming that his Native American sexual partner was in touch with some sort of animal spirit. The fact that this spirit is presented as having value only for its ability to teach sex tricks makes the invocation of this stereotype especially insulting. Donnie then goes on to explain that his partner thought that he had performed so well in bed that he "made up for all the bad stuff the White man did to Indians back in the day anyway." This is problematic on a couple of levels: (1) It is dismissive of genocide and colonial land grabs, and (2) it implicitly dismisses any claims that Native Americans still face systemic barriers or oppression. By claiming that a single sex act can make up for hundreds of years of slaughter, removal, boarding schools, Christianization, and exploitation, Donnie belittles Native American suffering. His dismissiveness is compounded by the fact that his supposed lover "Cher" has commercially capitalized on claims that she is part Native American despite having no documented Native American ancestry.

Cher scored a number 1 hit in 1973 for the song "Half-Breed." The music video presents the singer sitting on a horse wearing a feather headdress and starts with her making claims about Cherokee heritage.

In the Super Bowl sketch, Donnie appears to be uncritically referencing the public persona of Cher being part Native American despite the fact that those claims are dubious at best given that genealogical records of Cher's family indicate that none of her recorded ancestors were identified as belonging to any Native American tribe ("The controversy of Cher's heritage," n.d.). With this in mind, we see a White woman, masquerading as a Native American, excusing

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crimes committed against Native Americans. By creating the situation of a White woman of dubious Native American heritage essentially speaking for all Native Americans, the *Bob & Tom Show* betrays layers of dismissiveness toward American Natives. First, they dismiss tribally affiliated Native Americans whose voices should receive preference in discussions of the legacy of colonialism on the North American continent. Second, they dismiss the diversity within First Nations communities by assuming that a Cherokee can speak for all Native Americans. Third, they belittle lineage and cultural claims of American Natives by validating the idea that a person raised White can simply put on an American Native identity.

The claims that Donnie's "pork injection" can make up for genocide and other colonial crimes is further complicated by the possibility that Donnie had actually had sex with Boy George rather than Cher. In this situation, we would have a British man roleplaying as a White woman with dubious claims to Native American heritage granting forgiveness for the colonial atrocities in North America (Williams, 2016). Thus, in this sketch, we can see American Native lives not mattering to White men and also that women, gay men, and members of the transgender community are belittled by the implication that their paths to fulfillment are so dominated by sexual desire that they are willing to erase and forgive atrocities against humanity because what they value more than anything is the sexual prowess of straight men.

Even putting aside the transphobia and homophobia inherent in this sketch, we see *Bob & Tom* presenting highly problematic discourse relating to genocide. At Midwest Installation, listening to sketches like these established a precedent that joking about genocide was okay. Thus, when the radio was turned off, employees had little hesitation about spouting off jokes with dehumanizing and genocidal themes.

Autoethnography Exploring Racial and Homophobic Degradation, Violence, and Genocide

in Workplace Humor

Given that the *Bob & Tom Show* played on workplace radios every morning at Midwest

Installation, content from the show established a climate where degrading jokes were

normalized. In my journals, I never reflected on specific reactions my coworkers had to racist

jokes from *Bob & Tom*. I can, however, relate many instances in which jokes with similar themes

were told throughout the day. The fact that dehumanizing jokes were heard on the radio and then

told through the day underscores the extent to which racist discourse was integrated into daily

life.

> Starting each day with a dose of bigoted humor set a tone for conversations the rest of the
> day, which featured a variety of low-brow jokes. Some were misogynistic quips like
> when the sick wife of one of my supervisors called and asked him to pick her up some
> medicine on the way home, and he replied, "Well, baby, when I get home I'll be happy to
> give you an oral dose of penis-illin." Other jokes were homophobic or racist, and I
> believe that they were used as an acculturation tool that normalized the dehumanization
> of "others" and implicitly validated the supremacy of straight White men.
> One common joke was cracked when a three-man crew crammed three across into
> the cab of a pickup truck. The person in the middle was misogynistically referred to as
> "riding bitch" or homophobically referred to as "going skiing." I was initially confused
> by the latter quip, and it was explained to me by a coworker extending his arms out to his
> left and right, making fists, and raising his hands up and down as if he was propelling
> himself with ski poles (or masturbating two men at the same time). In one variation of the
> "bitch in the middle" trope, I recall Bill, who was riding shotgun, ducking down in his
> seat and grinning at me and the driver. I asked him what he was doing, and he responded,
> "Now you guys look like a couple of queers." We all laughed. It was rare for Bill to be
> that silly. (AE)

At the time, I tended not to be offended by gay jokes. I only wanted to avoid being the

target of them myself because the accusation of gayness was a stigmatized challenge to one's

manhood. Racial jokes did offend me, and I tried to make that known to my coworkers.

> When I expressed my distaste about racist jokes, some of my coworkers would refrain
> from telling the nastiest and most demeaning jokes while I was around; however, most of
> the guys continued to tell them despite my objections. Somewhat ironically, however, the
> most effective way that I could confront racist humor was by simply not getting the jokes.

I often failed to laugh at the punchline because I was generally confused by the prejudice that formed the premise of a joke. My fellow coworkers would often spend minutes or even hours trying to help me understand the racially charged subtexts. I recall one instance when the joke was predicated on the assumption that Mexicans were lazy. When I explained that all the Mexicans I knew were very hard workers, my coworker and I argued. He believed that the "common sense" things that "everyone knows" about Mexicans were more important than how Mexicans actually act. (AE)

One way I actively pushed back against racist jokes was to explain that racial slurs

offended me. To oblige my sensibilities, my coworkers would sometimes substitute "Black" or

"African American" for the customary "nigger" that was included in many punchlines. Where

possible, in retelling these jokes I elect to use the more politically correct slur substitutes my

coworkers sometimes employed. When that strategy breaks down because the joke depends on a

slur, I will explain why. The following are a few jokes I heard often at work.

> "Hey, man, did you hear that the NFL was going to change the color of footballs from brown to green? You want to know why?"
> "No. Why?"
> "Well, have you ever seen an African American drop a watermelon?" (AE)

I met this punchline with a flat look of confusion. I was unaware of stereotypes involving

Black people and watermelons; I learned a new stereotype that day. When I pushed back by

arguing that everyone I had ever met loved watermelon, my coworkers said that I was missing

the point. Some of my coworkers grew tired of explaining the jokes to me and of my flat

responses, but others continued their attempts to use humor to ingrain stereotypes into me. At the

time, I was the youngest employee in the company, and the older White men often felt a

responsibility to educate me and prepare me for the world. This can be viewed as a form of racial

training that I was subjected to partially because I was young and seen as naive about race, and

partially because my Canadian upbringing had not prepared me for American-style racism.

Humor was one mechanism they used to teach me, and through it, I learned countless

racial and ethnic stereotypes. I was also exposed to permissive attitudes toward violence against

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Blacks and to clear articulations of claims that Black lives do not matter. The following joke

illustrates this point.

> "What do you call 1,000 Blacks at the bottom of the ocean?"
> "I don't know, what?"
> "A good start!" (AE)

When I heard this joke for the first time, I was angry. When I think about it today, I

realize how much credence this joke lends to the Black Lives Matter movement's contention that

Whites often fail to recognize the intrinsic worth of Black lives.

One of my more courteous workplace mentors once agreed that when it was just the two

of us working together, he would refrain from telling racist jokes. Immediately after making this

commitment he told the following joke.

> "A trucker was driving through rural Texas with a load full of bowling balls. He saw two
> young Black men trying to hitch a ride. He stopped and asked them what the trouble was.
> They explained that they had both blown out their bike tires and were miles from town.
> The truck driver told them both to hop in his trailer and bring their bikes. And he
> promised to drop them off at the next town. He got back up to speed and cursed when the
> blue and red lights started flashing. He pulled over and the officer approached the
> window.
>   'Howdy, partner. You realize that you forgot to use your turn signal when you
> merged back on to the interstate? That's dangerous stuff,' said the officer.
>   'I'm sorry, sir, I was distracted. It was an honest mistake.'
>   'Well, you mind if I take a look inside your trailer and see what you are hauling?'
>   'No, sir. Go right ahead. It's not locked,' said the driver.
>   After taking a quick look in the trailer, the officer walked back up to the driver's
> window. With fear in his eye and rage in his voice, he said, 'Now you listen here, ya
> carpetbagger. You get back on this here interstate, and you drive. And you don't stop
> driving until you hit the county line! Ya hear me? We don't want no trouble round here!'
>   'Yes, sir,' said the truck driver as he started up his engine and drove off. When
> the officer returned to his car, his partner asked,
>   'So, what was all that about? I never seen you look so scared.'
>   'Well, Jimmie, that there trucker was hauling a load of nigger eggs and two of
> them already hatched and stole bicycles.'" (AE)

My mentor laughed and gave me a sidelong glance. I pointed out that the joke sounded

pretty racist to me. He explained that it wasn't racist because it didn't say anything bad about

Black people. It only made fun of White ignorance and prejudice. He seemed to think I should

enjoy that. Of course, this joke is thoroughly dehumanizing in that it casts Blacks as subhuman

and even submammalian by suggesting that they "hatch." The joke also plays up stereotypes of

Black criminality.

This mentor, who typically avoided slurs around me, used "nigger" in this joke. Hill

(2008) pointed out that slurs "are indispensable in certain kinds of joking and humorous talk."

My mentor explained as much to me. He believed the slur was necessary for this joke because

the usual substitutions do not work in the context. "African American eggs" has too many

syllables and would take the punch out of the punch line. If he said "Black eggs," then the

listener might have heard "black eggs" and assumed he was describing the color of the eggs

rather than connecting them to African American reproduction.

While most of the overt bigotry at Midwest Installation came in the form of jokes, we

sometimes had violence toward minorities signaled in more ominous ways.

> One day I walked into our warehouse, and the manager Bill had all the guys circled up
> around him. He had decided that he was going to teach us all how to tie nooses. He
> demonstrated the technique and then showed us how to hang the noose. Rather than
> throw the end over a tree branch, he tossed the noose over our warehouse rafters. This
> took him a couple of attempts, but after he had it hung he left it up for the rest of the day.
> (AE)

At the time, I connected nooses with Western films and was unaware of the long history

of racial terror through lynching and its special place in Midwestern history. Thus, I was

uncomfortable with an implement of execution being displayed in our warehouse. In hindsight, I

am even more troubled because the noose signaled a threat of bigoted violence. Had the

company employed any African Americans, those employees could have successfully argued

that they were victims of a workplace hate crime. At the time, the noose tying struck me as

unusual but not out of step with our daily workplace hijinks. Reflecting on this experience, I can

now see how the hanging of the noose contributed to a culture that devalued Black lives, displayed an affinity for racialized violence, and sought connections to the Midwest's history of racial terror.

Conclusions

Black and Native lives are treated as if they do not matter

Given the prevalence of racist jokes predicated on the murder or genocide of Blacks and Natives, including their broadcast on nationally syndicated radio programs, it is ridiculous to view White shootings of unarmed minorities as isolated incidents. When Black and Native lives are depicted as dehumanized and disposable in many masculinized White male discourse communities, activists have no choice but to continue their insistence that the lives of people of color have value.

Facing the reality that in some White American discourse communities Black and Native lives don't matter brings the slanderous nature of the All Lives Matter counter-slogan into focus. Deploying the phrase "All Lives Matter" as a contradiction of Black/Native Lives Matter—in spite of clear evidence that Black and Native lives are not valued—denies Blacks and Natives inclusion under the heading "All." This is either full-scale dehumanization, a denial of citizenship, or a combination of the two.

Racist jokes across White masculinized industries, including law enforcement

A reader may question how strong a connection can be made between the discourse patterns of *Bob & Tom* and Midwest Installation and those of law enforcement. This concern can be addressed by highlighting news reports documenting similarly racist discourse patterns in law enforcement as on *Bob & Tom* or at Midwest Installation. Reports highlight multiple leaders in law enforcement being responsible for circulating hundreds of racist and sexist jokes within their

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departments (CBS News, 2015; Rodriguez-Jimenez, 2016). Other reports document that officers of the law across the United States have reportedly shared multiple racist jokes, many of which were violent in nature (Alanez, 2018; Cuoco, 2018; Wilson, 2016). The pervasiveness of racially degrading humor in law enforcement is perhaps best summed up by a 28-year LAPD veteran who was quoted as saying, "There seems to be a problem somewhere if the criteria for selecting a police officer is never having told a joke about a protected class. We'd better find another labor pool. We'd better go to Venus or Mars, because you're not going to find them on this planet" (Wilgoren, 1996). This officer hit on an important point in the broader debate about racism in law enforcement and organizational injustice. All U.S. organizations are situated within a national culture in which racism is pervasive. When recruiting from and working within racist communities, we should expect organizations to reflect this broader cultural norm. A recognition that organizations are working with deeply racist national or international cultures is important for HRD practitioners because it underscores the deep need for organizations to assume that they must be proactive in combating organizational discrimination, even if leadership has not yet noticed evidence of its presence. The assumption that no complaints equals no problems leads to reactive and short-sighted decision making when issues of racial injustice are noticed. Thus, proactive organizational anti-racism efforts should be pursued in all industries, perhaps most urgently of all in White-dominated masculinized industries.

Police shootings of Blacks and Natives reflect community values

Efforts to reform law enforcement practices are necessary, but not sufficient, to end police violence against Blacks and Natives. Given the way that violence against minorities is rehearsed and normalized through discourses that circulate through countless American communities, it is perhaps unfair to single out police officers as purveyors of violence against

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minorities. After all, what is the average police officer other than a citizen who carries a gun and has legal sanction to use lethal force? While efforts to improve the recruitment and training of police offers must continue, deeper societal changes will be required before the killings stop. White people need to stop expressing, or acceding to the expression of, dehumanizing ideas about "others" and begin to actively disrupt discourse that contributes to the normalization of racially based violence. Counter-protests under the slogans "All Lives Matter" and "Blue Lives Matter" demonstrate the hostility many American communities feel about the assertion of Black and Native worth. As long as law enforcement officers continue to be recruited from communities where such hostilities are prevalent, police shootings of Blacks and Natives will continue to reflect community values. Ending the violence requires community reform in conjunction with law enforcement reform.

Racism as a defining characteristic of White masculinized workplaces

Collins, J. C.'s (2015) discussion of masculinized industries focuses on the ways hegemonic masculinity and its marginalizations of women and gay men characterize workplaces in these occupations. I would add that, in White masculinized workplaces, there is a strong connection between hegemonic masculinity and racism. Collins, P.H's (1999) matrix of domination predicted this result, but a significant contribution of this work is to document this reality in action. My current and previous work (Bohonos, 2017) notes this connection in construction, automotive, transportation, oil and gas, and military settings. Likewise, news reports suggest a connection between racism and hegemonic masculinity is at work in law enforcement (CBS News, 2015). Male-targeted mass media programming such as the *Bob & Tom Show* should be considered a masculinized subset of the larger communications and entertainment industries, and discourse from this program also confirms connections between

hegemonic masculinity and racism in predominantly White and masculinized organizational settings. My conclusion is that racist discourse is a defining characteristic of White masculinized workplaces that reifies and legitimates violence against people of color.

Additional research is needed to further assess the prevalence of racism in more racially diverse masculinized industries. These studies should be carefully attentive to how marginalizing discourse affects people of color in predominantly White masculinized workplaces, as well as how people of color respond, cope, and resist when faced with organizational racism. Additionally, research is needed to explore ways to develop social justice allies of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who can work to confront bigotry in a variety of workplace settings, including White masculinized industries.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will provide a summary of major findings related to my original research questions as well as a discussion of implications my research holds for White scholars researching race and for HRD research and practice. This chapter will also address future directions for the study of CWS in HRD.

Summary of Major Findings

At the beginning of the research process, I proposed a series of research questions: How are race, gender, and sexual orientation discussed among majority group members in the workplace? What do majority group workplace conversations reveal about intersectionality in the workplace? What lessons about privilege and marginalization are communicated in White-on-White mentoring relationships and informal learning? How can majority group members resist when they are expected to take complicit stances in various bigotries? How do conscious biases operate covertly to secure White privilege in the workplace?

The lines of inquiry related to these questions led to several important findings, which will be summarized below.

In chapter 5, I argued that discussions around race, gender, and sexual orientation at Midwest Installation confirm previous findings (Willis, 1977) that in blue-collar environments learning hard skills can still be a pathway to social acceptance and to being regarded as manly. Access to this pathway, however, was severely limited based on the nearly complete exclusions of women and People of Color from opportunities to learn such skills on the job. In this way, White males had access to informal learning and mentoring that allowed them to acquire in-group status—which was synonymous with the group's definition of "manhood." Thus, access to informal learning and mentoring reinforced gender hierarchy and racial exclusions. In chapter 5,

I also discussed the class envy that lower-class Whites could direct up toward more affluent Whites and the parallel race/class resentment that surfaced in interactions with upper-middle-class Blacks. My research also indicates that racial privilege is experienced differently by Whites who occupy varying class positions. I argue that prominent definitions of White privilege reflect experiences of Whites who are middle-class or higher. Applying analysis rooted in intersectionality allows me to posit a definition of working-class White privilege that can be contrasted to existing definitions.

Chapter 6 explored the commercial appeal of bigoted humor by tracking the rise of *The Bob & Tom Show* locally and nationally. The show clearly benefited from boycott and censorship campaigns in a way that underscores the maxim that "all press is good press." As exemplars of bigoted White male discourse, Bob and Tom demonstrate the connectedness of different forms of discriminatory language and provide windows through which outsiders can view the construction and delivery of racist, sexist, and homophobic jokes. Documenting that bigotry drove decades of commercial success for this show also foreshadows the appeal of candidate Trump in the 2016 election cycle. Like *Bob & Tom*, Trump used the media scrutiny and the publicly expressed outrage of progressives to build his brand. His supporters, often steeped in the discourse patterns explored in this dissertation, found his racist, sexist, and xenophobic comments to be in keeping with entertainment programming they consumed regularly. As a result, rather than find his speech offensive, they viewed him as funny, relatable, and manly. Chapter 6 also revealed how a corporate zero-tolerance policy can be little more than window dressing and suggested that future research should explore employee behavior before and after the implementation of such policies.

Chapter 7 explored catcalling as a workplace ritual and found that men can raise their in-group status by participating in behaviors that degrade women and gay men. In this context, homophobia is used as a bludgeon to enforce norms of hegemonic hypermasculinity. In such a context, an employee who fails to collaborate in the denigration of women risks social exclusion, the perception of incompetence, and relegation to marginal low-skill tasks. Likewise, direct confrontation of sexual harassers can be met with brutal force. The potential for challenges to hegemonic hypermasculinity to turn violent forces would-be allies to tread carefully when trying to disrupt negative workplace behaviors. Given the social and physical risks assumed by allies who attempt to confront sexism, organizations should work to identify and develop potential allies. Once allies are identified, they should be provided with support in the form of training in verbal de-escalation techniques, access to networks of like-minded peers, and safe anonymous reporting lines.

In chapter 8, I explored dehumanizing, violent, and genocidal jokes regarding African Americans and Native Americans. My analysis indicates that stereotypes regarding mental illness, violence, and bestial strength are used to rationalize violence against African Americans. In a similar vein, Native Americans are discussed as nothing other than the targets of jokes and victims of genocide. In each case, the discourse around racial otherness presents people of color as subhuman and implies that their lives do not matter. In chapter 8, I also related a noose-tying incident that occurred at my company warehouse and explained how violent discourse supported enactments of symbolic violence.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I referenced Dylann Roof's massacre of Black worshippers at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina, and I explained that I believed that Roof's racial animus likely would have gone unchecked in some of

the discourse communities I have engaged with over the years. When I originally wrote that passage, I wondered if readers would find my statements incredible but knew that the evidence supported the claim. In a community where people could laugh and smile as they listened to jokes about killing African Americans, cracked jokes about genocide, and displayed symbols of racial terror, Roof's feelings would not have been regarded as far off the mark. It is not hard for me to imagine some of my coworkers laughing while listening to a young man talk about shooting up a Black church. Most would have assumed that he was joking, because his intentions matched the patterns of humor often drawn upon at Midwest Installation. In such an environment, someone like Roof could have taken the laughter as approval or encouragement. And I doubt that he would receive more in the way of censorship than a warning that he might be taking this a little too far.

Implications for White Researchers

When I decided to analyze content from *The Bob & Tom Show*, I was years removed from having been a daily listener of the show. I was also years removed from depending primarily on working-class White males for my socialization. As I began listening to the recordings, I assumed that I would enjoy revisiting the content that I laughed at so often with my old work buddies. I knew that some of the content would be offensively racist or misogynistic, but I assumed—based on my recollections of the show—that the majority of the content would be benign. As I coded the data, I was shocked at both the frequency and potency of bigoted humor. What I had assumed would be a fun project of revisiting old jokes and their accompanying memories turned into an emotionally grueling experience. At various times I was confronted with sadness, depression, disgust, rage, and guilt for my former enjoyment of such

content. I frequently walked away from a listening session repeating the mantra "studying evil is bad for the soul" and questioning whether I could continue the project.

Much of the discomfort I navigated while analyzing this content stemmed from the cultural distance I've traveled since I stopped being a daily *Bob & Tom* listener. I can see now that years ago I missed much of the racist content in *Bob & Tom* sketches because I didn't understand the references or the subtext, and other times I failed to recognize the racism because it was well coded in symbolic imagery around Blackness. There is, however, an additional—and even more troubling—reason why I missed so much of the racist content: I had been socialized into a tacit acceptance of such speech. Put another way, I was so accustomed to insensitive discourse that only the most blatant and offensive material would register in my mind as inappropriate. Within this frame of hegemonic racism and misogyny, participation in organizational life required that I and other employees become desensitized to bigotry.

Many of the experiences I relate in this work would have been inaccessible had I been other than White, as it was my Whiteness that granted me entrance into the community at Midwest Installation. But deeper than that, many of these experiences would have been inaccessible to me—even as a White man—had I refused to do a certain amount of going along to get along. Put another way, a mature critical consciousness would have made gaining acceptance in this organizational culture extremely difficult. The paradox is that tolerance for bigotry was required to gain trust and access to the workplace culture, and a critical consciousness was required to do the analysis. In my case, I was able to partially resolve the paradox by doing my analysis a decade after leaving Midwest Installation—a decade that was largely spent developing critical perspectives on race and gender.

As I reflect on the way my racial identity and in-group status shaped the possibilities open for me to explore in this project, I become convinced that White researchers have a good deal to learn from debates in anthropology regarding the insider status of in-group researchers— who are sometimes referred to as "native" researchers. I will explore this topic in the following section.

Whites as In-Group Researchers

As a White researcher studying Whiteness, my work should be defined as in-group research. In anthropology, a good deal of attention is paid to the insider or outsider position of the researcher, and discussions of the implications of doing work in one's own community are summarized in debates about "native" ethnography (Jacobs-Huey, 2006; Narayan, 1993). All Whites doing research in communities or organizations that are dominated by White norms should grapple with the implications of their insider status in the same way that anthropologists of color have been required to do regarding their fieldwork. This is not just true for researchers like me who study race; it is also true for researchers who focus on other aspects of White organizational or community culture. For example, White HRD scholars studying how to optimize organizational performance in a predominantly White organization should grapple with the ways in which their Whiteness predisposes them to view performance in terms of the dominant culture. They should also be aware of how their insider racial status may privilege them by facilitating trust-building with White stakeholders, while at the same time recognize that their affiliation with the dominant culture may make it more difficult for them to build trusting reciprocal relationships with stakeholders of color. White researchers should take into account factors such as these while in the field and give an accounting of them in their research.

Insider Ethnography and Implications for White Organizational Research

The term "native" ethnography has a double meaning. In the first, the term "native" means "born into," and thus native ethnography describes works using anthropological methods in a community under examination in which the researcher is also a full member. In the second meaning of the term, "native" is treated as synonymous with "indigenous" or "tribal." This double entendre sets a snare for scholars of color whose work in their own communities is sometimes described pejoratively as "native" ethnography, under the assumption that membership in the group compromises one's potential for objectivity. The work of White scholars who study White groups or organizations are rarely questioned along these same lines; in fact, they are rarely even identified as "native" researchers. Whites as much as any other group should be aware of both the potential benefits and pitfalls of researching communities or identity groups of which they are a member. We also need to be aware of variants in identity group culture across geographical and social distances.

Jacobs-Huey demonstrated how her entrance into Black communities in different parts of the country broadened her understanding of Black American culture (Jacobs-Huey, 2006). Likewise, White scholars researching across geographic, class, or cultural lines should be aware of how the relative levels of in-ness and out-ness change while crossing boundaries in their research. As a native to Whiteness, I could claim insider status to the White culture embodied at Midwest Installation. However, my Canadian upbringing qualified my insider status (Nelson, 1996), as many of the cultural phenomena I experienced were particular to Midwestern iterations of Whiteness. My failure to demonstrate cultural competency (Foster, 1996) in areas such as not "getting" some racist jokes, for example, marked me as a less than a fully integrated member of the community.

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Issues of Representation

Like other "native" researchers, I face questions about how I choose to represent members of my own racial group (Behar, 1995), especially considering my discussing of racism and sexism in White male communities could be seen as "airing dirty laundry" (Jacobs-Huey, 2006; Visweswaran, 1994). As I constructed these representations, I was mindful of the dual goals of community uplift and scholarly achievement that in-group researchers often work to balance. It may seem counterintuitive to employ scholarly critique of bigoted tendencies in White culture as a tool of edification or liberation. I believe, however, that research pursuing paths that might help working-class Whites to disentangle themselves from marginalizing habits has the potential to uplift the community by freeing it from the baggage of discrimination. Scapegoating saps the energy of the White working class and discourages commitments to individual and community betterment (Vance, 2018). Thus, working-class Whites need a path out of racial resentment if they are to grow. Additionally, research aimed at providing paths out of racism may increase the likelihood that the working class will eventually achieve interracial class solidarity. Insider research in White communities can provide insights on how to develop such paths. If working-class Whites can come to see the ways that racism hurts their communities, this might provide a leverage point to inspire hard conversations about race in America. The following section discusses some of the ways working-class Whites can be held back by their own racism and suggests a path working-class Whites might traverse to become racial justice allies.

Implications for HRD Research and Practice

How the Capitalist Class Benefits From Iconic Images of the White Working-Class Racist

Fiscal and political profits are strong motivators for the upper class to peddle the image of working-class White racists, as are the psychological benefits of scapegoating. There are also additional ways in which the upper classes benefit from peddling these images. The first is the exacerbation of racial intra-class conflict, the second is the solidification of White racial solidarity, and the third is that it provides a distraction from the structural racism that does so much to insulate the privilege of rich Whites. Class-oriented findings of this project underscore the need for additional focus on issues of social class in HRD research and practice. In research, greater attention should be paid to how social class intersects with other areas of social difference. Greater attention to the role of social class may require that HRD scholarship commence deep engagement with Marxist scholars. Findings from this dissertation as well as future research will be useful in practice as they suggest diversity initiatives be mindful of class-related marginalizations. My research also suggests that fostering the development of class consciousness may be a practical method for reducing racial scapegoating.

Class and White Racial Discourse

Openness regarding racism will serve to prevent the upward mobility of working-class Whites as long as color-blind racism persists as an ideal in the upper classes. Differentiated approaches to the expression of racism serve as a line between the upper classes, where there are taboos against overtly mentioning race, and the lower classes who openly express racist attitudes. Both sets of norms prevent deliberate action against structural racism while combining to make class mobility difficult for lower-class Whites.

Under the mantras of liberalism or anti-racism, elite Whites can rail against lower-class racists and quickly identify would-be climbers by their willingness to talk about race. This practice serves to protect upper-class feelings of White purity while marking lower-class Whites as other, and thereby limiting possibilities for upward mobility. While I hope for a deeper personal and spiritual renewal as Whites confront racism, the need for working-class Whites to move beyond marginalizing discourse can be argued for in crassly capitalistic terms. Frankly, working-class Whites will struggle for acceptance in the world of the upper classes where color-blind racism is the norm for as long as they tell crude racial jokes that members of the upper class will regard as crass, tacky, or unrefined.

Lower-class Whites with ambitions to climb will need to repattern their overtly racist modes of discourse if they are to pass in upper-class circles, but passing in upper-class circles should not be the goal. Rather, lower-class Whites should be encouraged to buck both the upper-class norms that expect silence regarding race and the racist discourses prevalent in the lower classes. Both enforced silence regarding racism and racist discourse represent dead ends for racial progress, and it is possible that working-class White comfort with racist discourse could be redirected into authentic and meaningful dialogues about race. Future research and professional practice should work to facilitate this type of dialogue among lower-class Whites.

Hope for Anti-Racist Reform in the Working Class

To be clear, I *do not* advocate that outspoken racists from the lower classes should be trained in the ways of color-blind racism. While this could likely aid the economic and social mobility of lower-class Whites, it would serve to strengthen the staying power of racism by making it even harder to identify. Rather, I am cautiously optimistic that lower-class Whites who internalize an ethos of racial equity might be better prepared to engage in productive

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conversations about racial differences than members of the upper classes who are steeped in color-blind racism.

My own experiences form part of the basis for this hope. I became increasingly comfortable talking about race through participation in overtly racist discourse communities, and I then benefited from the mentorship of race-radical People of Color who helped me channel these discussions into productive directions. In my case, the comfort around the discussion of race I learned from working-class Whites served as scaffolding onto which I could build an increasingly confident anti-racist voice. I should note that, as I was transitioning from blue-collar to white-collar workplace cultures, I initially viewed silence and blindness about race to be an ideal to which I was expected to aspire. Without the interventions of Black mentors who modeled modes of speech that engaged with race in challenging, provocative, and productive ways, I likely would have conformed to middle- and upper-class norms of silence about race and racism.

As I have developed comfort and facility expressing progressive ideas about race in daily conversation, I have been struck by how Whites from the upper classes seem uncomfortable when I introduce racism as a topic of conversation. Some have given me detailed explanations as to how they have been schooled to avoid mentions of race. The blushing, stammering, defensiveness, and fear I sometimes witness while proceeding with such conversations leave me with little hope that many upper-class Whites will develop into strong and articulate racial justice allies. I hold more hope that members of the lower classes can successfully develop into articulate anti-racists, both because of a cultural orientation that allows open discussions around race and because of the potential for empathy with many People of Color around experiences with classism and economic marginality. Using diversity initiatives to foster class solidarity

around economic marginality represents a radical departure from industry standards for diversity training but should be attempted as it holds out hope for fostering authentic bottom-up change.

Future Research in CWS and HRD

Future research should explore how Whites talk about race, gender, and sexual orientation in different organizational settings and from different class, gender, and geographic positions. CWS research in different organizational settings can help the HRD community to better understand what is particular and what is general in terms of White workplace racial discourse. As more nuanced understandings of how organization type affects how bigotry is enacted, HRD professionals will be better equipped to tailor their interventions. Likewise, identifying differences in how bigotry is coded across class hierarchies of large organizations would help HRD practitioners to understand how social injustice is experienced and reproduced at different levels. Studies looking at how White women and White people who are gender non-conforming talk about race at work are also needed to form more robust understandings of race in the workplace. In a similar vein, research studying geographic variations on racism are important for large organizations. When differences in White discourse around race in different organization, class, gender, and geographic groups are better understood, HRD practitioners will be better equipped to develop nuanced diversity and inclusion initiatives that directly address needs of all stakeholders.

Studies of how Whites enact racism also need to be complemented by studies of how other majority groups marginalize out-group members. While race remains a highly salient identity marker in the United States, in other regions religious affiliation, tribe, nation of origin, ethnicity, or other identity markers can serve as an axis along which privilege and marginalization are enacted. In such contexts, "Whiteness" might not be the most salient

construct through which to view social problems. In many cases other "majority groups" may occupy positions of social privilege similar to those experienced by Whites in the United States. Much could be learned through comparative majority group studies. Such comparisons would help activists and organizational change agents to develop global perspectives on social injustice and to better understand local enactments of bigotry.

In addition to studies that seek to better understand injustice, additional research is needed exploring how social justice allies are developed. Ally development research should attend to the complementary roles that HRD, other fields of education, religious organizations, and social movements can have in developing strong allies and advocates for social justice. Research is needed that addresses the particulars of racial justice ally development as well as the particulars of all development in different areas. Special attention should be paid to the ways in which some potential allies develop strong commitments to justice around certain areas while lagging behind in others. It is likely that better-developed areas can be used as leverage points to develop broader critical consciousness. However, educators cannot assume that commitment to a single cause will necessarily be generalized out to other causes. Rather, educators must develop broad-based critical consciousness in potential allies that encourages allies to see struggles for justice as interrelated and highly dependent on one another.

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APPENDIX A

Timeline of Research-Related Activities

Dates	Education	Employment Sector	Primary Employment	Writing Activity	Research
2001		Service sector	Restaurants		
2002	Finish H.S.	Blue collar	Gas stations	Songs, texts, emails, & tax records	
2003	Begin B.A.		Midwest Installation		
2004					
2005					
2006					Cowboys in Western literature
2007	Complete B.A. Begin M.A.		Transportation & vehicle maintenance		
2008					
2009	Finish M.A. courses	Education	GED center		Masculinity in gender progressive emergent 19th century religions
2010			Vocational training		
2011			Higher education		
2012	Finish M.A. thesis				
2013					
2014				Journal 1	
2015	Begin PhD		Teaching		Social justice in HRD
2016				Autoethnographic writing	Propose ERP
2017				Preliminary CDA	Defend ERP
2018	ABD			Additional CDA	Propose dissertation
2019					

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Office for the
Protection of
Research
Subjects 805
West
Pennsylvania
Ave
Urbana, IL 61801

January 2, 2018

Assata Zerai Sociology
3120 Lincoln Hall
702 South Wright Street Urbana, IL 61801

RE: *Learning to Work in White Spaces: Combining Linguistic Analysis and*
        Organizational Autoethnography To Explore of the Normalization of Racism in
        Midwestern American Organizations
        IRB Protocol Number: 18457

Dear Dr. Zerai:

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in your project entitled *Learning to Work in White Spaces: Combining Linguistic Analysis and Organizational Autoethnography To Explore of the Normalization of Racism in Midwestern American Organizations.* The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved, by expedited review, the protocol as described in your IRB application. The expiration date for this protocol, IRB number 18457, is 01/01/2021. The risk designation applied to your project is *no more than minimal risk.*
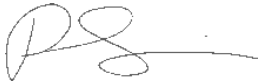
Copies of the attached date-stamped consent form(s) must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Under applicable regulations, no changes to procedures involving human subjects may be made without prior IRB review and approval. The regulations also require that you promptly notify the IRB of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated side effects, adverse reactions, and any injuries or complications that arise during the project.

You were granted a three-year approval. If there are any changes to the protocol that result in your study becoming ineligible for the extended approval period, the RPI is responsible for immediately notifying the IRB via an amendment. The protocol will be issued a modified expiration date accordingly.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at the OPRS office, or visit our website at https://www.oprs.research.illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller, MSW
Human Subjects Research Specialist, Office for the

Protection of Research Subjects Attachment(s): Research

Team Form, Alteration of Consent, Informed Consent

c: Jeremy Bohonos