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ADDRESSING RACISM THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENTS: EXAMINING NPC SORORITIES WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

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NPC sororities (inter)national organizations posted countless messages to websites and social media platforms against racism following the summer of 2020 racial protests. The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical content analysis of the twenty-six NPC (inter)national organizations' websites and Facebook pages to evaluate the messages about racism following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Three findings were identified: naming systemic racism, acknowledging the organization's history and values related to racism, and calling for individual and organizational action. Findings suggest NPC sororities' must communicate explicitly about their values and action in addressing racism in society and organization to move towards racial equity.

Keywords: National Panhellenic Conference (NPC); Racism Communication, Sororities

It has been a little over two years since the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor sparked a collective reckoning and awakening around racism across the United States. Many corporations, sports teams, universities, and organizations released public statements against racism and police brutality. The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) was no exception, as the chairwoman Carole J. Jones (2020) released a letter via the NPC's website calling for the Panhellenic community to acknowledge historically white sororities' racist past and change systems and "norms that have historically benefited and centered white women" (para. 7). Many NPC sororities (inter)national organizations also posted countless messages to websites and social media platforms against racism. Given the history of formal and informal racist policies and practices within these organizations (Gillon et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; Hughey, 2009; Torbenson & Parks, 2009), it is no surprise there is limited research examining historically white sororities (inter)national organizations public

relations and communications related to racism.

Organizations' websites and social media platforms have become an increasingly important component of how sororities mitigate negative public perceptions and provide counternarratives focused on recruitment, sisterhood, philanthropy, and leadership (Beaird et at., 2021; Taylor et al., 2018; Taylor & McArdle, 2018). Ironically, social media platforms are a prevalent site for racist incidents involving sorority chapters on college campuses (i.e., Halloween parties perpetuating racist stereotypes and cultural appropriation) surface publicly. In response to many racial incidents involving local chapters, (inter)national office staff carefully construct statements of misalignment of values with the collegiate chapter on social media but rarely address racial incidents on their organization's website. However, following the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, all NPC sororities (inter)national office staff posted on their websites and social media pages against racism. Although

such statements are usually welcomed as an indication of an organizational commitment to confronting racism, it is unclear what NPC (inter)national organizations say about racism concerning their organizations and society.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to conduct a critical content analysis of the twenty-six NPC (inter)national organizations' websites and Facebook pages to evaluate the messages about racism following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Namely, we sought to understand the nature of these messages about racism, white privilege and supremacy, intersectional oppressions, and social change. Given that existing research on historically white sororities' communication around racism is limited, the findings of this study will inform communications practices related to racism within these organizations. The following question guided this research:

1. What messages were communicated about racism by NPC inter/national organizations' websites and Facebook pages after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor?

In the following sections, we provide a brief literature review on NPC sororities with racism and organizations' public responses to racism. Next, we describe the theoretical framework of Victor Ray's (2019) Theory of Racialized Organizations. We present the study's findings using a Critical Content Analysis (CCA) methodological approach. Lastly, we discuss and recommend NPC (inter)national organizations' communication around racism. NPC sororities with histories of racism and racial discrimination must continue the work for racial equities, starting with their practices and communications strategies, especially when racial justice is not trending.

Literature Review

The scholarship on race and historically white sororities focuses on membership recruitment (Beaird et al., 2021; Edwards,

2009), interactions with someone of a different race (Park & Kim, 2013; Matthews et al., 2009), intercultural competence (Davis & Harris, 2016), and women of color membership (Edwards, 2009; Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014). Past studies highlight that white sororities and fraternities are likely to hold damaging stereotypes of Black students, dismiss cross-racial membership, minimize the role of race in an organization, and rely on traditions and history to justify racial exclusion (Harris et al., 2019; Park, 2012). Such stereotypes about their Black peers may include but are not limited to being the inherently inferior race, poor, from a ghetto, and admitted into university based on a race quota.

Although most sororities eliminated legal racial exclusion statutes, these organizations remained racially homogeneous through de facto discrimination (Park, 2012; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Scholars have identified recruitment, organizational structure, and social activities as de facto discrimination practices that discourage racial interactions (Freeman, 2020; Harris et al., 2019; Hughey, 2010; Park, 2012; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). According to Harris et al. (2019), historically white sorority organizations are rooted in a racial exclusion that continues to restrict their membership to white members. Despite the increase of Students of Color entrance into NPC sororities, Hughey (2010) found that these members must assimilate to whiteness to belong in the organization. For example, Black members may change their natural hair to fit in with white members; thus, whiteness becomes the norm. Organizational, institutional, cultural, and individual forms of oppression, such as racism, continue to permeate historically white sororities (Salinas et al., 2019). According to Hughey (2010), Black sisters and sisters of Color who joined historically white sororities experienced tokenization, wherein these sisters are a representation of their racial minority group who are visibly different from white members. Nevertheless, there remains lim-

ited literature on how (inter)national organizations confront racist practices, especially with racial incidents being shared across multiple social media platforms.

Banks and Archibald (2020) identify how white fraternities and sororities continue to display racist ideologies through members using racial slurs and themes parties used to represent racial stereotypes or to mock any racial or ethnic group. Several racist incidents involving white sororities (i.e., Methodist University's Alpha Delta Pi member critiques of four Black football players) have surfaced on social media and in news headlines. Taylor and McArdle (2018) noted that sororities use Twitter for internal messaging among their current members and alumnae, and when using this medium, sorority members rarely promote positive behaviors. Scholars have found that sororities engaging in social media are essential for recruitment and organization uniformity (Fouts, 2010; Zuckerman & Kretovics, 2003). However, social media has also become another platform for white sororities to display racial stereotyping and racism (Gillon et al., 2019).. Following the murder of George Floyd, many local and national headlines and social media posts called for sororities and fraternities to confront their racist past and practices.

Organizations' Public Responses to Racism

There has been an increase in organizations (i.e., corporations, universities) taking a public stance on social issues, such as racism, following a tragic event. Research studies on universities' responses to the murder of George Floyd found that many statements denounced the brutal murder of George Floyd, the dehumanization of Black and Brown people, and racialized inequality (Connors & McCoy, 2022; Meikle & Morris, 2022). According to Meikle and Morris (2022), these statements "became socially constructed precepts, shared meanings, and gateways into organizational

postures" (p.2). In other words, what is communicated could provide insight into organizational values. Although higher education leaders have released many statements on a variety of events, most statements ignore racial inequities in their universities and the organization's responsibility for racial equity (Connors & McCoy, 2022). Thus, raising concerns about statements are virtue signaling as a performative action to reinforce an organization's image as committed to racial justice (Brown et al., 2022). When the organizational practices and processes do not reflect proclaimed values against racism, organization responses are perceived as inauthentic.

Davis and Harris (2016) declared that higher education administrators are responsible for working with student groups and spokespersons to address racial incidents with apologetic statements and immediate action(s). This requires acknowledging the damage that racism caused and critically analyzing a response's past, present, and future implications. Scholars note that higher education leaders' response to social-political public events can be "inherently risky given the diversity of opinions and perspectives on college campuses" (McNaughtan & McNaughtan, 2019, p. 199). However, implementing a preventive and responsive organizational culture can counteract the harm that is done (Davis & Harris, 2016).

Organizations, including sorority (inter)national headquarters, can establish a new baseline of expectations by creating a culture that explicitly rebrands as anti-racism messaging. Logan (2021) introduces a theory of corporate responsibility to race (CRR) that focuses on corporations acknowledging racial inequities and advocating for social justice as a moral stand rather than out of corporate profit or interests. Logan argues that organizations should engage in social responsibility around racism because these organizations have directly and indirectly perpetuated

and benefited from racial discrimination and oppression. According to Bonaparte (2020), corporations are illustrating support against racism through messaging and rebranding the organizations to champion the end of systemic racism. Given the history of NPC sororities with racism, there is a need for more scholarship on how these organizations' statements catalyze racial justice and/or as performativity to racial justice. The current messages published on social media by NPC sororities inform scholars on the progress, or plateau, of the organizations' efforts to acknowledge the history of whiteness and racial exclusion while advocating for racial justice.

Theoretical Framework

Victor Ray (2019) argues that organizations are racial structures that mirror society's rules and norms around race. Thus, organizational hierarchies and processes are not race-neutral, as "racial inequality is not merely 'in' organizations but 'of' them, as racial processes are foundational to organizational formation and continuity" (Ray, 2019, p. 48). Ray uses the theory of Racialized Organization to understand the organizational function that reproduces and challenges racial inequality through formation, hierarchy, and processes. The theory of Racialized Organization centers on how organizations are nested in a broader institutional structure informed by race and offers insightful understandings of how, when, where, and why racism is perpetuated. Ray posits that the theory accounts for how institutional (macro), organizational (meso), and individual attitudes influence racialized organizations.

Ray (2019) offers four tenets that guide the theory of Racialized Organization: (1) racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups; (2) racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources; (3) Whiteness is a credential; and (4) the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized. The first tenet of racialized organizations shape agency refers to individual positions in an organization and their ability to influence organizational hierarchy and processes. In white organizations, whiteness often goes unmarked through racialized exclusion, racial symbolism, explicit and tacit discrimination, and normative practices. The second tenet focuses on how white spaces, white emotions, and the racial hierarchy of an organization influence material resources to support white people's sense of group position. Thus, the third tenet of Whiteness is a credential that refers to providing access to organizational resources, legitimizing work hierarchies, and expanding White agency. The last tenet considers how racialized organizations decouple formal commitments to equity, access, and inclusion from policies and practices that reinforce existing racial hierarchies. We apply the four tents of the theory of Racialized Organization to understand how, when, where, and why race and racism shaped the NPC organizations' posts. More specifically, we use this theory in the data analysis through a priori codes.

Methodology

In this study, we conducted a critical content analysis focusing on how words and images convey a message about racism. Qualitative content analysis involves the investigation and interpretation of the meaning of text and images within a particular social context (Krippendorff, 2004; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Roller, 2019; Short, 2019). Critical content analysis focuses on inequity, power, and resistance in analyzing, describing, and interpreting the text (Short, 2019; Thomas & Dyches, 2019). Texts are never neutral or without value systems, requiring the researcher to understand that words are socially constructed. Short (2019) stated that a critical stance in content analysis questions "how it is presented, by whom, and for what purposes, along with whose values, texts, and ideologies are privileged or considered normative" (p.6). In other words, text and

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visual text are permanently embedded in a particular context that requires researchers to balance description and interpretation to understand the phenomenon under study.

Positionality

Given the importance of the researcher in qualitative research, it was essential for us to be conscious of how our positionalities, along with our previous and current experiences, influenced the cogeneration and interpretation of the data for this study. We identify as Black women who are members of NPC sororities. Our experiences in these organizations have been shaped by overt and covert racism. Therefore, we come to this study with experiences and assumptions about NPC sororities' communication on racism and whom that communication is intended to engage. We use reflexivity not to bracket our experiences or knowledge but as an awareness tool throughout the research process.

Data Collection

Data was collected from all 26 NPC sororities' websites and Facebook pages administered by their (inter)national offices. Sororities' websites are a primary means of communication with collegians, alums, potential new members, and the public to gain information about the organization. Also, the website serves as a platform to communicate sorority news, educational programs, celebrations, and organizational history and values. The social media platform, Facebook, was used for data collection because organizations can provide more information than Twitter, Instagram, or Linkedin on their corresponding page. Data were only collected from public posts resulting in no password or permission needed to view posts on the organization's websites and Facebook page. Posts were selected based on the following criteria: posted from May 25, 2020, to May 25, 2021, official post from administrative IHQ staff, and mentioning summer 2020 events, race, and racism. We reviewed over 200 posts from websites and Facebook pages. Organizations duplicated posts across the two platforms but adapted the message length and images to be appropriate for their website or Facebook. Posts were not equally distributed among the 26 sororities; however, this study focuses on what the organizations posted rather than how many messages were posted.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using a deductive, theory-driven, inductive thematic approach. Using the theoretical framework of the theory of racialized organization for a deductive approach informed the creation of a priori codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Mayring, 2004). A priori coding consisted of codes that included, but were not limited to, unmarked whiteness, white emotions, racialized organizational hierarchies, practices and policies decoupled for addressing racism, white sense of group position, and organizational accountabilities. Then, we conducted open coding analysis across the posts to create the initial codes outside the a priori codes (Saldana, 2020). Next, we combined the open and a priori codes to conduct axial coding to draw connections between codes for categorizing (Saldana, 2020). Some categories included but were not limited to organizational stance on current events, naming of Black people murdered, organizational apologies, individual call to action, and organizational call to action. Lastly, we used selective coding to connect related categories into one category, which resulted in identifying the study's findings (Saldana, 2020).

Limitations

There are some limitations concerning the findings of this study. First, we chose a timeframe to analyze which may have missed posting related to racism. An extended timeframe may provide a different perspective on these organizations' communication on racism. Second, we did

not include comments from the Facebook posts. Such comments by collegians and alumna members may have provided more profound insight into what was being said about racism in an organizational context. The exclusion of these comments includes possible responses from (inter)national staff to members, which could have added another layer of analysis.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical content analysis of the twenty-six NPC inter/national organizations' websites and Facebook to evaluate the messages communicated about racism following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. We identified four findings from reviewing sororities' websites and Facebook posts. These findings include: (1) Naming the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other People of Color as racism, (2) Acknowledging racism within their organization's history and organizational values against oppression, and (3) Calling for individual and organizational action.

Naming Racism and Race-Related Violence

Some of the initial messages posted by NPC organizations during the height of national protests and demands for racial justice were the naming of racism in the United States. This finding illustrates that all organizations, at a minimum, named racism in connection to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other People of Color. All NPC organizations posted messages using one or more of the below terminologies: "racism," "bigotry," "racial injustices," "racial discrimination," "white supremacy," "police brutality," "white privilege," and "Black Lives Matter." These words and others communicate a philosophical stance against racism attached to an unfolding public display calling for racial justice. In these initial posts, no organization provided definitions of the terms, making it difficult to fully understand the nature of their messages.

Nevertheless, these words were connected to current public racial injustices incidents. Many organizations' posts acknowledged the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor as an outcome of racism. For example, Alpha Gamma Delta Fraternity posted

"Alpha Gamma Delta condemns racism, bigotry, violence, and hate. We emphatically believe in Black Lives Matter. We are outraged by the needless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others. However, please know our silence does not reflect indifference. We want to do this right. It takes time to enact true, long-lasting change and to dismantle systemic racism."

The above organization listing the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery clarifies the racial violence being addressed in their posts. Additionally, this message centers on reflection to consider the violence committed against Black people by systems meant to keep all people safe as a reason for organizational silence. Other organizations also named racism with an apology due to the demands from their membership to explicitly address racism. Kappa Delta Sorority posted on Facebook the following statement,

"Several of you reached out to share your concerns about our last message in response to the horrific racial injustices happening in our country. We are thankful you took action and courageously shared your thoughts. We are listening, we hear you, and we are with you. Our previous statement was not strong enough, and we need to do better. We are sorry. We realize our failure to deliver a bold message on this issue is part of the problem. While we don't have all the answers, we will not be silent. What we should have said: We are outraged by the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and the wrongful death of many other black men

and women across this country. We stand with you to condemn acts of racism, bigotry, violence, and hate, and we believe Black Lives Matter."

Such a demand by Kappa Delta's membership enlisted a message where the organization clearly states its position on current racial injustices in the country. Similarly to Kappa Delta, many organizations posted messages about condemning or standing against racism in all forms. Delta Zeta Sorority National posted

"As Delta Zeta sisters, we stand against racism, hatred, intolerance, bigotry, and violence. They have no place in our world. Our hearts are breaking for George Floyd and his family, and we can impact the lives by making clear that injustice we've witnessed in the form of violence against people of color."

Using words such as "stand against" and "condemn" sends a declaration that acts of racism are reprehensible. Additionally, the words used in the above statement, "our hearts," are in the vein of a typical response to tragic events of "thoughts and prayers." Therefore, most of the statements by NPC organizations were a combination of empathy and concern related to current events.

Later in the year, many organizations condemned violence again the various Asian communities after the murder of six Asian women in Atlanta. For example, Alpha Sigma Tau Sorority posted,

"Alpha Sigma Tau stands in support of our Asian American Pacific Islander Sisters, families, and friends. In light of the senseless violence in Atlanta and increased attacks against the AAPI community around the country, we are reminded that we must continue to stand against violence and bias toward the AAPI community. Alpha Sigma Tau is committed to taking action to address racism, hate, and systemic injustice in our society."

Organizations posting about the violence against Asian and Pacific Islander communities highlight how racism impacts many communities of color. Additionally, this post draws attention to a community of Color that may be missing in the conversations about racism. It is important to note that the posts related to the murder of six Asian women were released promptly after the tragic event. Many organizations released statements about the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor weeks after the event. While some organizations' posts focused on public events, others included comments about how these racial injustices impact Black sisters and sisters of Color. For instance, an organization posted the following message on their website,

"Alpha Delta Pi unequivocally condemns the acts of violence, hatred, racism, and injustices that Black communities across the United States have experienced. Our organization actively affirms the work of every individual, and we support our sisters of color, their families, and our friends as they process during this difficult time. We hear you, sisters. We see you, and we stand with you."

The above statement acknowledges that Black sisters and sisters of Color may experience these racial injustices differently than the predominantly white membership. These posts appeared to reassure Black sisters and sisters of Color of their value as human beings and as sisters. Overall, all NPC organizations acknowledged the act of racism connected to recent and public events of the murders of People of Color. After these types of statements, many organizations acknowledged the role of racism in their organization's history and how their organizational values go against oppression.

Organizational History and Values

All NPC organizations connected statements against racism and other oppressions to their organizational history and values. These statements highlight how these organizations' founding was complicated and resisted racism. Few organizations posted explicit statements about the organizational

role in maintaining racism. For example, Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity posted,

"As an organization that has contributed to racial trauma and exclusionary tactics during its history, it's even more important to be active in our anti-racism efforts. The first step of that is acknowledging the presence of this insidious and destructive force in our world, in ourselves, and in our organization."

In the above statement, the organization is being direct about naming racism or racial trauma as part of its history. Additionally, these statements signal an organizational responsibility to address oppression through a process of awareness. It is unclear what timeframe these organizations were referencing in using the word "history."

Some organizations posted about needing to examine historical documents for discrimination and how racist practices may impact the present. Inspired by another NPC organization, Alpha Delta Pi, posted on Facebook,

"ADPi's senior leadership and archivist have reviewed our historical documents and read evidence of discriminatory and racist language and practices within. Realizing it is important to acknowledge our past and learn from it, we have been carefully researching the archives and interviewing sisters for a more thorough understanding of our history in this context. This is an important and sensitive topic that requires respect, time, and conscientious effort in order to accurately understand our past and how it impacts the present."

The above statement shows the intentional process ADPi took to examine historical documents to understand how racism is part of its organization's past and present. This organization's post acknowledges a timeless way of describing discriminatory and racist language and practices sustained by connecting history with the present. Other organizations used "history" connected to the timeframe they

were founded. For example, Delta Gamma Fraternity posted,

"Sororities were built during a time in our country's history when women were just being invited to attend colleges and universities for the first time. While this was a big step, it was not inclusive of all women and was limited to those who were White at most colleges and universities. Because of that, the rituals and practices of sororities were built upon white ideals and perspectives."

The statement above notes who NPC sororities were for and how racial identities influenced the construction of sorority practices and rituals. It is important to note that Delta Gamma, like other sororities, explicitly wrote about the context of racial discrimination in universities and colleges during the founding of these organizations. However, such a statement avoided the organization's responsibilities in maintaining sorority rituals and practices rooted in white perspectives or its role in upholding racism. Some organizations posted about how their organizational founding and value inherently condemned oppression in the organization and members' behaviors. For instance, Delta Phi Epsilon posted the following,

"For 103 years, Delta Phi Epsilon has empowered women to speak truth to power disparities, privilege, and social inequalities. Silence in the face of oppression is tantamount to consent. Having been founded with a core value of justice, we will not stay silent while members of our sisterhood and their loved ones feel the impact of hate."

Although the statement above does not directly address racism, it reminds us of a founding organizational value that requires action from the membership against oppression. The centering of organizational values in statements focuses on addressing the oppression of members and not on the greater society. Some statements connected to organizational values by highlighting how members should respond as part of the

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organization. Alpha Phi posted,

"As Alpha Phis, we expect our members to live up to our high ideals and to show the best qualities of character by being fair, inclusive, and supportive. Racism, hate, bigotry, and violence are in complete contradiction with our purpose."

Such a statement puts the responsibility on the members as the organization has set standards through values and creeds that indirectly stand against racism. Also, this statement suggests that racism or racial discrimination is happening externally to the organization. It needs to be clarified how organizational creeds and values are actualized in action at the individual level. Yet, these statements hint at a need for action for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Overall, in statements connecting organizational history and values to racism and other oppression, the language became less focused on racism. Terms such as "diversity," "equity," "discrimination," "oppression," and "inclusion" became more frequent; thus, posts related to racism or race were limited.

Calling for Individual and Organization Action

Most organizations posted about actions they were taking to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through special committees, membership training, changing organizational practices, and listed resources. Many NPC organizations posted about creating DEI committees with outside consultants and/or led by members as the first public action step. For instance, Zeta Theta Alpha posted under the title 'What efforts have ZTA made to be more inclusive,'

"Formed an inclusion Committee comprised of alumnae, collegians, and staff who represent the many communities of our members. The committee members live in different regions of the country and have an understanding of inclusion from a variety of backgrounds."

The above statement briefly describes

who is on ZTA's committee and what qualifications make them eligible to be on the committee. The direct posting about members leading these committees is essential to note as sisters are familiar with the purpose and values of the organization, access to non-public organizational documents, and possible influence change. Through the images of this study, most of the consultants appeared to be Black with expertise in DEI in higher education. This is important to note, as the posts with words connected to these committees used the following terminology racism, bigotry, racial injustices, racial discrimination, white supremacy, police brutality, white privilege, and Black Lives Matter sparely compared to the previous posts. We are not suggesting that a person who identifies or identified as Black will automatically center racism. Still, it is important to note who these organizations included in action planning. Organizations posted that most DEI committees were formed in the summer of 2020 to 2021. One can assume these committees were a response to the racial injustice events and the call for more organizational action by members. For example, Delta Gamma posted,

"In fall 2020, our Fraternity Council endorsed the formation of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) commission to help advise, guide, and inform Delta's Gamma's efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion to achieve our goals of ensuring our sisterhood is more equitable, more inclusive and more diverse, creating a sense of belonging amongst members who hold identities that have been marginalized."

Most posts included that the purpose of these committees was to review organizational policies and practices related to DEI, create strategic plans, and curate educational opportunities for members. For example, Sigma Kappa posted on its website,

"The DEIA committee is responsible for researching and making recommendations on key DEIA focus areas identi-

fied by boards and staff to ensure that the organization is aware of emerging trends. The committee will also provide feedback and advice to Sigma Kappa volunteers and staff on specific DEIA issues or projects as requested."

On DEIA's website page, Sigma Kappa also posted about the History Task Force and the Ritual Inclusivity Task Force. The History Task Force "research, document, and acknowledge Sigma Kappa's history as it relates to organizational discriminatory behavior and practices, as well as our historical steps toward inclusion." The different committees with DEIA highlight how vast an NPC organization's operations are and the need to focus on each organizational element (i.e., ritual and membership).

Like Sigma Kappa, other organizations posted the charges for their DEI committee to focus on being more inclusive. Also, organizations' websites included a DEI committee action report on what has been done to address inclusive issues. These posts attempt transparency and accountability for all who engage with organizations' websites. A significant step taken by most organizations was ending legacy practices due to the lack of inclusion. Few posts connected the ending of this practice with confronting racism within the organizations, but many cited that the legacy practice hindered membership inclusion. Also, there was a noticeable increase in Women of Color in organizational images. At best, the inclusion of Women of Color in organizations' images makes racial diversity visible in these organizations. Posts related to organizational action addressed broad, sometimes unclear, DEI issues, while posts related to individual members' actions focused on racism and anti-racism.

The organizations posted online resources (i.e., Racial Equity Tools), literature (i.e., The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas), documentaries and movies (i.e., Dear White People), and podcasts (NPR Code Switch) that focus on education around racism and anti-racism. For example, Al-

pha Chi Omega posted on Facebook:

"Read. Listen. Act. Anti-racism begins with understanding, with knowledge and with an acknowledgment of racism's continued insidious existence as an institution in this country. Alpha Chi Omega encourages members to read, listen to their Black sisters and the Black community without asking for education, and act. We encourage members to continue to use their voices and explore additional resources."

Alpha Chi Omega brought resources to their members and, for some sisters, a starting point for understanding racism. While most of the resources posted by organizations centered on educating white sisters, few organizations provided resources specified for Black sisters and sisters of Color. Theta Phi Alpha posted on their website for online resources: "If you've been harmed by racism. Please look through this list of 44 Black Mental Health resources for Black People Trying to Survive in this Country." Such posts of resources for Black sisters show a value in their healing, not just an interest in their racial trauma in and outside the organization.

Lastly, most organizations curated anti-racism exploration guides, symposiums, webinars, and workshops for collegiate and alumnae members. For example, Sigma Sigma Sigma posted, "ALL sisters are invited to join us for the virtual Leadership Symposium as we explore anti-racism through the lens of fraternity and sorority life." Sigma Sigma Sigma provides opportunities for members to learn within the context of sorority life. Such an effort invites the members to apply what they learned in the local collegiate and alumnae chapters. Alpha Epsilon Phi provided collegiate chapter officers with facilitator guides to lead conversations with members around racism. On their website posted the following about their 12-month program around areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging:

" The goal of these monthly programs

is to continue to build upon our existing knowledge while continuing to have conversations around race, religion, social, and societal inequities and inequalities. Our EMBRACE programs will open up new avenues for productive conversations and ideas to help serve marginalized communities.

This post by Alpha Epsilon Phi reminds the readers what the catalyst for creating a facilitator guide was and the outcomes of engaging in conversations around racism and other oppressions. Most importantly, this organization and others provided resources to assist members with having difficult conversations around differences. Overall, NPC inter/national organizations' websites and Facebook page posts about racism following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor communicated the need of these organizations' members at all levels to have conversations that promote education and awareness and prompt organizational and individual reflection.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the twenty-six NPC inter/national organizations' websites and Facebook pages to evaluate the messages about racism following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Our findings were that these organizations explicitly named racism connected to recent public racial incidents, acknowledged how organizational history and values uphold or challenge racism, and called for organizational and individual actions. Overall, most messages called for a collective and individual awareness development of racism and its impact on society. Like other national organizations and corporations, NPC inter/national organizations' statements characterized the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor due to a longstanding history of racism in the United States. This language suggests that recent racial incidents are not isolated, and that racism does exist in society. Also, many organizations posted the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other People of Color, which may appear to situate the statements in current events and the socio-political climate.

In alignment with the literature on university presidents' responses to racial violence events (Connors & McCoy, 2022; Brown et al., 2022), most of the organizations' posts tend to be performative to reinforce a positive and response image related to public racist events. In other words, language in these posts could be virtue signaling that these organizations are against racism. Virtue signaling is a strategy that serves to reform or reinforce an organization's image as progressive or, in these posts, committed to racial justice; there is limited action following the words (Brown et al., 2022). Although many NPC organizations used words such as racism, bigotry, racial injustices, racial discrimination, white supremacy, police brutality, white privilege, and Black Lives Matter in their early posts, most of these explicit statements framed racism as primarily interpersonal and external to the organization (Connors & McCoy, 2022).

Using the theory of Racialized Organization's fourth tenet, how these statements are crafted seemingly absolves these organizations of structural responsibility in maintaining or reinforcing racism through practices and policies. Such tension between explicit messaging and organizational practices was evident in following posts by some organizations responding to their predominantly white members for either not taking a "stronger stance" on racism or posting words without action that caused organizations now to listen and learn. White emotions influence public statements and material resources to acknowledge racism with current events; thus, in a racialized organization, whiteness is a credential or privileged. Such posts may suggest that NPC organizations were not listening, learning, or responding to previous or current racist incidents in and outside their groups, thus, leaving

overt and covert racism unchecked.

Scholars noted that NPC organizations have a history and current issues with race and racism, from exclusionary membership to racist theme parties (Freeman, 2020; Harris et al., 2019; Hughey, 2012; Park, 2012; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). However, few organizations directly acknowledged their organizational history and practices that maintain racism. Similar to Connors and McCoy's (2022) study findings, the lack of organizational history around race and racism resulted in many organizations posting their commitment to an extensive review of practices and policies for possible racial discrimination. These statements indicate a lack of understanding, critical reflection, and commitment to organizational accountability to address the legacy of racism in the organization. Also, these statements revealed how these racialized organizations maintain whiteness or go unmarked, which minimizes the unequal treatment of experiences of Black sisters and People of Color sisters (Harris et al., 2019; Park, 2012; Ray, 2019). In other words, these statements passively delegitimize the structural roots of racism, minimize the historical legacy of racism in these organizations, and prioritize individual behavior to distance the organization's responsibility.

The few organizations that were explicit about how their group has maintained, and reinforced racism, provided statements from leadership, unpacked controversial historical racial connections, and related race issues to current organizational existence. Like the work of Logan (2021), these statements created space for (inter) national headquarters and members to reflect on structural and organizational racism that is directly connected to their daily lives. Thus, implementing a preventive and responsive organizational culture can counteract racism and the harm it has created (Davis & Harris, 2016). While organizations reviewed their practices or explicitly acknowledged organizational responsibility in racial discrimination, there was a focus on individual behaviors in self-reflection and action.

Using the theory of Racialized Organization as an analytical tool, these organizations used language and signal actions that decouple formal commitments to equity, access, and inclusion from policies and practices while maintaining white people's sense of group position (Ray, 2019). For example, statements released later in the year connected to organizational or individual actions around race, the language of racism, white supremacy, bigotry, racial injustices, and white privilege were sparse, especially in education materials. The language changed to diversity, equity, and inclusion with a suggested focus on creating belonging for *all members* (recentering whiteness) regardless of identities. The DEI statement appeared neutral and welcoming to all differences (i.e., legacy policies). In other words, later posts highlighted members' various identities, including race, sexuality, and religion. Although identities are essential, most statements lack explicit language oppression (uneven power dynamics) and challenging systemic oppression.

Many organizations encouraged members to self-educate, often providing links to external educational resources about racism and allyship. In racialized organizations, this is a strategy enhancing white member agency as most of these resources centered on whiteness and helping members who identify as white or who have assimilated to whiteness understand racism from a racial privilege perspective (Ray, 2019). Only one organization offered resources directed toward Black sisters and sisters of Color to create space for healing. At the same time, other organizations diminished the agency of Black sisters and sisters of Color through silence and limited resources. In alignment with Hughey's (2010) studies, we found some posts with the images or stories of Black sisters and sisters of Color appear to be tokenizing as it only highlights the organization's visible racial diversity and inclusiveness but

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does not address organizational racism that influences their sorority experiences. Many action-related statements recentered whiteness as normative.

To answer the research question for this study, the messages that were communicated about racism by NPC inter/national organizations' websites and Facebook pages after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were explicit about racism in society and their philosophical stance on condemning racism and a race-neutral call for self-education and reflection on racism outside of the organization. Also, we found that most communication-centered whiteness by the audience the posts appeared for and posted by (predominantly white (inter) national staff and executive board) that protected white spaces, white emotions, and the racial hierarchy of the organization in related to beliefs, values, and action around racism. We conclude these messages were performative in reaction to the sociopolitical context and the current absence of public posts around racism began on organizations' websites and Facebook pages.

Recommendations

NPC organization communications about racism are essential for the future of these organizations and for being part of systemic racial justice. Most website posts on racism are buried within these sites, making it harder for members and others to be informed of the organization's stance on racism. First, we recommend that organizations make their commitments, reports, and other racial equity materials visible on their website. Such practice allows for organizational accountability by members and keeps racism in organizational conversations. Due to the absence of words such as racism, bigotry, racial injustices, racial discrimination, white supremacy, and white privilege, along with words such as condemning to send a direct message as time passed, we recommend that NPC organizations explicitly name these words in public and internal communication.

This explicit language signals an organizational commitment to preventing racism, addressing racist incidents, and striving toward racial justice as the membership and leadership changes over time. We also recommend that organizations post their progress and updates on promises made around race, racism, and anti-racism made in 2020 and 2021 in an easy-to-find location on their websites. This recommendation increases organizational responsibility for the espoused commitment to systemic racial justice.

For future research, we recommend more scholarship on organizational racism within historically white sororities' practices and policies. Also, we recommend more research on the communication patterns of NPC organizations related to racist incidents. Such scholarship will inform the work of (inter)national headquarters and campus professionals in addressing racism with these organizations for lasting change in communication and practice. Lastly, we recommend research on how NPC organizations' messages, online resources, and DEI committees influenced members' beliefs and actions around racism. This scholarship will assist organizations with moving beyond virtual signaling to ensure the matching of espoused anti-racist values with organizational practices and policies.

Conclusion

While the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor fade as a mark in history and the pendulum has swung to banning race/racism conversation in K-12 schools and postsecondary, these statements are harder to locate on these organizations' websites and social media. NPC sororities with histories of racism and racial discrimination must continue the work for racial equities starting with their practices and communications strategies, especially when racial justice is not trending.

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