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Women Faculty of Color: Success Stories from the Margins

Bridget Turner Kelly and Kristin McCann

Abstract

Based on data from a larger, longitudinal study of 22 women faculty on the tenure track, this qualitative study examines the socialization experiences of four women faculty of color (WFOC) who earned tenure at two public, research extensive, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the U.S. This study gives voice to WFOC who broke through the glass ceiling of tenure and were promoted to associate professor. Although these women earned tenure, their adjustment as newcomers to the academy was fraught with marginalization for being both women and persons of color. Specifically, the WFOC experienced challenges to their role clarity, self-efficacy and social acceptance—all of which are all key factors in the socialization of outsiders (untenured) to insiders (tenured) of an organization. This study holds implications for how WFOC can not only survive but also thrive in the tenure process.

The underrepresentation of full-time women faculty of color (WFOC) in the academy is well documented in the literature. WFOC—(i.e., defined as Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native in the United States)—comprised 11.5% of all assistant, 8% of all associate, and 4% of all full professors (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). However, researchers primarily focused on WFOCs' departure from the academy and/or failure to earn tenure because of gender and racial challenges they faced (Agguire, 2000). Although it is important to highlight barriers that impede WFOCs' success in the academy, it is also crucial to give voice to the challenges that WFOC experienced through successful tenure and promotion. In this way barriers and challenges are not falsely consigned only to WFOC who were not conventionally successful. Naming the barriers and challenges in stories of WFOC who surpassed the glass ceiling of tenure in predominately White, research extensive universities in the U.S. gives credence to the women's resiliency, to the core belief in their ability to earn tenure, and to how their socialization as newcomers could have derailed their success. Put another way, this study aligns with scholars who characterize success in the face of gendered and raced barriers as "resisting from the margins" (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001, p. 166), and as "instances of resistance and victory" which "can provide direction for ways to make our [WFOC] work lives more rewarding and enjoyable" (Allen, 1996, p. 268).

To analyze WFOC's successful resistance from the margins, we employed the newcomer adjustment model (Bauer, Bodner, Erodogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007) from the organizational socialization literature. However, this model has not been used to understand faculty members' adjustment to the tenure track and does not account for the impacts of identity on socialization. Thus, we modified the model to consider gender and race, as the literature showed WFOC's journeys were shaped by gendered and raced experiences. Therefore, we could not do justice to the WFOC in our study without

incorporating analysis of their tenure track journey through the lens of their multiple marginality as both women and persons of color (Turner, 2002).

Review of Literature

WFOC inhabit a gendered and racial identity, yet their experiences are often “buried within studies that reported results under categories such as ‘faculty of color’ or ‘women’” (Turner, González, & Wong, 2011, p. 200). Therefore, although there is a critical mass of literature that gives voice to women faculty in terms of race *or* gender (Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Stanley, 2006); we limit this literature review to studies that specifically focused on participants as both women and faculty of color.

Many of the studies reviewed pointed to challenges of multiple marginality, such as resistance to WFOC as the Other. For example, in a qualitative study that included 22 assistant, associate, and full professors, Vargas (1999) found some students at PWIs resisted WFOC due to White faculty members’ treatment of WFOC as Other. Also, in a qualitative analysis of narrative data, Turner (2002) characterized WFOC’s experiences in terms of “lived contradictions and ambiguous empowerment” (p. 75), in that faculty colleagues often reacted to WFOC in terms of race/ethnicity and gender rather than their collegial role as a faculty member. In addition, in a first-person narrative, Mata (2009)—a Latina professor at a PWI—argued that her dual roles of being a woman and person of color pushed back on “pre-conceived notions of what a scholar/professor looks like” (Mata, 2009, p. 272) and interrupted a “Black/White binary that characterizes most conversations on race” (p. 272). Finally, Ford (2011) interviewed 21 WFOC and concluded that WFOCs’ bodies “represent a series of raced and gendered contradictions in academia” (p. 472) relative to a White male norm and that working within raced and gendered stereotypes “impinges on the performance, retention, promotion and tenure of WOC [women of color] faculty” (p. 473). Thus, research that focused on women faculty in terms of both race and gender revealed that although WFOC are in positions of authority in the academy, they encountered resistance to their power as faculty members because their gender and race did not conform to a White male norm (Turner, 2002).

Another strand of the literature reflected a theme of resistance and agency, in that WFOC must find ways to navigate the academy in the face of gender and racial stereotypes. For example, through a critical race feminism conceptual framework, Sulé (2011) analyzed how seven Black and three Latina faculty from one PWI research university resisted isolation as women and persons of color. One strategy WFOC successfully used was “self-affirming thoughts combined with actions of resistance” (Sulé, 2011, p. 182). Sulé (2011) also found that active resistance drew energy away from WFOC working toward tenure and promotion. Additionally, Gregory (1999) conducted a quantitative study on 384 Black women faculty members’ experiences in the academy. Based on her findings, Gregory (1999) recommended that senior administrators support WFOCs’ scholarship, implement faculty development programs, and provide mentoring and protection from responsibilities that are not awarded by tenure.

Although the literature reviewed here addressed the experiences of WFOC in terms of both gender and race, studies did not incorporate longitudinal data from faculty members’ experiences on the tenure track and focused primarily on Black women.

Therefore, our study provides a unique contribution to the literature, as we captured the experiences of WFOC over time as opposed to one discrete time point, address the phenomenon of the tenure track, and analyzed WFOCs' experiences in terms of socialization, which is an underused framework for research on faculty life. Finally, this study departs from a Black/White binary for what counts as a person of color, and includes the voices of Black and Asian American women faculty.

Conceptual Framework

Organizational socialization theory informed the conceptual framework for this study. Organizational socialization is defined as “the process by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders” (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 707). In specific relationship to faculty socialization on the tenure track, Tierney and Rhoads (1993) defined this process in terms of “how faculty learn to be faculty” (p. 5). For the purposes of this study, insider status is considered being a tenured faculty member, and one's transition to this insider status is commonly referred to as the newcomer adjustment model (Bauer et al., 2007). Defining characteristics of newcomer adjustment model include: (a) role clarity; (b) self-efficacy; and (c) social acceptance (Bauer et al., 2007). According to the model, more role clarity, more self-efficacy, and more social acceptance theoretically lead to desired outcomes, such as intentions to remain in one's position, job satisfaction, high job performance, and lower turnover (Bauer et al., 2007). For our study, role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance provided a basis to analyze WFOC's journey on the tenure track over time in order to identify any common themes (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013) for how the WFOC experienced the tenure track. Specifically, role clarity related to how clear or uncertain WFOC were about tenure requirements; self-efficacy related to WFOCs' belief in their capacity to accomplish a given task toward tenure; and social acceptance related to WFOC feeling validated relative to organizational insiders such as senior faculty and administrators (Bauer et al., 2007).

Although WFOC operated within the newcomer adjustment model, they did so in a gendered and raced context. Because organizational socialization models—including the newcomer adjustment model—do not account for the impacts of social identity (Allen, 1996), we modified the newcomer adjustment model to include considerations of gender and race. As discussed in the literature, the impacts of race and gender on women's experiences in the academy are evident; therefore, we postulated that attention to WFOC's multiple marginality in conjunction with the newcomer adjustment model could highlight the mediating impacts of gender and race throughout WFOCs' socialization experiences on the tenure track (Allen, 1996).

Methodology

We employed a constructivist framework to understand how individual WFOC socially constructed and gave meaning to their experiences (Creswell, 2013). The constructivist framework helped to foreground WFOCs' voices on the tenure track as individuals within research extensive universities and to describe “the behavior of groups

who occupy a particular culture” (Stage & Manning, 2003, p. 21)—such as women of color in the academy.

Participants

Via purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), participants in this study included only the WFOC who earned tenure at their original institution: two Black (i.e., Bonnie and Florine) and two Asian American women faculty (i.e., Diana and Evelyn) who were housed within Counseling, K-12 Education, and Higher Education departments. Participants were sampled from one of the author’s larger Women in the Academy study that included 22 tenure track professors (seven WFOC; 15 White faculty) who were recruited from two public, research extensive, PWIs in the U.S. Limitations of this study include: a) the decision to bound the examination of women faculty’s experiences to public research extensive universities only—however, this decision was purposeful due to the greater disparity of WFOC at research extensive universities (Philipsen, 2008); b) the inability to analyze WFOC’s experiences based on discipline, given the small number of women in each field and differences within fields; and c) the lack of women from a wider scope of racial and ethnic identities, as only Black and Asian women consented to this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured, open-protocol interview served as the primary means of generating data (Torres, 2003). On an annual basis beginning in their first or second year on the tenure track, WFOC responded to seven interview questions related to their experiences as tenure track professors. Because of the study’s longitudinal design, transcripts were reviewed on a yearly basis in order to modify probes in the next year’s interview protocol and to develop follow-up questions for each WFOC. This review process helped to increase the accuracy (Creswell, 2013) of the study and build trust and rapport with participants. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, read, and re-read as a preliminary stage of analysis before coding. For the present study on WFOC, the first stage of coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana., 2013) involved analyzing critical turning points of each woman’s experience on the tenure track as compared to the newcomer adjustment model (Bauer et al., 2011). The second round of coding focused on determining themes across WFOCs’ experiences related to gender and race. A White woman who differed from the researcher’s social identity served as a third coder for the data, and we relied on intercoder agreement (Creswell, 2013) to increase reliability of the study. For example, after coding the first transcripts separately, we met and came to agreement on what code was assigned to key passages in women’s transcripts. Themes that emerged from coding WFOC transcripts were the basis for the findings reported for this study.

Researcher Positionality

Our identities as women of color were essential to our positionality as we collected data for, analyzed, and wrote-up this study. One researcher experienced being

the only faculty of color in her program and navigated gender and race as she earned tenure. She documented her tenure track journey (Fries-Britt & <name of one author>, 2005) in a separate study. The other researcher, a South Korean-American doctoral student, located herself both inside and outside of the data. As a woman of color, she identified with the highlights and challenges women in the study experienced in relationship to race and gender; yet, she did not hold the position of a tenure track faculty member and did not identify as closely with that socialization process. In addition, a White woman faculty member engaged the researchers in a dialogue about the data and findings. Thus, our ongoing researcher reflexivity (Creswell, 2013) and data analysis strategies enhanced the trustworthiness and reliability of the study (Creswell, 2013).

Findings

We present our findings based on WFOCs' first year on the tenure track, their mid-tenure experiences, and the year or year after they received tenure. In line with our conceptual framework, our findings foreground WFOC's voices and illustrate how their experiences relative to role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance were impacted by both gender and race.

Evelyn

Year one. Evelyn, an Asian American faculty member in higher education, faced challenges to her role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance during her first year on the tenure track in terms of her gender and race. For example, in relationship to role clarity and gender, Evelyn believed that women faculty must conform to a male-centric identity to "sell" their credibility on the tenure track. Evelyn explained, "I think women naturally are more self-doubting than men. This is a field where you have to be confident. You have to exude that confidence, which is hard for women . . . Get over the socialization that tells you not to."

In relationship to self-efficacy and gender, Evelyn struggled to believe she could balance responsibilities on the tenure track with future plans to be a mother. Evelyn shared, "Every step I take I think about how it's gonna work with children and I think that's a property of women that isn't a property of men." Also, Evelyn was unable to share these concerns with her assigned White female mentor, as she was "not a particularly helpful mentor about family" because "she hasn't had that experience."

In addition, Evelyn faced challenges around social acceptance for scholarship on race. Although Evelyn identified a need for more research on Asian American students, as they "are just completely forgotten about," she delayed that strand of research. Evelyn viewed race-based research as an unviable means to earn tenure, per "not that much interest" from other academics and "much less funding in that area." Thus, Evelyn perceived lower social acceptance for research on Asian Americans.

Mid-tenure. In her third year on the tenure track, Evelyn felt clearer about what it would take to earn tenure, more confident in her ability to earn tenure, and socially accepted from her senior colleagues' positive mid-tenure review of her work. However, Evelyn expressed lower self-efficacy in terms of how her race was implicated in her

service. She explained, “Everybody else [on the dean appointed diversity committee] was faculty of color. . . . As if it’s our job to carry the mantle for the college about diversity. . . . a lot of us were junior professors . . . It’s not like what we did was gonna make a dent into fixing the climate here.” Therefore, Evelyn doubted her ability to effectively change the racial climate at her institution because of her lack of power as an assistant professor and felt tokenized because she believed her appointment to the committee was based on her status as a person of color.

Additionally, though Evelyn found social acceptance from successful publication in her field, she continued to grapple with her goal to conduct research on Asian American students. Evelyn reiterated that that “nobody publishes on them [Asian Americans]” and noticed, “I feel myself losing track of more research on Asian Americans because I haven’t kept up.” Thus, Evelyn continued to view race-based scholarship as less accepted in the academy. While Evelyn’s department maintained “a really good climate” of supportive White women colleagues and a White male department chair, who helped her to feel more “firmly planted” and socially accepted on campus, they did not mentor her around scholarship or teaching on race.

Final interview. Ultimately, Evelyn earned tenure and viewed the achievement as a career highlight. Evelyn did not stop her tenure clock but instead timed her child to come as she received tenure. Evelyn also mentioned the possibility of “going back to” her earlier research interest on Asian American students, but she decided to focus on a topic unrelated to race, per better funding and publishing opportunities. Thus, though Evelyn found success on the tenure track as a WFOC, she abandoned her race-related research interests and chose to not combine motherhood with being on the tenure track.

Florine

Year one. For Florine, a Black faculty member in a counseling program, year one marked an overall lack of role clarity. In an attempt to increase clarity around tenure expectations, Florine consulted review letters from faculty who earned tenure within her program and sought the advice of organizational insiders. Yet, Florine found, “The more people I asked, the more evasive people were—especially the authorities . . . she [Florine’s White female dean] wouldn’t tell me the number.” Florine remarked that the dean’s lack of support was troubling—particularly because Florine was the first woman of color in her program to ever have the opportunity to earn tenure. Florine said that when she told her dean the number of publications to which she aimed the dean “made a statement that implied that I was really ambitious, which was really strange.” Florine wondered whether the dean was surprised because she expected so little of a woman of color or because she did not believe Florine was capable of reaching such goals.

Mid-tenure. Though Florine received a positive two-year review and had four articles accepted for publication by the end of her second year, Florine “eventually accepted” that she could not count on organizational insiders to contribute to her role clarity around tenure expectations. For example, Florine shared the lack of support she received from a recently tenured associate professor, “Although she’s a White woman, I had thought I would get it from a fellow woman and [the first] woman that had gotten

tenure [in the counseling program].” Despite lack of support from within her institution, Florine appreciated the opportunity to publically thank her White male mentor and dissertation director at an “article of the year” ceremony in which she was honored. She credited this mentor as integral to her self-efficacy.

Yet, in relationship to social acceptance, Florine faced an issue of race and gender in her four-year mid-tenure review. Though Florine was reappointed, Florine believed her White male department chair left out a “critical component” of Florine’s accomplishments in his review letter so that two White colleagues whom the chair supported and “who were really struggling [fewer publications and recognition relative to Florine]” would appear as productive as Florine. As a result, Florine realized, “I could not be passive because I was junior faculty. . . in a college where there was no person of color with tenure, no less a woman of color . . . if I felt I was being treated unfairly, I needed to speak up.” Florine resisted messages that told women, especially Black women, not to speak up to address her chair’s omission. With her mid-tenure review being positive overall, Florine felt more confident that she would be judged on her merit as a scholar and that race would not be a negative factor. Florine asserted, “I really began to believe that, wow, this process might just be fair; these [White] people are going to focus on my scholarship.”

Final interview. By the end of her time on the tenure track, Florine earned tenure and explained, “If the process was fair, there was no reason why I shouldn’t get it [tenure]. . . . I had way and above beyond the expectations.” Florine also stated that if she had not earned tenure, she would have felt comfortable departing her institution. She said, “I will go get a job somewhere else where I am judged on merit. Because if they didn’t give it [tenure] to me, it wasn’t going to be because I did not meet the requirements for tenure.” Though the beginning of Florine’s tenure journey was filled with less role clarity and less social acceptance—particularly from White female colleagues—Florine found ways to manage her uncertainties around tenure expectations, such as reconnecting with her White male mentor and receiving positive feedback from multiple reviews prior to tenure. Florine also gained self-efficacy in her ability to earn tenure based on scholarship without race or gender being a negative factor. Another WFOC, Diana faced similar concerns about her merit as a scholar and teacher.

Diana

Year one. In her first year on the tenure track, Diana, an Asian American woman in a K-12 education department, experienced challenges related to her self-efficacy. Diana discussed how she “second guessed” herself as a teacher and “tried to integrate” her identity into her teaching but felt, “my voice isn’t just quite legitimate anymore . . . I don’t feel like I can reach as many students as I used to feel being in a setting that was perhaps a little more diverse.” Diana’s lower self-efficacy as a teacher in a PWI was complicated by interactions with some of her White students, as they asked questions they “wouldn’t ask in that tone or manner” to a White male faculty member. These interactions related to her belief that women of color “have to prove themselves more” than White male colleagues to be socially accepted as a legitimate member of the academy. Although Diana perceived low social acceptance relative to her PWI context,

her service with a campus-wide multicultural organization helped to buffer feelings of racial isolation from “just being really the only person of color in my wing, on my floor” and feeling pressure to be the voice for diversity in her department.

Mid-tenure. By mid-tenure Diana discussed her socialization in relationship to gender. Diana described her gendered identity as a “caretaker,” which was rooted in her family’s cultural background. For example, Diana felt divided between honoring responsibilities between two programs to which she was appointed. One of the programs aligned with her research interests and professional background; whereas, and the other did not. Diana characterized the tenure system as “political,” in that she felt unclear how she could voice her preference without leaving colleagues with more responsibilities, thereby denying her caretaker identity.

Adding to her lack of role clarity, Diana received less support over time from her assigned White female mentor who was “very committed to other things” and had less time to devote to the mentoring relationship. Also, while Diana felt more “concrete” in terms of what she wanted to accomplish after her positive feedback from her two mid-tenure reviews (one each after years two and four), the recommendation to reduce her service resulted in less role clarity. Diana’s service with the campus multicultural center was integral to her combating racial isolation. Thus, Diana decided to remain involved with the center. As well, Diana felt overall “reaffirmed” after reading review letters that validated her contributions to teaching—especially given the challenges she faced teaching within a PWI. Yet, Diana wondered whether further involvement with diversity-related activities in addition to her race-related research and teaching would detract from the strength of her tenure case. Diana explained, “I mean, politically you don’t know what people are thinking. I was really more worried about the university committee.” Despite her fears of low social acceptance for her research and other diversity activities, she “slowly” became “an advocate for multicultural ed.” According to Diana, “people have asked me to do things, and I was asked to present about cultural competence . . . I will be a spokesperson, even though I feel uncomfortable about it. Someone has to.”

Final interview. Though Diana was uncertain as to how her race-related research would be received by her tenure review committees, she earned tenure and received more affirmation for her contributions as a WFOC. Diana appreciated the external reviewers’ letters the most; as they minimized any fears she had with regard to her race-related research being accepted as legitimate by organizational insiders. Additionally, Diana’s willingness to chair a college-wide diversity committee was a shift from previous ambiguities about being a spokesperson. Therefore, throughout Diana’s socialization on the tenure track, she doubted she could be the “voice” for diversity in her department, conduct diversity-related research, serve in a diversity-related campus unit, be a caretaker and still earn tenure. These gendered and raced challenges eroded her self-efficacy as a new faculty member. However, her tenure review provided a form of social acceptance that allowed her to be an advocate for diversity-related issues and believe in her scholarship as “legitimate” in the academy. Like Diana, Bonnie began her journey unclear of how her status as a WFOC would impact her tenure track journey.

Bonnie

Year one. Bonnie moved to a tenure track position after a successful career in administration knowing she would be “the first Black woman who got tenured in the college in 30-something years.” Bonnie felt she was “floundering” with research and given a high advising load, which conflicted with messages about how her time should be protected for research. While this led to a decrease in role clarity around earning tenure, one key highlight was being “asked by a senior professional to do a lead piece in a journal.”

Mid-tenure. Regardless of the social acceptance Bonnie gained by publishing as the lead author with a White male senior colleague, by mid-tenure, Bonnie remarked that the publication process usually took longer than she originally planned, and she received mixed messages about how many publications were needed for tenure. Also, she experienced a gendered and raced situation in her third year review related to her “productivity” on the tenure track. Bonnie’s department chair, a White male, reaffirmed the importance of publications and questioned Bonnie’s productivity. Bonnie felt “boxed in” by the chair’s one-dimensional interpretation of productivity and reminded the chair of a recently accepted manuscript, her completed prep of three new graduate classes, and her unusually high advising load. Her chair responded that he was not attempting to be “racist” in his critique. However, Bonnie did not name his criticisms as such; rather, she simply wanted to defend her productivity. Later, at a faculty meeting, Bonnie learned that part of the chair’s approach was based on a “how to speak to junior faculty” guide that many senior level faculty received which included the advice to take on a chastising tone. Aside from her negative experience with her chair, Bonnie noted her extensive social acceptance from other colleagues. Bonnie asserted, “as a Black faculty member, it was important for me to have a community, and I knew a lot of Black colleagues on the campus.” Thus, Bonnie experienced higher levels of social acceptance by like-race organizational insiders, which was, in large part, due to relationships she built during her time as an administrator.

Final interview. Though Bonnie ultimately earned tenure, she experienced a gendered and raced tenure vote. Bonnie received two abstentions while a White male colleague with comparable accomplishments in terms of publications, teaching, and service did not receive any abstentions. Bonnie expressed that she would have preferred the committee members to vote against her tenure than abstain, as the reasons for abstention appeared to be related to her role as a mother and her research on Black students. Bonnie explained that her approved temporary sick leave due to her child’s serious medical issues earlier in Bonnie’s tenure process surfaced as a negative aspect of her tenure case. Bonnie said, “My motherhood piece came up . . . fortunately I think there were some people in the room who used that as a plus. Who said, ‘my gosh she’s been able to manage all of these challenges.’” In relationship to race, Bonnie also explained, “I honestly felt like I had made a case where race and gender shouldn’t matter. . . . they came up anyway because of that classic thing of, ‘I write about Black students.’” Similar to Florine and Diana’s questioning of whether race would be used as a negative form of merit for tenure, Bonnie shared that her tenure along with other recent faculty of

colors' tenure spurred White senior colleagues to approach the dean to suggest that standards for tenure were being lowered. The dean corroborated this meeting, and changes were made to increase publication requirements for tenure. Bonnie elaborated, "We have four Black tenured people in the college right now. So, all of a sudden now the standards have been reduced? Here we are changing the rules again. And I'm telling you it is sad. It is really sad."

Throughout the journey to tenure Bonnie faced challenges related to role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance throughout her socialization on the tenure track—such as mixed messages around the importance of service which had gendered implications of women faculty being assigned more caretaking roles, to what extent race-related scholarship counted toward her merit for tenure, and how her motherhood was perceived by senior colleagues. Through it all, Bonnie shared that she gained clarity around how she wanted to live her life as a woman, mother, and faculty member, as well as how she wanted that clarity to shape future WFOC's experiences:

I think that we [women faculty] have a lot to teach the academy about how to do this right [earn tenure], or do this differently . . . I think we bring a lot of enormous insights to the process that get overlooked [by men]. . . there are a lot of ways in which women can help change the professorship.

Discussion and Implications

According to the existing newcomer adjustment model, more role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance theoretically lead to specific outcomes, such as an intention to remain in one's position, and job satisfaction (Bauer et al., 2007). However, in our study this model represented an incomplete formula for success because WFOC experienced "ambiguous empowerment" (Turner, 2002, p. 75) due to their multiple marginality (Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Stanley, 2006; Turner, 2002). In other words, though the WFOC in this study earned tenure, they struggled to gain a strong sense of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance as they navigated a gendered and racialized academy. Although these women found ways to buffer gendered and raced challenges to gain tenure, we wondered: At what cost was their tenure?

Role Clarity

In varying ways, all four women lacked role clarity around achieving tenure and they lacked access to organizational insiders (tenured WFOC, Deans, Department Chairs) that could model how to be a successful WFOC. Gregory (1999) found that mentors offer crucial information and support for earning tenure. Yet, mentors did not always help clarify the faculty role. For example, as an Asian American woman, Evelyn had mentors who were White men and women but none assisted her specifically around gendered and raced barriers in the academy. Also, Florine and Diana were unable to gain clarity from organizational insiders in their programs and departments—particularly from White female colleagues. What appeared to be implied in Florine's and Diana's experiences with White female colleagues was that if Florine and Diana were White women or men, their Dean and assigned mentor, respectively, might have been more supportive. To navigate this gendered and raced barrier, Florine resisted marginalization

(Sulé, 2011) by reconnecting with her dissertation mentor for more support around research and publication expectations for tenure. Diana turned to other sources of support for role clarity, such as the affirming feedback (Sulé, 2011) she received from her mid-tenure review and her service with her campus multicultural center as a form of support for her scholarship on multicultural education.

Additionally, WFOC experienced mixed messages in terms of role clarity. For example, Bonnie was given a high advising load—including many students of color—yet instructed to reserve more time for publication. As shown in the literature, WFOC are often assigned service responsibilities not awarded by tenure (Gregory, 1999; Vargas, 1999). Thus, Bonnie was arguably marginalized because of her gender by being seen as more caring or nurturing to student advisees and because of her race by being seen as the only faculty member who could advise students of color. Thus, the additional lenses of race and gender to the existing newcomer adjustment model showed how faculty experienced challenges in gaining role clarity because of their multiple marginality. Although these women found buffers for their role clarity, perhaps they could have thrived rather than merely survived on the tenure track if they had more support as women and persons of color from their dean (Florine), mentors (Diana and Evelyn), and fewer mixed messages around service expectations (Bonnie).

Self-Efficacy

WFOCs' ambiguous empowerment was also evident in relationship to the self-efficacy component of the newcomer adjustment model. Overall, the WFOC doubted their ability to earn tenure as women of color and believed they needed to prove their credibility beyond what they perceived was expected of their White male and female colleagues. For example, Evelyn referenced her doubts about balancing responsibilities on the tenure track with future motherhood, and she was unable to find an organizational insider who could help bolster her belief in her ability to do so. Though Evelyn characterized her White female mentor's inability to discuss such doubts in terms of the mentor not having "that [family] experience," perhaps Evelyn did not want to share her concerns with her mentor out of fear that her gendered concerns alongside her marginal status as a woman of color would detract from her credibility and mark her as Other (Turner, 2002; Vargas, 1999). Moreover, Evelyn believed that she needed to forego how she was socialized as a woman to conform to a male norm of success (Ford, 2011).

In addition, Diana felt low self-efficacy in the classroom, as she believed her "voice" was not "quite legitimate" in her predominantly White classroom and that she needed to "prove" herself more than her White male colleagues. Consistent with the literature, reduced credibility in the classroom can weaken WFOC's self-efficacy (Mata, 2009; Turner, 2002). Also, in relationship to the presence and absence of organizational insiders, a mentor figure could have been helpful for Diana in terms of helping her navigate "classroom dynamics that can take place when a person of color or a woman steps in front of students who expect a White male teacher" (Turner, 2002, p. 85).

Furthermore, another aspect of WFOC's self-efficacy was resistance to organizational insiders' attempts to depreciate their credibility. This resistance appeared to be part of Bonnie and Florine's innate determination to succeed and to not allow their isolation as sole WFOC in their departments to impede success. For example, Florine—

arguably because of her awareness that she would be the first person of color and woman of color to earn tenure in her department—decided to resist any potential negative feedback because of her race and gender and published more than what she estimated was actually needed to earn tenure. Additionally, Bonnie faced resistance to her tenure because of her race-related scholarship and could have viewed such resistance as basis for self-doubt. Instead Bonnie pushed back and saw the resistance as an opportunity to “teach the academy about how to do this [the tenure process] right, or do this differently.” Arguably, without WFOC’s strong, core belief in their ability to earn tenure, challenges to their self-efficacy could have derailed their socialization as newcomers. Yet, had Florine been more confident throughout the duration of her tenure track journey that her gender and race would not be viewed negatively by her tenure committee, perhaps Florine would have felt less obligated to prove herself above and beyond what her White and male colleagues needed to demonstrate to earn tenure. Also, Bonnie’s tenure was rendered bittersweet, as colleagues challenged the content of her research and her decision as a mother to take leave and care for a sick child.

Social Acceptance

For all four WFOC in the study, lower social acceptance again translated into feelings of ambiguous empowerment because of their multiple marginality (Sulé, 2011; Turner, 2002; Turner et al., 2011). According to the newcomer adjustment model, lower social acceptance would not relate to positive outcomes, such as remaining in one’s position. However—as with role clarity and self-efficacy—the WFOC found ways to buffer or navigate the lower social acceptance they experienced. For example, though Evelyn wanted to pursue research on Asian American students and saw a gap in the literature for such research, Evelyn did not believe that she could earn tenure with that research agenda due to her field’s lack of support for the topic. To buffer this lack of acceptance, Evelyn turned to other topics with more cache. Similarly, Diana wanted to pursue race-related research, but she felt uncertain as to how such research would be viewed by organizational insiders due to the “politics” of the academy. She buffered this lack of social acceptance for her research with increased social acceptance for her diversity-related service.

Florine’s doubts as to whether her gender and race would be used as a negative form of merit in the tenure process also relate to social acceptance—a reasonable fear, per the literature that shows how WFOC are noticed more for their race/ethnicity and gender rather than their role as a faculty member (Turner, 2002). Florine’s concerns were solidified when her four-year mid-tenure review resulted in her White male department chair omitting a critical component of her scholarly activities. Yet, Florine risked being seen as the stereotypical sensitive and angry Black woman, and defended her record. By the end of her tenure track journey she felt accepted among organizational insiders because of her merit as a scholar. Also, though Bonnie felt “boxed in” by her White male chair’s expectations, Bonnie resisted her multiple marginality through an action of resistance Sulé (2011)—(e.g., drawing upon the support of Black colleagues to support her through the tenure process, maintaining high advising load while earning tenure).

Thus, according to the newcomer adjustment model, persistence in a professional role is best supported by high role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance; yet, these WFOC's persisted despite these supports often not being in place throughout their socialization as newcomers on the tenure track. Because of the WFOC's gender and race, they faced challenges not represented in the newcomer adjustment model.

Implications for higher education research and theory. Through this study, we exposed dimensions of the gendered and raced socialization of WFOC who were successful on the tenure track. However, there is a need for more research on the stories and experiences of WFOC—particularly longitudinal studies—as there many nuanced reasons why WFOC succeed in the academy, and our analysis was helped by a longitudinal approach as compared to data collected from only year one on the tenure track. Moreover, future research should account for gender *and* race, given the fact that WFOC are often subsumed in the aggregate research on women faculty (Turner et al., 2011). Thus, future research could modify the newcomer adjustment model to incorporate the mediating effects of gender and race and faculty socialization experiences. Multiple marginalities could be addressed in future applications of the model, such as sexual orientation, class, ability, among other markers of identity. In addition, research on the experiences of WFOC could benefit from an attention to a wider variety of races and ethnicities, as much of the existing literature focuses on African American women. For example, our findings showed Asian American faculty experienced similar gendered and raced challenges as the Black faculty in our study.

Implications for higher education practice. This study showed how WFOC are often tokenized for their identity as the Other (Sulé 2011). Therefore, higher education institutions should reassess how they value their WFOC—whether in terms of diversity as a mark of excellence or tokenization. In other words, WFOC might be currently used by institutions to bolster structural diversity of all faculty (i.e., numbers), but institutions should also understand how to better support WFOC's throughout their newcomer adjustment period. To do so, more urgency should be concentrated on faculty development programs—including the involvement of colleagues who understand unique experiences of faculty who are Othered and who serve on tenure and review committees (Gregory, 1999). Such faculty development programming could also work to combat the mixed messages that WFOC face in relationship to service, teaching and research (Turner, 2002; Vargas, 1999). Finally, informed organizational insiders or mentors could also be a component of campus faculty development programs, as such efforts are related to the professional advancement of WFOC (Gregory, 1999).

Conclusion

Without consideration of the context for WFOCs' gender and race alongside the broader context of the institution type—PWIs—and an overall predominantly White, male dominated academy, the WFOCs' challenges with role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance would not have been fully examined. The lenses of the newcomer adjustment model and accounting for gender and race within that model revealed how WFOCs' newcomer socialization experiences could have assisted them in thriving--not

just surviving—in the tenure process. For example, WFOC could have thrived by pursuing race and/or gender-related research instead of just survived by acknowledging a lack of social acceptance for such research by organizational insiders. WFOC could have thrived by changing deep-seated power hierarchies instead of just survived tokenized appointments on diversity committees. WFOC could have thrived by balancing motherhood and tenure track journeys, instead of just survived by foregoing motherhood until after tenure or having tenure decisions impacted by motherhood. Our hope is that our research on WFOC's socialization on the tenure track compels higher education researchers and practitioners to consider WFOC's success stories from the margins as a point of departure for how the academy can be a more equitable institution for all.

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