Journal of Vocational Behavior 113 (2019) 62–74

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Vocational Behavior

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jvb

Scrutinized but not recognized: (In)visibility and hypervisibility experiences of faculty of color[☆]

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Visibility
Hypervisibility
Invisibility
Tokenism
Exclusion
Faculty of color
Minority status

ABSTRACT

Because of their minority group status and underrepresentation, faculty of color (FOC) are tokens and as such, are highly visible within the academy. Paradoxically, token status may result in their being made to feel simultaneously invisible (e.g., accomplishments are unimportant, lack of belonging) and hypervisible (e.g., heightened scrutiny). Drawing from 118 interviews, we identified six themes related to how Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and American Indian faculty members at a single, predominantly White, research-intensive university, describe issues of (in) visibility at work. FOC experienced hypervisibility when they were treated as *Tokens* and used to represent diversity within the institution, and they felt invisible when they experienced *Social and Professional Exclusion* and *Epistemic Exclusion* (i.e., lack of recognition for their scholarship and achievements) from colleagues. FOC responded to tokenism and exclusion using three (in)visibility strategies: *Strategic Invisibility* (i.e., disengaging with colleagues while remaining engaged with their scholarly activities) to remove themselves from negative environments; *Working Harder* to prove themselves, counter exclusion, and create positive visibility; and *Disengagement* (i.e., removed effort from work). Our analysis suggests that a lack of control over one's (in) visibility is problematic for FOC. In response, FOC may attempt to increase or decrease their own visibility to counter such experiences, often with some positive effects.

1. Introduction

Although many universities have been engaging in efforts to increase the number of faculty of color on their campuses, the data suggest that they remain largely underrepresented in the academy. For example, 2013 data from the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) indicate that White, non-Hispanic faculty hold 75% of all full-time faculty positions, whereas they represented 64% of the U.S. population at that time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Asians are also overrepresented (10%) compared to their representation in the population (5%). In contrast, Blacks are underrepresented in the academy (4%) compared to their rates in the population (13%), as are Hispanics (4% of faculty vs. 16% of the population), and American Indians (0.4% of faculty

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[☆] Parts of this research were conducted by Isis H. Settles while in the Department of Psychology, Michigan State University. Portions of this manuscript were completed while the NiCole T. Buchanan was on sabbatical leave as a Senior Visiting Scholar with the University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Department of Psychology.

This research received funding the ADAPP-ADVANCE office at Michigan State University and from the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives at Michigan State University. We thank Paulette Granberry Russell for her support of this research project.

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.06.003
Received 30 September 2017; Received in revised form 5 June 2018; Accepted 7 June 2018
Available online 08 June 2018
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vs. 0.9% of the population). Being a numerical minority in a workplace is associated with a number of stressful experiences and mistreatment (Kanter, 1977) and being a low status group member is an important factor in predicting when minority stress will occur (Seyranian, Atuel, & Crano, 2008). Given the low representation of faculty of color at predominantly White institutions, and the low status of faculty of color within the academy, our study sought to examine whether faculty of color experience (in)visibility within the workplace, and if so, what forms it might take. We use "(in)visibility" to refer to the range of experiences that include invisibility, visibility, and hypervisibility. We addressed this research question using a large qualitative study of 118 faculty of color at a research-intensive, predominantly White university.

1.1. (In)visibility and hypervisibility

Visibility refers to the extent to which an individual is fully regarded and recognized by others (Brighenti, 2007; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Visibility can be advantageous and empowering when it facilitates having voice, or the ability to speak and be heard, and when one can control how they are perceived and represented (Lollar, 2015). Often, marginalized groups seek to increase their visibility as a means of gaining recognition and power (Simpson & Lewis, 2005). However, visibility can be constraining and disempowering when individuals or groups are made hypervisible (Brighenti, 2007; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Ryland (2013) described hypervisibility as "scrutiny based on perceived difference, which is usually (mis)interpreted as deviance" (p. 2222) and is the result of an individual being recognized for their 'otherness' or deviance from the norm. Hypervisibility is associated with heightened scrutiny and surveillance where failures are magnified and individuals lack control over how they are perceived by others (Brighenti, 2007; Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2010).

Visibility and invisibility are also inherently connected to power (Lewis & Simpson, 2012) and the nature and function of (in) visibility depends on whether one is in a powerful dominant group or a marginalized one. Invisibility often disadvantages marginalized group members by denying them recognition, legitimacy, authority, and voice (Lewis & Simpson, 2010; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). However, because norms are based on powerful dominant groups, invisibility works in favor of dominant group members because that which is "normal is unmarked, unnoticed…" (Brighenti, 2007, p. 326). For dominant group members, invisibility reinforces these norms, leaves their privilege unquestioned and unchallenged, and allows them to maintain their power and authority (Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Further, dominant groups can render marginalized groups invisible and/or hypervisible to maintain their privilege; this process of delegitimizing marginalized groups is especially likely to occur as marginalized groups seek to increase their visibility and recognition (Lewis & Simpson, 2010).

Visibility, hypervisibility, and invisibility are not mutually exclusive. Rather, individuals could be visible in one context and invisible in another, or they might be simultaneously hypervisible as outsiders and invisible with regard to having authority (Lollar, 2015; Stead, 2013). Further, (in)visibility is engaged in relationship with others and can be strategic, with individuals deciding when to blend in (i.e., be invisible) and when to stand out (i.e., be visible; Stead, 2013). Individuals may also seek to manage their visibility by controlling which aspects should be observed and by whom (Brighenti, 2007). Clair, Beatty, and MacLean (2005) note that "people experience a feeling of authenticity when they can be fully 'themselves' in public" (p. 79). As a result, when marginalized group members manage their visibility by keeping some aspects of themselves hidden, it is often with tradeoffs to their sense of authenticity and belongingness within the organization or social group.

In organizations, visibility is also connected to systems of recognition and reward, with favorable visibility increasing the likelihood that an employee's successes will be recognized and rewarded (Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). Faculty of color, as an underrepresented group that lacks power within the academy, may be hypervisible due to their race and other markers that distinguish them from dominant group members (e.g., gender for women faculty of color). At the same time, their marginalized group status may render them invisible in terms of their personal identities, personhood, or work performance. As a result, achievements warranting recognition may be largely unnoticed, whereas potential mistakes and missteps, whether real or merely perceived by dominant group members, may be amplified and receive heightened scrutiny.

1.2. Token and minority status

Because faculty of color are a numerical minority within academic settings, Kanter's (1977) theory of proportional representation can be used to frame their experiences. In her study of women in a corporate organization, she noted that gender composition affected how women were treated. In particular, she noted that when women were *minorities* within their workgroup (1%–35% of the group was women), and especially when they were *tokens* (1%–15% were women), they experienced a number of stressors not found in women who worked in groups with a greater proportion of women. Importantly, Kanter theorized that the increased stress experienced when women were numerical minorities was due to their heightened visibility; that is, because of their small numbers, these individuals were easily noticed and marked as different from the majority (i.e., hypervisible). She found that numerical minority women experienced performance pressures in which they felt under scrutiny and were deemed to be representatives of their group; as a consequence, these women felt the need to work harder to prove their worth and that of their group. This phenomenon is similar to that of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), or the concern that one will confirm a negative stereotype about one's group, which is associated with performance pressures and stress. Kanter also noted that numerical minority women experienced boundary heightening because men overestimated the similarities between themselves and other men and exaggerated differences between themselves and women. This resulted in women's exclusion, social isolation, and being treated as outsiders. Finally, numerical minority women experienced role entrapment in which they were viewed in terms of stereotypes about women and their opportunities were limited to those fitting women's gender roles.

Kanter's (1977) theory generated a tremendous amount of research and further refinement of her theory. For example, Seyranian et al. (2008) noted the importance of not only group size, but also group status, in the experience of minority or token stress. In particular, they theorized that regardless of their numerical size, low status groups can be considered minorities because they are likely to encounter obstacles and challenges as a result of their low status. Yoder (2002) noted that tokenism effects are, at least for women, partially due to their low status, particularly when they work in non-traditional occupational contexts. Others have found that tokenism effects apply only to disadvantaged, low status minority groups. That is, when high status minority group members are tokens in an occupational context (e.g., men in nursing), they experience heightened visibility and sometimes stereotyping, but not token stress effects, such as marginalization, social exclusion, or performance pressures (Heikes, 1991; Williams, 1992, 2013; Yoder & Schleicher, 1996).

Although much of the research on tokenism and its related negative outcomes has examined gender tokens (e.g., Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Wallace & Kay, 2012), there have been some studies examining racial tokens. Consistent with findings on women, research supports that people of color experience similar stressors (i.e., discrimination, stereotyped treatment and expectations, exclusion, and fewer opportunities) related to their token status (Jackson & Stewart, 2003; Kelly, 2007; Stroshine & Brandl, 2011; Turner et al., 2008). Moreover, race-related token stress is associated with a variety of deleterious outcomes, including performance pressures, feelings of rejection and isolation, loss of identity, and depressive symptoms (Jackson & Stewart, 2003; Jackson, Thoits, & Taylor, 1995; Kelly, 2007).

Among faculty of color, research has found that they were expected to engage in stereotyped activities (e.g., related to race and diversity), had to work harder to be perceived as legitimate scholars, and experienced racism and prejudice from their colleagues (Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011). Further, Eagan Jr and Garvey (2015) found that the stress faculty of color experienced from discrimination was associated with lower productivity, even after controlling for perceptions of the workplace climate and pressure to work harder. Together, the existing literature suggests that faculty of color may face visibility-related stressors due to their small numbers and low status within academia.

1.3. *Minority stress*

The minority stress model suggests that, in addition to general stressors experienced by all people, stigmatized minority groups experience additional stressors due to their group membership (Meyer, 2007). These identity-based stressors include rejection, prejudice, and discrimination. Such stressors may affect individuals' outcomes in a manner similar to general stressors. That is, they may challenge goal-related efforts and deplete coping resources, resulting in a wide range of negative physical and psychological health consequences (Juster, McEwen, & Lupien, 2010; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Identity-based stressors may cause additional distress because they challenge individuals' sense of self and require that they make decisions regarding the concealment or expression of identities (Meyer, 2007). This suggests that for members of marginalized and underrepresented groups within a work setting, (in)visibility may be an intermittent and/or chronic stressor related to their identity as a marginalized minority group member (Harrell, 2000; Meyer, 2003).

1.4. *The current study*

Although there is a small, but growing, body of research on visibility and invisibility experiences in the workplace, the empirical literature addressing (in)visibility among faculty of color is scarce. To address this dearth of empirical research, we examined the (in)visibility experiences and responses reported by 118 Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian faculty at a single research-intensive, predominantly White university. By using (in)visibility as the framework for this research, we are able to consider both how individuals in positions of power work to maintain systems of inequality and how individuals in marginalized positions work to counter them. Conceptualizing faculty of color as having agency in their responses to tokenism shifts the existing literature which has posited their responses as primarily reactive. An additional contribution of this study is the examination of faculty experiences within this particular research-intensive university context, where faculty face pressures related to the volume and quality of publication and grant productivity in addition to high teaching and service demands. Further, our study's focus on a large number of faculty of color who are diverse along a number of dimensions allowed us to examine differences by race, gender, and nativity. Finally, our study may also speak to reasons for the low number of faculty of color among the professoriate, as organizational research suggests that a history of tokenism, stigma, and negative (in)visibility contribute to difficulties recruiting and retaining employees from underrepresented social groups. For example, among university faculty, underrepresentation and the negative experiences of token faculty contribute to eligible doctoral candidates opting out of academic careers (Brunsma, Embrick, & Shin, 2017; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009) and contribute to current faculty of color leaving. Thus, understanding (in)visibility experiences of faculty of color and how they respond to such experiences is crucial to their recruitment, promotion, and retention. Ultimately, diversifying the nation's faculty will require an understanding of the unique stressors they face, including (in)visibility stressors.

2. Method

2.1. *Participants*

Participants were 118 tenure-track faculty of color at a single research-intensive, predominantly White university. At the time of the data collection, 19% of undergraduates at the university were racial minorities, 17% of graduate students were racial minorities, and 24% of the faculty were racial minorities. Similar to national statistics on faculty representation in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013), the faculty at the institution we studied were 14% Asian, 5% Black, 4% Hispanic/Latinx, and 0.7% American Indian. The sample was varied in terms of participant gender (women: 47%, $n = 56$; men: 53%, $n = 62$), race (American Indian: 5%, $n = 6$; Asian: 47%, $n = 56$; Black: 25%, $n = 30$; Hispanic/Latinx: 22%, $n = 26$), nativity (U. S. born: 45%, $n = 53$; non-U.S. born: 55%, $n = 65$), rank (assistant: 36%, $n = 42$; associate: 30%, $n = 35$; full: 35%, $n = 41$), and academic disciplines (non-STEM fields, such as arts and humanities: 36%, $n = 42$; STEM-related fields, such as natural sciences, social sciences, and agriculture and natural resources: 64%, $n = 76$).

2.2. Procedure

We collected data in two phases. In Phase 1, we invited all 176 American Indian, Black, and Hispanic/Latinx tenure-track faculty at the institution to participate. Of those invited, 62 faculty participated (35% response rate). Because of the larger number of Asian tenure-track faculty at the institution, in Phase 2, we used stratified purposeful sampling to recruit faculty from this population that varied by gender, nativity, and STEM vs. non-STEM fields. Using this process, of the 261 Asian tenure-track faculty at the institution, we invited 244 to participate and 56 participants took part in the study (23% response rate).

We first sent eligible faculty members an email informing them that we were conducting a study of underrepresented faculty members with the goal of learning more about their “workplace and work-life experiences;” this email also included the IRB-approved consent form for their review. During the month following the email, we called potential participants to assess their interest, and if willing to participate, schedule their interview. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews typically lasted 1–2 hours Questions covered a range of topics related to faculty experiences within the institution, such as the environment within their department, their perceptions of policies and procedures in their department and the university, strategies they used to deal with career challenges, and factors that contributed to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their jobs. None of the interview questions specifically asked about (in)visibility, tokenism, or other themes presented in this paper.

Interviewers were trained graduate students recruited from social science and education departments. Many of the interviewers had previous experience with interviewing and qualitative methods. All interviewers took part in a two-hour long training in which we reviewed the study procedure and discussed interviewing strategies and best practices (e.g., arranging the space, building rapport, encouraging honest communication, and dealing with challenges during the interview). Interviewers were encouraged to make notes of any unusual circumstances or other important observations during and at the completion of their interviews. Interviewers were matched with the participants along race and gender to increase trust and rapport. However, participants could also request a faculty interviewer ($n = 7$). With permission of participants, interview audio was digitally-recorded, downloaded to a secure server, and reviewed by the first author to ensure they were of good quality. For those who declined to have their interviews recorded ($n = 3$), interviewers took extensive notes during their interviews which were used as the participant's data. Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and then a second researcher checked transcriptions for accuracy. Finally, identifying information was removed from the transcripts, resulting in 1963 pages of deidentified, single-spaced text in Calibri, 11-point font.

2.3. Data coding

Data were initially coded and analyzed using NVIVO by nine members of the research team. Coders were the first author and eight graduate students in social science and education departments, most of whom had prior experience with qualitative data coding. Coders were diverse with respect to race (3 Black, 2 Hispanic/Latinx, 2 Asian, 2 White). The second and third authors, who are two Black women, also later recoded the interviews to analyze discussion around bias and epistemic exclusion. We analyzed the data using thematic analysis, a process in which meaningful patterns within the data are identified as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We first engaged in open coding, in which we coded each phrase or sentence for meaning. Next, we refined and organized codes into categories with similar or related meanings. Categories were documented in a coding manual, which we updated as the process continued. During this process, the coding team met weekly to discuss codes and categories, and differences in interpretation of interviews. Finally, we organized categories into higher order constructs that represented abstract connections between different categories. Throughout the process, we engaged in a constant comparative method in which we examined data for examples that did not fit the extant categories in order to refine the codes as needed.

2.4. Trustworthiness

We took a number of steps to increase the trustworthiness of our data. First, at least two members of the coding team coded each transcript until a minimum interrater reliability of 85% was reached. Disagreements were resolved through the discussion. Across interviews, interrater reliability ranged from 85% to 96%. Although individual member checks were not conducted, we presented the results widely throughout the university. Additionally, we conducted three focus groups with faculty of color in which we presented the results of the study in conjunction with roll-out plans for a university-wide diversity initiative. In these contexts, participants provided feedback that the results did reflect their experiences. Finally, we maintained an audit trail detailing each step of the study and noted any relevant decisions we made.

3. Results

In the results, we discuss six themes across three broad areas — Tokenism, Exclusion, and (In)visibility Responses to Tokenism and Exclusion — in which faculty of color talked about their experiences in ways that relate to issues of (in)visibility. Tokenism captured ways in which faculty of color were used by others as visible minorities, often to promote diversity. Exclusion included discussions of ways in which others treated faculty of color as if they were invisible by excluding them socially (Social Exclusion theme) or by devaluing their scholarship (Epistemic Exclusion theme). (In)visibility Responses included three themes reflecting ways in which faculty of color dealt with experiences of tokenism and exclusion: Strategic Invisibility, Working Harder, and Disengagement. These themes together highlight the challenging and paradoxical nature of visibility concerns for faculty of color.

In the results, we provide quotations to illustrate the themes, but omit information regarding the quoted speaker's race, gender, field, etc., in order to protect their identities; as a result, we use "they" in place of singular gender pronouns (i.e., he or she). We also present the percentage of participants for whom a specific theme was coded as present. To take advantage of the variability within our sample, we examined whether there were gender, racial/ethnic, or nativity differences in whether themes emerged. For analysis by race/ethnicity, we compared underrepresented minority faculty (URM; i.e., Black, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian) to Asian faculty. Asian faculty are the only racial minority group who are numerically overrepresented as university faculty compared to their proportion of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Additionally, Asian faculty are the racial minority group that has experienced the largest increase over the past 20 years, increasing their representation from 5% in 1993 to 10% in 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, 2013). In contrast, over this same period, the increase in representation for other racial minority groups has been more modest (1% for Black faculty, 2% for Hispanic/Latinx faculty, and 0.1% for American Indian faculty). Thus, Asian faculty represent the bulk of the numerical increase of faculty of color (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016) and, as such, may have qualitatively different experiences around their visibility in the academy because token status is partially tied to representation (Kanter, 1977). It is important to note that the goal of the study was to allow themes to emerge from the data (theory generation) rather than verifying previously identified themes (theory verification; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Therefore, although we provide comparisons of the percentage of faculty that mentioned each theme across groups, these quantitative data should be interpreted with caution. Because participants were not asked specific questions assessing whether or not they had each experience, we cannot make inferences as to whether or not other participants shared these experiences, nor can we use these data to extrapolate the prevalence of their occurrence to the larger population of faculty of color (Maxwell, 2010; Neale, Miller, & West, 2014).

3.1. Tokenism

As noted by Kanter (1977), tokenism occurs for individuals who are numerically underrepresented and visible as a distinct group, and can result in a number of negative experiences (e.g., scrutiny, negative stereotyping, role limitations). Within our sample, 17% of participants reported experiencing tokenism. Of these, only one participant was Asian and only one participant was born outside the U.S. In contrast, 31% of URM participants reported experiencing tokenism, 95% of whom were born in the U.S. Women (23%) were somewhat more likely to report tokenism than men (11%).

Participants in our sample discussed feeling like tokens when others used them to represent diversity and when they were asked to participate in stereotyped activities. In such cases, faculty of color were made hypervisible by others, which often resulted in negative emotions about the experiences. Participants felt that others (i.e., colleagues and administrators) in the university used them to make the organization look diverse and appear committed to diversity. Yet some faculty expressed their feeling that the university was insincere in wanting true diversity and instead wanted a token representative to make claims of diversity.

Often these discussions emerged in the context of faculty hiring. For example, one participant described moving to a new unit in the university and learning this department's perspective on faculty hiring: "… The unit that I was brought into also promoted diversity and yet when we had opportunities to hire faculty of color, and especially Latino faculty, some said 'we already have one.'" Another participant described token representation alongside a limited conceptualization of diversity: "People still think that diversity means checking off a little box to declare, 'I'm a woman.' … People are stuck on that check the box thing". Finally, participants also noted that when faculty of color were hired as token representatives, they were unlikely to receive adequate support and mentoring.

> They want the minority so that they could do that little check and send it to the Provost's office, "Look how good we're doing. We hired one." But then they don't give you the support; they don't give you anything when…you need it.

Discussion of token representation also emerged when participants described being asked to engage in extra service so that committees would have racially diverse membership. As one participant described:

> Now if I were vain, I would think, "Oh they want me to do all these things because I'm so good and I'm so valuable," (pause) but on the other hand, I know in some parts, it has to do with the perception of representation: "This committee would look better if we had a [racial minority group] professor on it…".

This participant, like others, described the heavy service demands often shouldered by faculty of color as universities attempt to increase the appearance of diversity and inclusion.

Some faculty described being treated as tokens through role entrapment, being asked to engage in activities that relate to stereotypes of people of color. In particular, they talked about being asked to do "diversity work," in part so that others (i.e., White faculty) would not have to, and in part due to the assumption that as faculty of color, they would want to focus on race and diversity tasks.

> There are expectations that the department has and other faculty have of faculty of color, that [the faculty of color] are going to do the equity and race stuff, which makes it so that [White faculty] don't have to, which pigeonholes faculty of color and the expectation is that, "well, since you're a minority you should be doing this work."

Faculty of color felt constrained by these stereotyped expectations. This participant importantly noted that by shifting responsibility for diversity onto faculty of color, university leaders reduced the burden of organizational change efforts away from White faculty, who presumably could instead focus on their scholarship and teaching. Such tactics increase the number of barriers for tenure and promotion faced by faculty of color: "Being asked to do way too much stuff, in the midst of trying to pursue tenure, because I'm a minority."

In their discussion of tokenism, participants expressed a variety of emotions. Some laughed when describing situations in which they were tokens, yet they used words like "hardship" and "unfortunately" which suggest that their laughter indicated discomfort. Others used words like "feelings of marginalization" and "limited and frustrated" that indicated displeasure with their experiences. Some were resigned to their role as tokens: "I've been the only one [racial group member] for so many experiences, it doesn't surprise me. I just kind of accept it and go on. This is the way it is. This is my reality." And at the extreme, a few participants expressed that they felt used in ways that dehumanized them. As one participant described:

> They only want our carcass. They want diversity because it looks good on paper. So say you have a Latina female, you have an African-American female, or an Asian female, or an Asian male, but the reality of this is that they just want the carcass, because on the inside, they want us to be White middle class. …So I think one of the things that will help in the process is to educate them about what cultural diversity really means, and maybe that will help with the biases.

This participant describes faculty of color as carcasses, in which the university wants their status as racial minorities to be highly visible, while simultaneously devaluing them. Consistent with hypervisibility, the university preferred faculty of color to suppress parts of themselves that challenge White middle class norms rather than allowing faculty of color to express their cultural diversity. Another participant also described feeling dehumanized because of her visible status as a faculty of color:

> I might have a medallion on, they feel it's their right to reach underneath it and pick it up and look at it. …It would be like me walking up and picking up your star or your cross. …I think it's part of the whole mascot thing. If you're not treated like a real person, then somehow you're less valued and it's okay to do those kind of things.

This participant's experience reflects being objectified and perhaps even fetishized because of racial and cultural differences. Analogies of being a carcass or mascot reflect participants' perceptions that they, as faculty of color, are not perceived as fully human, and as a result can be used (e.g., to represent diversity) and their personal boundaries can be violated.

3.2. *Exclusion*

During their interviews, we found evidence of two types of exclusion and isolation. As Kanter (1977) theorized, and consistent with the results of other studies of tokens (e.g., Kelly, 2007; Stroshine & Brandl, 2011), our participants detailed their experiences of social and professional exclusion. In addition, we found evidence of epistemic exclusion, or exclusion that is related to one's scholarship and expertise. Both of these forms of exclusion reflect ways in which faculty of color felt invisible within the workplace; we describe each separately.

3.2.1. *Social and professional exclusion*

Sixteen percent of participants described experiencing social and professional exclusion by other faculty members, with similar rates for women (18%) and men (15%). Social and professional exclusion was reported by 18% of URM participants and 14% of Asian participants; however, interesting nativity differences emerged. Specifically, of the URM faculty reporting social and professional exclusion, 82% were born in the U.S.; however, among Asian participants reporting this type of exclusion, 75% were born outside the U.S.

Because social exclusion was taking place at work, at times it also served to simultaneously function as professional exclusion. Participants talked about feeling isolated, ignored, and excluded in formal professional settings and informal settings, noting that this experience made them feel invisible and devalued. For example, one participant described how "…when you have new faculty members and you are introducing yourselves [at] a faculty meeting, they would not even look at me." Other faculty members described how they felt invisible, inconsequential, and upset when they were excluded from social activities in which other faculty were invited to take part.

> I can't tell you how many times we'd have colleagues go to the door of my suitemates, talk, and invite them to lunch. I could hear all of it and they would just walk out without even a wave at the door to me. And I end up feeling like I don't matter, I don't exist in the same way as everybody else to these people. …There were several years of being very disturbed by the kinds of social interactions my colleagues would have in front of me and never even think of asking me to participate. That social exclusion was very difficult for a long time, especially because I had [just] moved here, and I didn't have a set of friends and I didn't have anything outside of my colleagues.

The exclusion participants described was not only from social events, but also from important work-related communications: “Because I get excluded from so much in the department, I don't have a sense of who gets asked to do what, who talks to who about all the big issues. Nobody asks me so I don't know.”

Participants often tied their social exclusion to their race, but some women of color felt that their exclusion was at times primarily due to their gender and sexism within their departments, as illustrated by the following two participants.

> I think there's definitely the informal old boys' network going on because I can see who would go to lunch and it would be the chair of the department and the other bigwig guy and all the White junior faculty members.

> You are chatting with this male senior colleague and you get to talk about certain kinds of things. Then you later overhear a younger male colleague is talking to this same senior male colleague. …They are exchanging really important matters over a course of three minutes. Those [pieces of] information are not disseminated or conveyed to me because I'm not included in boys talk 'cause [sic] I'm not a boy, I guess.

As the last quote illustrates, socializing with colleagues can be a place where important professional information is communicated. As another participant described, in response to being excluded from lunches: “Well, this is where this stuff happens right? It's like the equivalent of the golf course in academia.” Thus, social exclusion and professional exclusion were often described in tandem, with participants noting that exclusion from informal or social activities had significant negative implications for their career outcomes. Many of our participants articulated the link between the social exclusion they faced and being made to feel invisible, both of which caused them emotional distress.

3.2.2. Epistemic exclusion

Epistemic exclusion is a concept largely absent from psychology, but discussed in philosophy and feminist scholarship (Daukas, 2006; Dotson, 2012, 2014). This form of exclusion refers to the devaluation of certain research topics, methodologies, or types of knowledge production and it creates a decreased sense of belonging for targeted scholars. Epistemic exclusion is common when a scholar's research is outside the disciplinary norms of their field, particularly if their research focuses on marginalized people and communities. As such, it typically targets faculty that embody those marginalized identities, such as faculty of color. Dotson (2012, 2014) theorizes that epistemic exclusion is a thinly veiled form of gatekeeping that serves to exclude people of color from academia. In our sample, participants reported epistemic exclusion occurring through formal mechanisms of evaluation and informal communications, both of which left faculty feeling invisible, devalued, and unwelcome.

In our sample, over 43% of participants (46% of women and 41% of men), reported experiences of epistemic exclusion. Approximately 55% of URM and 30% of Asian faculty reported some form of epistemic exclusion, and we found nativity differences that were similar to those observed for Social and Professional Exclusion. In particular, among URM participants, 82% of those reporting epistemic exclusion were born in the U.S. However, for Asians reporting epistemic exclusion, 88% were born outside the U.S.

Formally, evaluations of scholarship were filtered through seemingly “objective” assessment metrics (e.g., number of publications, journal impact factors, and the amount and source of extramural grant funding; Gruber, 2014). However, these hierarchies often privileged traditional research and cast the scholarship of faculty of color as lower in quality, often because they were more likely to study ethnic/racial/minority issues. Such topics are conspicuously absent from mainstream journals (Diaz & Bergman, 2013), and thus typically published in journals that focus on these issues (Medina & Luna, 2000; Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). Our faculty participants reported that these “specialized” journals were not valued as highly as “mainstream” journals, resulting in their publications being devalued by colleagues and in the promotion and tenure process. Similarly, some participants noted that the research methods that best suited their research topics were also deemed as inferior to others, such as qualitative, community, applied, and social justice-oriented work. These concepts are captured by the following quote demonstrating the feeling of marginalization resulting from evaluation methods that are not inclusive of diverse topics and methods:

> They're trying to come up with crystal clear rubrics for evaluating scholarship but everything they're coming up with I find more and more alienating…the department is making a deliberate declaration to go in the direction of being more and more traditional. …They're trying to determine through a combination of impact factors, and citations and all these things, which citations really matter and which one's don't. …That's going to *always* leave people who do non-traditional research on the margins, always.

Faculty in STEM fields noted that their scholarship was not valued unless they were able to acquire large grants to fund their work. One participant described, “In my department, first and foremost you're valued if you bring in money. So in that sense, no, I'm not valued right now, because I haven't brought in money.” Another participant noted the change in how they were viewed because of their grant funding: “[My] department values me… now. But on the other hand, you have to see what I bring in — (whispers) I brought in 1.4 million [dollars].” This participant implies that the shift to being valued not only required grant funding, but their value was due to the significant size of the grant.

Participants also felt that higher standards were applied to them as compared to their White colleagues, as when one individual described: “There are double standards in how you are viewed, assessed, treated, and promoted or not promoted [compared to] White colleagues.” Participants felt that the standards for success for faculty of color were moving targets that could never be achieved, reflecting another form of epistemic gatekeeping. Tying the expectations of performance to their status as the sole member of a specific gender-racial group member in their department, another participant said: “The environment here is prove that you're worth it. And prove over and over. ‘Yeah you did this last year, can you still do it this year?’ In other words, you never do enough.”

Informally, epistemic exclusion was communicated through messages to and about faculty of color that demonstrated that they are not perceived as legitimate scholars, despite evidence of success. Dotson (2012, 2014) refers to this as exclusion via exceptionalism, where faculty of color have successfully navigated, and even exceeded, standards for success, but continue to be treated as if their accomplishments are insignificant. For example, one participant said, "I'm the first faculty in the history of the department to be the principal investigator on a grant from [federal funding agency]. And they make comments like, 'Well, [participant's name] got it because [participant's name] got a year of research leave.'" Another participant similarly described a lack of recognition of their scholarly activities: "The program that I run has been practically removed from the webpage. I have 5 times, 10 times the grant funding of the rest of the department combined. It's just, it's crazy." Illustrating a perceived lack of legitimacy, this participant later noted: "They treat me like I somehow snuck in the back door and I'm trying to pull a fast one on them."

Epistemic exclusion was also communicated as a lack of comprehension of their work, where other faculty expressed not understanding their scholarship and being unable to see its importance or contribution. One participant described the assessment of their research: "I am treated like the work I do is ancillary, people not really getting it, not being able to understand why it's important, and being dismissive about it." A lack of comprehension of the scholarship engaged in by faculty of color is a way of devaluing their contribution. Rather than describing research one does not understand as innovative and ground-breaking, participants report that their colleagues were disdainful of the importance of their scholarship, and unwilling to do the work to learn more about it.

3.3. (In)visibility responses to tokenism and exclusion

The faculty of color in our study had many different responses to being treated as tokens within the academy. Here, we focus on three responses that are significant for the visibility of faculty of color in the academic workplace: Strategic Invisibility, Working Harder, and Disengagement.

3.3.1. Strategic invisibility

Of the three (in)visibility responses, strategic invisibility was most commonly described, emerging for 12% of participants. Strategic invisibility describes agentic behaviors in which individuals manage the risk of being mistreated (e.g., stigmatization, rejection) by choosing to make themselves invisible (Lollar, 2015). With this strategy, individuals disengage with the parts of the workplace in which they have experienced or fear they will experience marginalization, devaluation, or mistreatment, yet remain engaged with their academic work - teaching, research, or community engagement. Descriptions of the use of this strategy often followed questions about their treatment at work (e.g., "What is the environment like in your department?"; "Have you been treated with civility or incivility?"; "Have you personally experienced harassment or discrimination?"). This strategy was more often used by women (19%) than men (5%), and slightly more commonly reported by URM faculty (15%) than Asian faculty (9%). Among URM faculty reporting strategic invisibility, 89% were born in the U.S. whereas among Asian faculty reporting it, 80% were born outside the U.S.

One way in which strategic invisibility was described by participants was "being off the radar screen" as illustrated by the following description of incivility:

> In a faculty meeting this one woman was kind of rude to me and then one of my colleagues said, "Well that's because you're always doing things that are always in the public eye." And I was like, "I do? I am?" (Laughs) I thought I was pretty invisible. I was trying to stay off everybody's radar screen. … I just try to stay off the radar screen and do my thing.

This participant describes how they tried not to be noticed by colleagues, to avoid situations in which others subjected their community-engaged scholarly activities to heightened scrutiny. And yet this faculty member remains engaged with their work ("do my thing").

Others remained involved in their scholarship but made themselves physically absent from the workplace. For example, when asked if they had experienced any incivility, one participant said:

> No, but I think it's because I try to be invisible. I try not to put myself in those situations. I try to stay either in my office or outside, like literally out of the building altogether.

Following a discussion of how colleagues discounted their success and viewed their salary as unearned, another participant described their type of research facilitating their absence.

> I don't put myself in situations-, I'm usually by myself doing my work, I'm not in situations where I have to interact with people who don't want to interact with me. I'm not in the office. I'm in the field, I'm doing research, I'm collecting data, I'm with youth, because this is what my job is about.

Still others talked about how they limited their engagement with colleagues, forming an invisible barrier between coworkers and themselves. For example, one person described how they avoided "office politics" and discrimination:

> I come here, I do my work. I'm cordial with people - you know "how are you doing?" But I don't spend too much time on "how are things at home?" and "how are the kids?" I try to keep my interactions brief but pleasant.

Another participant expressed a similar response to experiences of social and professional exclusion:

> Distancing myself from the department is obviously a coping strategy. I had to get over feeling hurt when my colleagues would talk about getting together on the weekend in front of me, even though I wasn't invited.

Thus, participants using strategic invisibility avoided interactions with individuals and situations in which they might experience exclusion or other types of mistreatment, while remaining engaged in their scholarship.

3.3.2. *Working harder*

Nine percent of faculty described that to address experiences of tokenism and exclusion (especially epistemic), their response was to increase their engagement in scholarly activities so as to be perceived as legitimate scholars, equal to their White colleagues. This theme emerged at similar rates for women (11%) and men (8%), and for URM faculty (55%) and Asian faculty (45%). As with strategic invisibility, most of the URM faculty reporting this tactic were born in the U.S. (67%) whereas all of the Asian faculty doing so were born outside the U.S.

In a typical response of working harder to prove their worth to others, one participant said:

> The biggest strategy that I've used is to publish as much as I can. I think that in a lot of senses, that's the only strategy that works if you're a person of color and if you're a woman. If you don't meet and go beyond expectations then …you'll always be vulnerable to somebody suggesting that you haven't done enough or you're not doing the same kind of work. So the thing I've done is be very active publishing and very active doing grant funded research.

Similarly, another faculty member described use of this strategy as a response to others' perceptions of them: “There're some people who wonder why I'm here, why I was hired. Is it because they need a [racial minority] person in here? …So I hold myself to higher standards to make sure people have nothing to say.”

An international faculty participant talked about having to prove themself to their industry partners, noting that a number of identities led them to be perceived as less competent:

> It takes extra work to prove yourself because the first perception is what do you know about industry? Based on your appearance or your speaking or origin and that is definitely there. And …then we understand that opportunities may not be as many because by default you're not looking at someone who would be part of that club or who would know about that industry.

Thus, faculty of color described having to work harder than others to overcome negative stereotypes about their racial/ethnic group (along with stereotypes about other identities) and to compensate for additional demands due to tokenism. That is, individuals attempted to increase their positive visibility and gain recognition for their scholarly activities.

3.3.3. *Disengagement*

Disengagement traditionally involves the withdrawal of effort from a domain (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Only three participants (3%) described this strategy, and none of them talked about personally disengaging from academia. This may be expected, since our participants were those individuals who persisted despite challenging experiences and were those individuals willing to talk about their experiences (in contrast to those who had already disengaged and might not have been willing to do so). Instead, our participants talked about other faculty of color becoming disengaged. For example, one participant described her colleagues' disengagement: “She was minority, natively born, but minority, and as soon as she said something outspoken, she was marginalized. She had no position in the department. Then she started to lose interest in academia.” Another participant described a colleague who had similarly disengaged: “An African American male in the department who I believe was probably broken long before I got here and never speaks, which is a sheer sign of abuse.” The participant later noted, “he doesn't write at all anymore.” Although infrequent in our sample, disengagement is the ultimate form of invisibility, as individuals remove themselves from a negative work environment.

4. Discussion

The results of our study suggest that issues of visibility and invisibility are central to understanding the experiences of faculty of color. We note that our results are not exhaustive of the types of experiences faced by faculty of color because of their low numbers and low status within academia. We see evidence of many other forms of mistreatment (e.g., discrimination, incivility) and coping responses (e.g., confrontation) within our data. The six themes we presented here, however, were those in which issues of (in) visibility were at the forefront and sites in which faculty articulated the connection between their experiences and their visibility.

As tokens, faculty of color were made hypervisible because their racial distinctiveness was used to create the impression that the university was a diverse and welcoming space. Although many faculty of color expressed their sincere commitment to diversity and to supporting underrepresented students, there was some resentment of how their minority status could be appropriated and taken advantage of. Participants acknowledged how these expectations, based on their minority status, were based on biases and stereotypes, and limited the types of activities that others expected of them or the types of opportunities offered to them (e.g., diversity committee work). At the same time that faculty of color were asked to take on additional service demands that were not acknowledged or rewarded, they felt that the institution was not interested in how their distinctive experiences could inform and contribute to policies and practices. Demands related to tokenism have been described as “cultural taxation” (Padilla, 1994) which refers to the additional burdens placed on faculty of color that capitalize on their visibility and distinctiveness but simultaneously take away resources (i.e., time, energy) that could be used to achieve professional success (e.g., publications, teaching; Stanley, 2006).

In contrast, we found that faculty of color were made to feel invisible through experiences of exclusion. Specifically, participants described being excluded from social activities that build community and from important communications, because of their race, and for women because of their gender as well. Kanter (1977) theorized that exclusion is a consequence of majority group members overestimating their similarity with each other and exaggerating their differences from minority group members. If so, women of color may experience exclusion based on both their race and gender, whereas men of color may experience some gender privilege that gives them some limited access to the 'old boys' network' such that they experience exclusion due to race but not gender.

Faculty of color were also excluded and made invisible epistemically, as the types of scholarship they engaged in were not perceived as valid and of quality. As noted by scholars such as Lewis and Simpson (2012), (in)visibility is connected to power such that it is controlled by the dominant group (i.e., White faculty and administrators), and often disadvantages members of the minority group (i.e., faculty of color) who find it difficult to change dominant narratives about their group and effect organizational change that would reduce power differences. Epistemic exclusion renders faculty of color in a Catch-22; their legitimacy as scholars and academics is hard to achieve because their successes are invisible (i.e., ignored or downplayed), yet any perceived failures are noticed and magnified due to the heightened scrutiny that results from their hypervisibility as people of color. Our results suggest that when individuals cannot control their visibility and are made hypervisible or invisible by others, they may experience emotional distress and a lack of belonging.

However, some faculty of color chose to use active strategies (i.e., strategic invisibility and working harder) that decreased or increased their visibility as a means for countering the ways that others made them hypervisible or invisible. Overall, compared to working harder and disengagement, strategic invisibility appears to be the response that best maximized positive outcomes and minimized costs. When using this strategy, faculty remained engaged in their work, and thus maintained the benefits afforded to faculty members, such as stable employment, academic freedom, and mental stimulation. Yet, by using strategic invisibility, individuals were no longer engaged with the people or the context in which their token treatment or exclusion occurred. Lollar (2015) suggests that when attempts to increase one's visibility are potentially problematic (e.g., unsafe), strategic invisibility can be a form of resistance. When using strategic invisibility, the individual can simultaneously acknowledge the constraints and limitations of the context while engaging in a behavior that provides agency. Nevertheless, strategic invisibility is not without costs. Becoming invisible does not remove the psychological harm caused by exclusion, nor with being aware of how faculty of color are negatively viewed — what Granfield (1991) called the "hidden injury" of stigmatization. Further, by disengaging with colleagues, individuals are not able to develop positive relationships with colleagues who might be friends, supports, or allies. And because strategic invisibility is an individual-level behavior, it does nothing to eliminate the poor workplace climate, prejudice, and bias that result in social exclusion, epistemic exclusion, and other forms of mistreatment experienced by minority groups.

Working harder, as Kanter (1977) noted, is a response to performance pressures due to one's heightened visibility and uniqueness. This response to tokenism and exclusion seeks to increase individuals' positive visibility and reduce the extent to which others attach racial and/or gender stereotypes to them. When individuals work harder to prove their worth, they may have professional success and greater chances for mobility to more supportive environments. However, although working harder may lead to positive outcomes for individual faculty members, the constant scrutiny and pressure to outperform can have negative psychological and health effects. Further, rather than changing stereotypes about one's group, overperformance by individual faculty members may lead others to view them as subtypes or exceptions to their group, rather than changing overall group stereotypes (Richards & Hewstone, 2001). Finally, since epistemic exclusion occurred even when individuals had met stated expectations, exclusion may persist despite overperformance. Thus, working harder may not address the challenge of exclusion. Further, because this strategy usually involves remaining engaged with colleagues, faculty who use this strategy may be at risk for continued tokenism and exclusion.

Within our sample, disengagement was uncommon and associated with the worst professional outcomes. Disengagement is not a strategy that is done purposefully, but rather is typically a reaction to negative experiences within a domain or context (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Although disengagement can be effective in removing an individual from a negative work environment, the withdrawal of effort and sense of self also makes success in academia unlikely. Further, a consequence of disengagement may be to decrease the visibility of the individual, which decreases the visibility of faculty of color more generally and may reinforce perceptions that they are not well-suited to academia.

When examining variability within our sample, interesting patterns of results emerged across the themes. We found that women were more likely than men to report experiences of tokenism and were more likely to use strategic invisibility; no other differences by gender emerged. The women of color in our sample may have been particularly hypervisible, due to their distinctiveness along both race and gender. Thus, the university might have especially sought out women of color as representatives of diversity because they would signal the institution's commitment to both gender and racial diversity. The use of strategic invisibility may have been perceived as an effective way to reduce their hypervisibility without sacrificing their scholarship. We also found that for tokenism, exclusion (both types), strategic invisibility, and working harder, the URM faculty reporting these themes were largely U.S. born whereas the Asian faculty doing so were primarily those born outside of the U.S. This pattern suggests that these groups are perceived as distinctive from foreign born URM faculty and U.S. born Asian faculty, who may be perceived as better fitting the norms and stereotypes of the university context. In particular, U.S. born Asian faculty, as targets of the model minority stereotype, may be viewed as possessing the intellect and drive needed for academia without the language differences that non-U.S. born Asian faculty may be thought to have (Chou & Feagin, 2015; Ghavami & Peplau, 2013). Similarly, non-U.S. born URM faculty may be thought of as exceptions to the negative intellectual stereotypes commonly imposed on U.S. born Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian people (Ghavami & Peplau, 2013).

4.1. Addressing workplace (in)visibility for faculty of color

Kanter's (1977) original theory of proportional representation suggested that the remedy for the negative token stressors faced by minority group members was to increase group size until their numbers were closer to being balanced with those of majority group members (35% representation or higher). But this assertion has been challenged as an insufficient condition for change. For example, Danaher and Branscombe (2010) suggested that tokens are allowed into a context by majority group members because doing so maintains the legitimacy of the system and obscures the actual discriminatory nature of the setting (e.g., we have a few faculty of color so it is clear that we do not discriminate against this group). Because such systems appear fair, majority and minority group members may not see the need for change. Additionally, the mistreatment of tokens is due to their low status as well as their low numbers, as evidenced by studies finding that high status minority group members (e.g., male nurses) often have positive experiences in their organizations (Heikes, 1991; Williams, 1992, 2013; Yoder & Schleicher, 1996). Finally, some have suggested that some of the negative treatment of tokens (e.g., women, people of color) is due to the fact that their presence challenges the power and status of majority group members (e.g., men, White people; Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). If so, to the extent that increasing the number of low status individuals is threatening to majority group members, increased exclusionary behaviors, gatekeeping, and backlash will likely occur toward minority group members (Krook, 2015; Yoder, 2002).

Thus, in addition to attempting to increase the number of faculty of color in the academy, universities need to alter reward and incentive structures that recognize and value the scholarship and service of faculty of color (Turner et al., 2008). By doing so, faculty of color could be made more visible as legitimate scholars rather than being made hypervisible as mere token representatives of diversity. Further, although universities may seek to have visible racial diversity within the faculty and on committees to create positive organizational change, placing the responsibility for doing so on faculty of color, who lack power and voice, is unreasonable and is unlikely to create buy-in from the larger university community. Thus, White faculty members must participate in efforts to diversify the academy. Creating a climate supportive of diversity can also improve outcomes by providing faculty of color with additional resources for coping with stressors (Newman, Nielsen, Smyth, Hirst, & Kennedy, 2018) and promoting job satisfaction (Holder & Vaux, 1998).

Because social exclusion often is associated with missing out on professional interactions, institutions might also promote positive intergroup interactions to reduce the extent to which faculty of color are regarded as unlike White faculty. Although exclusion may reflect biased and discriminatory behaviors and systems, it can also be an outgrowth of ingroup favoritism that increases positive impressions and actions toward ingroup members (Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014). Therefore, creating a larger social identity that includes both White faculty and faculty of color might alter beliefs about who is an ingroup member. In sum, to create organizational change around faculty diversity, it is important to increase the number of faculty of color as well as their power, status, and legitimacy.

4.2. Strengths, limitations, and future directions

This study is unique in its scope, breadth, and size. It provided us with incredibly rich data which provide insights into the (in) visibility experiences of faculty of color. The large number of faculty members allowed us to examine variability in our sample along a number of dimensions that provided nuance to our results and the potential to develop organizational change programs tailored to the needs and experiences of specific groups of faculty of color. At the same time, the size and the scope of the study required a great deal of resources, both financial and in terms of time and labor, and we recognize that researchers at smaller institutions might not be able to engage in this type of project. Further, the fact that our participants were drawn from a single institution may create limitations to the generalizability of our results. Our findings may reflect the particular geographic location, size, or culture of the university we studied. Yet, we suspect that the experiences of our participants are similar to those of other faculty of color, particularly those at large, predominantly White research-intensive institutions.

Our results suggest a number of avenues for future studies in this area. Similar studies at other universities would address the issues of generalizability. In particular, our most novel themes were epistemic exclusion and strategic invisibility and additional studies focused specifically on these forms of faculty (in)visibility would be fruitful. It would also be interesting if future studies examined experiences of faculty of color at minority serving institutions where faculty of color may not be underrepresented. A comparison of faculty of color at predominantly White institutions with those at minority serving institutions would allow us to disentangle some of the factors that have been theorized to account for tokenism and token stress, such as numerical representation and organizational culture.

5. Conclusions

Our results suggest that hypervisibility (i.e., tokenism) and invisibility (i.e., exclusion) are negatively experienced by faculty of color. Consistent with the minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), these forms of (in)visibility are stressors experienced because of faculty members' social identities as women and men of color, and as stressors, they have psychological and work consequences. To counter these experiences, some faculty of color responded strategically to increase their positive visibility by working harder to prove their value, or by avoiding negative experiences within the institution through strategic invisibility. We suggest that a goal for colleges and universities should be to create environments in which faculty of color experience positive visibility, that is, for them to have recognition, legitimacy, and authority rather than the “wrong” type of visibility associated with hypervisibility (Stead, 2013). Further, for visibility to be positive, individuals must have control over their image and be recognized in ways that affirm their important identities (e.g., academic).

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