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"We Hear You, We See You, and We Are With You." An Analysis of NPC Sorority Chapter Social Media Messages

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"WE HEAR YOU, WE SEE YOU, AND WE ARE WITH YOU." AN ANALYSIS OF NPC SORORITY CHAPTER SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

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In this critical discourse analysis, we examined the most popular non-video-based social media platforms of 33 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sorority chapters. This study includes chapters at or approaching 25% "racially/ethnically diverse" membership, a term, and status determined by NPC and campus-based advisors. We analyzed posts from 2019-2022 and how, if at all, these sororities espoused diversity, equity, and/or inclusion (DEI) in their posts. Notable findings involve a spike in DEI posts during June 2020 and a signal of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer(+) identities and issues.

Keywords: sorority/fraternity life; diversity, equity, and inclusion; social media; racial justice; LGBTQ+

In popular culture, there are existing questions about historically and predominately white sororities and fraternities (HPWSFs) and their efforts and actions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Between racist party themes and discriminatory social endeavors (Garcia et al., 2023; Garcia & Shirley, 2019; Gillon et al., 2019) to questions about inclusive recruitment efforts (Beaird et al., 2021; Ispa-Landa & Risman, 2021), HPWSs specifically have received attention for racist, classist, sexist, and transphobic behaviors (e.g., see Barnes et al., 2021; Garcia, 2019; Goodman & Garcia, 2021; Literate & Hodge, 2011; Ray & Rosow, 2012; Rhoads, 1995; Soria & Martin, 2013). Some of these realities came more directly into light in 2020 when people called on colleges and universities to abolish sorority and fraternity life (SFL) in full (Nguyen, 2020). As such, over the past several years, there has been an uptick in research involving SFL students and communities and their experiences and challenges in relation to DEI and social justice (e.g., see Beaird et al., 2021; Dodge et al., 2019; Duran & Garcia, 2021a, 2021b; Garcia & Shirley, 2019; Goodman et al., 2023; Roland & Matthews, 2023).

We ground our understanding of DEI in AFA's (n.d.) position statement on and definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. For example, diversity is defined as recognizing, understanding, and appreciating human characteristics, backgrounds, and cultures different from one's own; this includes social identities and lived experiences (AFA, n.d.). Equity is defined as achieving equal outcomes for

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all, as well as applying different resources based on organizational and human characteristics (AFA, n.d.). Finally, inclusion is "the intentional effort to cultivate a sense of belonging" (AFA, n.d., para 5). While there are competing understandings of what DEI is and can be in HPWSFs, we also center(ed) ways power and privilege are displayed as related to DEI in organizational and fraternal contexts.

Nested in a larger qualitative study about National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sorority members' experiences with DEI, for this article, we wondered what HPWSs espoused about DEI in online spaces like popular social media. Methodologically, the social media component was added to the study because it emerged during participant interviews as an integral way NPC sorority members expressed their interest and commitment to DEI issues. Further, past research has noted that some sorority social media accounts have twice as many followers and 'likes' than fraternity accounts and that sororities tend(ed) to use social media more than their fraternity peers (Taylor & McArdle, 2018). To conduct this iteration of our research, we asked: (1) *What messages did HPWSs post over three years, and* (2) *in what ways (or not) did those messages espouse elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion?* To better respond to these questions, we enlisted critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand how social media contributes to and reproduces white hegemony through power and the social organization of NPC sororities (Given, 2008). By looking at how language-in-use (discourse) is structured and how images are used to convey the meaning of socially rooted shared group norms, beliefs, and attitudes, CDA attempts to capture the interconnectedness of power, discourse, and social organizations (Given, 2008). The following sections contain a brief review of relevant literature, study outline, findings and implications, and recommendations for practice and research.

Literature Review

Although the body of scholarship on SFL and HPWSFs is vast (Biddix et al., 2014), the literature on DEI issues in SFL and HPWSFs specifically has been sparse. However, in the last ten years, scholars have increased research efforts to explore DEI issues in SFL and HPWSFs (e.g., Garcia & Shirley, 2019; Gillon et al., 2019; Goodman et al., 2023; Goodman & Garcia, 2021; Martin et al., 2015; Parker & Pascarella, 2018). Over time, scholars have sought to examine the ways HPWSFs are exclusionary in nature. For example, sexism (Harris & Schmalz, 2016; Ispa-Landa & Risman, 2021; Rhoads, 1995), racism (Gillon et al., 2019), antisemitism (Sasso & Davis, 2022; Sales, 2021), and homophobia and transphobia (Duran & Garcia, 2021a, 2021b; Goodman et al., 2023; Goodman & Garcia, 2021) are ways scholars have brought to light systems of inequity, exclusion, and injustice in SFL. More recently, scholars have taken a look at how social media is part of sorority (and fraternity) life and what organizations signal via online platforms (e.g., Beaird et al., 2021; Garcia et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2023; Goodman & Garcia,

2021; Ortiz & Thompson, 2020; Roland & Matthews, 2023; Thompson & Ortiz, 2016).

Most relevant to our research, Beaird and colleagues (2021) approached the examination of social media to explore how NPC sororities engage in and reinforce harmful stereotypes critically. Their study examined the top 100 most viewed NPC chapter recruitment videos and found that these videos cast signals about gender, race, and social class (Beaird et al., 2021). Specifically, the videos affirmed the notion that NPC sororities were all white organizations and conveyed activities associated with high socioeconomic status and expectations of women to be featured on camera in swimsuits and other revealing outfits (Beaird et al., 2021). Most recently, Roland and Matthews (2023) conducted a critical content analysis of all 26 NPC sorority websites and Facebook pages between May 25, 2020, through May 25, 2021. The authors looked specifically at posts pertaining to events of Summer 2020, including sentiments involving race and racism (Roland & Matthews, 2023). Key findings included organizations calling for collective and individual attention to racism and its impact on society, as well as how organizational histories uphold or challenge racism (Roland & Matthews, 2023).

Roland and Matthews (2023) suggested that posts such as the ones in their study reinforced a performative, virtue-signaling style of engagement for members. Similarly, Goodman et al. (2023) found that sorority/fraternity engagement with June as Pride Month lacked nuance and appeared as a type of *rainbow washing* wherein organizations made "Happy Pride" posts or added rainbow colors to organization imagery. Perhaps these findings also align with work done by Ortiz and Thompson (2020), who found that the more students identified with their sorority, the more they subscribed to stereotypical depictions of sorority women. In this paper, we sought to extend prior literature by examining HPWS' social media posts over a multi-year period and to examine the types of DEI messages or statements included (or omitted) in posts. To do so in research, we next overview significant elements of our study.

Study Overview

This work stems from a larger research study on NPC students' experiences with DEI issues. In the larger study, researchers asked NPC and its member organizations to nominate chapters they believed were at or approaching 25% "racially/ethnically diverse"[1] membership at predominantly white institutions (e.g., sorority women who were members of an NPC organization and who did not identify as white). Although this is not an ideal way of identifying chapters with a critical mass of Students of Color, one issue we ran into as researchers was that the inter/national organizations did not consistently track data on

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[1] We note this terminology as a way to describe how we came to these organizations; from this point forward, we use the term, "racially diverse," to describe the organizations that were part of this study.

members' racial and/or ethnic identity. Further, many of the campuses where we interviewed students also did not track this demographic data on members. Interestingly, identifying this gap in data availability and tracking is an important, albeit unintended, finding of this study. The following sections contain an overview of the methodology and methods used for the purpose of this study and article. As a research team, we made an intentional decision not to use a driving theoretical frame for this CDA project in order to allow social media posts and images to unfold without preconceived ideas of what we might find (e.g., see Johnson & Christensen, 2014); further, we engaged with the *critical* nature of CDA as a sort of conceptual framework that enabled us to interrogate social issues involving DEI in this discourse. Additionally, we offer a positionality and epistemological point of view that guide our approach to this research and our role(s) within it.

Methodology

Critical theories, such as CDA, aim to interrogate and expose systems of power and oppression that humanize some and dehumanize others (Bhattacharya, 2017; Rogers, 2011; Stewart, 2022). Systems of power are maintained and reproduced through stories and represent "the teller's epistemic (beliefs about knowledge), ontological (beliefs about reality), and axiological (beliefs about value/s) commitments (i.e., paradigms)" (Stewart, 2022, p. 551). The language-in-use (discourse) by "elites play an instrumental role in the shaping of public opinion and the production and maintenance of discriminatory and biased beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies" (Given, 2008, p. 146). As Jäger (2001) suggested, "discourses exercise power" (p. 37). Moreover, this discourse, especially by elite-controlled social media, is meant to disseminate the beliefs and norms through public communication (Given, 2008). The goal of critical scholarship is to take up these elite-controlled stories, which represent social practices, to offer not only a critique but also to identify ways of resistance and re-vision systems that focus on liberation and justice (Bhattacharya, 2017; Given, 2008).

We enlisted CDA to unearth the relationship between language and ideology (Fairclough, 2010). Specifically, we used CDA to focus on addressing social problems (Rogers, 2011) and to gain an understanding of "how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge in organizational social institutions" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 7). Investigations using CDA start with naming the social issue under scrutiny, in this case white hegemonic behaviors, specifically through the use of social media as a means of discursive manifestations (Given, 2008), which we have identified as specifically the social media posts through the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In this context, SFL is an ideal 'location' to do this type of work; in particular, this concerns HPWSs. The purpose of this study was to identify what HPWSs conveyed through their discourse of DEI on their social media platforms. Our CDA approach is grounded in a purely inductive analysis of how power is displayed in the language/images of social media posts rather than a deductive analysis informed by a particular theory. While we examined

these posts through lenses that relate to power, privilege, and oppression (e.g., see the introduction and our grounding of DEI), we also acknowledge that after a review of posts, there were largely missing elements related to topics like Christian hegemony, ableism, classism, colorism, and different intersections of identity.

Methods

During the Fall of 2021, NPC shared a list of nominated chapters with the researchers and the research team began recruiting participants using that list. According to NPC and their member organizations, these chapters were thought to have a membership at or approaching 25% of their members as individuals who would be considered racially diverse. However, many inter/national organizations shared that they do not collect data on members' race or ethnicity, so obtaining an accurate list of racially diverse chapters using this criterion presented a challenge. Further, it became clear to researchers throughout the study that the lack of clarity around membership demographics, both at the inter/national organization level and at the institution level, in these organizations is a barrier to effective DEI work. In other words, it is difficult to program, educate, and attend to the needs of a diverse sorority community if institutions and inter/national organizations do not know who their members are demographically. Regardless, their view of who is racially diverse made up for the sample of our review (see Table 1).

Detailed information on the methods used in the overarching study can be obtained from the report titled, *Understanding NPC Sorority Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Diverse Chapters at Predominantly White Institutions* (Martin et al., 2023). In this paper, we discuss the methods used specifically for the social media CDA aspect of the study. During interviews for the larger study, elements associated with social media came to light. They prompted us also to examine the most popular non-video platform of each organization in our sample. Because Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are among the most popular non-video platforms (Pew Research Center, 2021; Sorensen et al., 2017), we chose the most followed of these to examine. We looked at 33 chapters across 27 schools and 10 NPC organizations. These data are stored in a password-protected online file accessible only to the three researchers. Chapters and institutions were assigned pseudonyms using the broad geographic region where the institution was located to maintain the anonymity we assured our participants we would protect. Once we identified the platform, we pulled all the typed copy into an Excel document organized by chapter and date. We then saved all photos associated with posts in a folder organized by chapter name and date. Analyses included a deep review of words and images, with specific focus on a social problem with a semiotic aspect (Fairclough, 2001). We identified posts that had to do with various elements of DEI, specifically with a relationship to gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, religious difference, and more broad elements of social justice, if named or espoused in the posts. Within our analyses,

we hold close to Fairclough's (2001) assertion that "discourse is ideological in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination" (p. 126). Because our approach to CDA was problem-based (Fairclough, 2001), there was constant engagement between the research team as a way to ignite reflexivity in the process (Jones et al., 2014). This included researcher discussions around what constitutes a "DEI-related" post, and how we made sense of what we read and saw in posts.

Table 1

Institutions and NPC Organizations and Pseudonyms

Institution	NPC Organization(s)
East Coast 1	NPC 10
East Coast 2	NPC 1
East Coast 3	NPC 10
Midwest 1	NPC 4, NPC 7, NPC 8
Midwest 2	NPC 4
Midwest 3	NPC 4
Midwest 4	NPC 10
Midwest 5	NPC 8
Midwest 6	NPC 3
Northeast 1	NPC 2
Northeast 2	NPC 2
Northeast 3	NPC 6, NPC 9, NPC 10
Northeast 4	NPC 9
Northwest 1	NPC 4
Northwest 2	NPC 5
Northwest 3	NPC 7
Southeast 1	NPC 8
Southeast 2	NPC 7
Southern 1	NPC 3
Southern 2	NPC 3
Southern 3	NPC 5
Southwest 1	NPC 8
West Coast 1	NPC 4
West Coast 2	NPC 8
West Coast 3	NPC 8
West Coast 4	NPC 3, NPC 8
West Coast 5	NPC 5
West Coast 6	NPC 5

Positioning and Limitations

We arrived at this research each as members of sororities/fraternities, and having received grant funding from the Timothy J. Piazza Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research and Reform (Piazza Center). As we reflect on our position within this research, we also draw out some limitations that are both part of our position(ing) and the research process itself. One such positioning *and* limitation is that the starting point of our work came from the NPC-designation of racially diverse chapters. However, we operated independently from NPC and the Piazza Center, and were mindful to engage in peer-debriefing among the research team as a way to further engage in the trustworthiness of the research (e.g., see Jones et al., 2014). Peer-debriefing, in this case, meant not just engaging about the data but also naming the structure of our connection to the Piazza Center and NPC and resisting any feelings of debt to the organizations that funded and supported this research. Having been former student affairs professionals and campus-based advisors, we also understand our positioning as researchers with insider knowledge of sorority and fraternity campus communities. This allowed us to find social media posts, and to understand the language of chapter designations associated with the nominated organizations themselves. Finally, we also must address the reality that the data we examined were public discourses and were inherently limited by what organizations did–and did not–post. As such, we made sense of these data in our findings and yet, were still limited by what we were able to access. Further, social media posts, while reflecting some of an organization's and its members' values and commitments, cannot solely reflect the entirety of an organization's thoughts, behaviors, and espousal of DEI efforts. It is but one component of a much larger puzzle.

Findings

In this section, we present our key findings from this study. Overall, we found that social media posts lacked depth and nuance when describing people, events, and values. For example, when considering service and philanthropy, many chapters posted event photos and focused more on the theme of the programming rather than the cause itself. However, some did tend to these issues of power and oppression. In one case, a chapter talked about the mission of a local organization that inspires young girls. The chapter named explicitly notions of gender, economic, and social barriers in the way of girls' ability to thrive in society. Similarly, nearly all chapters posted about holidays like International Women's Day, yet few named some explicit challenges women face in society. One organization mentioned gender biases and inequities and the need for "advancing womanhood" as part of a programmatic and everyday commitment espoused within the organization.

Some posts were about holidays or notable periods of time (e.g., Diwali, Navratri). Posts related to DEI also lacked depth around the nuance(s) associated with identity. For example, only one chapter

posted about Native/Indigenous Peoples, four posted about June-teenth, and only one posted about engagement and relationships to non-NPC or non-Interfraternity Council (IFC) organizations and councils (e.g., National Pan-Hellenic Council [NPHC], Multicultural Greek Council [MGC], "United" Greek Council [UGC]). Many chapters featured member's stories about being "accepted" and "included," but rarely expanded on what these terms meant for those members (outside of "empowering women" framing).

Notably, and illuminated in the following two subsections, we found that HPWSs in our sample posted about racial justice in June 2020, around and following the time George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis, Minnesota police officers. Very few, if any, chapters posted about racial issues in the years we reviewed prior to June 2020, and for those that did, posts lacked explicit mentions of structural racism and the ways the organization and chapter were complicit as historically and/or predominantly white. Additionally, we found several chapters posting photos and branding changes to signal some inclusion value of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer(+) (LGBTQ+) issues and identities.

June 2020 Spike

In mass, yet in different ways, chapters posted in May/June 2020 about police brutality and the murders of multiple Black individuals at the hands of police. For many, this was a single post, with little or no follow-up thereafter. East Coast 3/NPC 10 started their post with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), that read, "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it." This quote was followed by their "solidarity" with the Black community. East Coast 3/NPC 10 and others used phrases like, "We hear you, we see you, and we are with you." Chapters encouraged members to use their "voice and platforms" for action and education. Such platforms included one organization, West Coast 1/NPC 4, that wrote, "an organization of our size and resources should be doing more to support organizations within our local Black Lives Matter movement financially." The organization created a GoFundMe campaign that raised money for the local Black Lives Matter and Campaign Zero organizations in their respective city. Further, the organization shared they "decided that simply condemning the social injustice that permeates our society regarding the loss of numerous innocent members of the black community at the hands of law enforcement is not enough." Likewise, Northwest 2/NPC 5 selected the Minnesota Freedom Fund as an entity to donate profits from a sticker sale.

In addition to encouraging people to use their voice, chapters enlisted their values, motto, or associated sentiments as a way to show support. For example, West Coast 1/NPC 4 wrote, "Please listen to what's being said, speak up, take action, and always [live our motto]." Similarly, Southern 2/NPC 3 cited their ritual documents and declared,

"[The ritual] asks us to [be more conscious and thoughtful]. Therefore, we encourage our members to speak out against acts of racism, hatred, bigotry, and violence." The chapter also touted itself as a group of women who "strive to help our community" and that remaining silent on current issues was not acceptable. They named the murder of George Floyd as a catalyst for this change, and with an accompanying image that featured elements of the organization's motto. Two months after their first post, one of the few chapters to follow up on their efforts included Northwest 2/NPC 5, that wrote:

We as an organization are committed to making the recruitment process as inclusive as possible. The legacy system has been eliminated from [our organization] nationally as a step in the right direction to end the systemic oppression and exclusivity that has been historically encouraged within greek life.

Other organizations made similar commitments and declarations in initial posts and continued to connect back to their organization more broadly. For example, Northeast 3/NPC 9 wrote, "Our motto […] calls upon us to stand up against racism, hatred, and join the fight for justice and equality." A month and a half later, the chapter wrote they "will not stay silent," and encouraged members to use their voices "to stand up for what is right."

Finally, for many, DEI-related language and concepts seemed new and cumbersome. For example, #BlackLivesMatter was used in many posts, and as the only, if not one of few, posts to use that hashtag. The use of hashtags was present for most groups, including the names of those who were murdered by police (Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd). In one post by Midwest 4/NPC 10, accompanying hashtags included #blacklivesmatter #justiceforgeorgefloyd #justiceforahmaud #justiceforbreonnataylor #speakup #beempoweredbe[organization] and #TheFutureIs[organization]. Similarly, some used language that seemed to gloss over the issues at hand (e.g., police brutality), and that specifically did not encapsulate the pressing concern of support for Black lives. For example, Northwest 2/NPC 5 posted comments from a member who stated, "Stand up for minorities, do not let the events of the past week be something you forget about next month, and always continue fighting for human kindness." Using terms like "minorities" and "human kindness" disregards the specific concerns of institutionalized and systemic racism broadly and in higher education.

LGBTQ+ Issues and Identities

Outside of June 2020, celebrating LGBTQ+ Pride in some way seemed to be where most chapters posted support or content associated with DEI. For example, some posts featured queer members and their stories, photos of members at Pride parades, and programs around understanding homophobia in society. Very few chapters made explicit mentions of support for transgender and gender non-conforming members and membership. In one instance of an organization that

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did, they explicitly named this commitment as one of few NPC groups to welcome transgender women in the organization. Throughout posts, chapters used heart emojis in rainbow colors, the rainbow flag emoji, and imagery of rainbow flags and backgrounds.

Posting about Pride Month seemed to be a central theme for chapters, and with varying ways of uplifting affirmation. Some offered short, succinct posts wishing people "Happy #pridemonth," with images and emojis of support. Southern 1/NPC 3 wrote, "[Our chapter] celebrates the diversity, love, and acceptance of pride and is dedicated to uplifting the voices of the LGBTQ+ community." Similarly, East Coast 3/NPC 10 wrote, "Empowered women empower those around them," with a photo of two members and a Pride flag, and "[rainbow flag emoji] LOVE IS LOVE [rainbow flag emoji]" in their post. In a more detailed post, West Coast 5/NPC 5 wrote about celebrating Pride and specifically illuminated both Pride and Black Lives Matter as "led by Black Queer and Trans Women of Color." They wrote, "The fight for Black Lives Matter and equal rights for all members of the LGBTQ+ community remains with ever-most importance." The chapter emphasized the role of Black transgender women and their work in the LGBTQ+ movement. Similarly, East Coast 1/NPC 10 posted images of Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, and Midwest 1/NPC 8 detailed the 51st anniversary of Stonewall. The chapter wrote:

> We must take this time to honor activists like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and countless others who fought for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, we must support those who fight against the injustices the LGBTQ+ community continues to face today.

West Coast 6/NPC 5 also offered education about Pride Month and Marsha P. Johnson, and Johnson's prominent role in the Gay Liberation Front, "leading the way in the first gay pride rally and staging a sit in protest [sic] to remove stigma around gay organizations."

In other posts, chapters illuminated the stories of individual members. For example, Northeast 3/NPC 6 shared a #Reflections OnPride series of posts, including one "Anonymous" member who posited:

> I've faced so much internalized homophobia throughout my life and have tried to force myself into being straight, so pride for me is mostly a reminder that I now accept myself and am proud of the woman I am, that I am accepted by the people around me, but also a reminder that it's been a major journey getting to the place that I am today.

When Pride Month ended, the chapter shared that the "meaning behind this movement transcends into every facet" of their lives. Also sharing member vignettes, Southwest 1/NPC 8 featured a student who shared that Pride meant "being yourself unapologetically." They elaborated in a post:

That was something that took me a lot of work and patience to understand, but now I can say that I am proud of my identity without feeling shame. Pride is so important to me because it is a privilege many members of the LGBTQ+ community don't have. I celebrate pride not only for myself, but for those who can't express their identities with freedom, and for those who struggle to come to terms with it. It's important not to take pride for granted. I am blessed to have my family, my community of sisters, and my friends who constantly support me and make me feel like I am no different than them.

By featuring member stories like these, chapters made queer membership one that was more personal. This was not only featured in words but also images, as Pride Month was a time when some chapters posted multiple times with images of members in or around rainbow colors. Midwest 2/NPC 4 shared, "don't ever be afraid to show off your true colors and be PROUD of how you are because you are AMAZING [emoji of a smiley face with star eyes; emoji of two women with a heart between them]." Further, one image specifically featured a rainbow flag that read, "NOT SUPPORTING LOVE WAS NEVER AN OPTION."

Discussion

In some ways, we might argue that HPWSs have made strides in the area of DEI because we can see a visible presence related to DEI issues on social media; compared to the exclusionary history of these organizations (e.g., Gillon et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2015; Syrett, 2009), progress has indeed occurred. However, it is important to note that meaningful DEI discourse appears to be lacking from these HPWSs, particularly when it comes to their social media posts. Still, organizations must be accountable. Our findings suggest that HPWSs have not moved beyond reactive responses (e.g., June 2020) and single-era posts (e.g., Pride Month). Because social problems are often constituted in discourse, "the analysis of discourse opens a window on social problems" (Scollon, 2001, p. 14), and in this case, a window on a social problem within HPWSs. This is not an unfair expectation of sororities, as we have seen inter/national organizations publicly grapple with histories at odds with DEI. For example, in 2019, Delta Gamma worked with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. It released a report that named some harmful histories in the organization with specific attention to racist events, policies, and imagery (Dodge et al., 2019). Perhaps this is a notable template–or permission–for chapters to follow suit. With this in mind, we must also name that students are at a developmental age where they are (still) grappling with many of these concepts, including work toward achieving a competency (or *expertise*; see Goodman & Templeton, 2021) in these efforts that even some practitioners are still working on/through.

Similar to Roland and Matthews' (2023) research, in this study, we found that the overwhelming majority of social media posts seemed performative. Posts often occurred alongside an awareness campaign

or Pride Month and many organizations made posts to acknowledge their support of particular causes (e.g., Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ Pride) or to recognize a non-Christian religious or cultural observance (e.g., Diwali, Yom Kippur). While reactive posts such as those occurring because of the U.S. racial uprising in 2020 are important as a way to showcase awareness and support for a cause or group of people, the one-time nature of these posts affirm the performative nature of this action. In essence, this reinforces power dynamics of "us" and "them" when considering HPWSs and communities outside of normative membership. For example, some posts used language that positioned people, such as Black individuals, as other or outside of the sorority. This language is problematic and reinforces the "historically white" founding of these organizations rather than reflecting the diverse student body present in higher education today; this includes the racially diverse members who brought the chapter to our study in the first place. The tendency to "other" People of Color is particularly relevant given that the sororities included in our analysis were considered more racially diverse than many of their counterparts inter/nationally. There is an insight here that may suggest that sororities can benefit from understanding their chapter's own racial/ethnic makeup as well as their organization's history on racial in/exclusion, to acknowledge the entirety of the members already within the organization.

Next, a few of the posts made during Pride Month took on an educational tenor whereby posts were made about influential people in the LGBTQ+ movement. Prior scholars have found that less than 1% (across 37 organizations and close to 30,000 posts) (Goodman & Garcia, 2021) and 1.24% (out of close to 41,000 posts) of sorority and fraternity social media posts (Goodman et al., 2022) included LGBTQ+-related content. Although we did not obtain the percentage of cause-specific posts in the present study, it was clear from these findings that many cause-specific posts were relegated to an awareness month or as reactionary to a national event. This includes the notable absence of discourse around gender diversity and gender inclusion explicitly, such as support for transgender communities specifically (e.g., organizations did not post about Transgender Day of Remembrance/Visibility), and beyond citing identity of individuals like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. Perhaps, too, this is a form of *pinkwashing*, where organizations (and political parties, corporations) jump "on the gay bandwagon for as long as it suited them" (Bullock, 2022, p. 271). In this case, it suits sororities to virtue-signal a support for or interest in gender and sexuality and in the place of taking on additional issues of oppression, such as racism, antisemitism, classism, or ableism. This finding aligns with Goodman et al.'s (2023) connection to *rainbow washing* in SFL.

Finally, Jäger (2001) posited, "Discourse analysis pertains to both everyday knowledge that is conveyed via the media, everyday communication, school and family, and so on, and also to that particular knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time)..." (p. 33). For chapters to cite back to their mottos and rituals, we wonder how far

this extends with regard to power and the HPWS enterprise itself. Goodman and Garcia (2021) highlighted sorority and fraternity use of social media as a tool to showcase their values. In the present study, we found that several organizations incorporated their inter/national organization's values in posts. A few organizations called on their organization's open motto or quoted lines from their symphony, creed, or mission to reflect a commitment to causes such as the Black Lives Matter movement or celebrating Pride Month. The use of their values in this way, or one example, the use of MLK, leads us to wonder how far that meaning-making extends. For example, Bonamy et al. (2022) explored how sororities and fraternities used, and in many ways "co-opted," MLK's quotes. Related to our work, Bonamy et al. (2022) posited, "many organizations used hashtag activism…to appease calls for social justice, distancing themselves from the violence of the sorority/fraternity system, and maintain power discourses" (p. 14). With all of this in mind, we offer implications and recommendations as it relates to our findings and our work more broadly.

Implications and Recommendations

These findings offer campus-based professionals, college administrators, inter/national organization staff, and student members an opportunity to reflect on the ways social media may enhance an organization's commitment to DEI issues. At the same time, we recognize that not all professionals, administrators, staff, and students are knowledgeable or adept when it comes to both social media and DEI issues. Goodman and Templeton (2021) suggested that any expectation of 'expertise' can be a disservice to new SFL professionals and perhaps even lead them to failure in segments of their job. As such, we encourage these individuals to continue the path of learning and growing and in these areas specifically. Moreover, SFL professionals should engage with their campus stakeholders (Wrona et al., 2018), specifically those who regularly engage in DEI areas and social media, such as their campus' cultural centers or faculty in media/communications. While some inter/national organizations may be providing resources for development in these areas, the constant turnover of officers in SFL may also mean that some of that learning is not translated from year to year. Further, we wonder which of these resources are for practitioners, and for which practitioners are they designed (e.g., individuals who work in student affairs more broadly but not SFL)? Determining an audience may be a critical component of opportunities for these specific trainings.

While these groups were recommended and touted as racially diverse chapters, the sentiments espoused in many social media posts lacked depth, nuance, and articulation of DEI as an enacted value outside of one-time-style posts. Yet, perhaps such an implicit articulation was never the plan; and, instead, students posted about the things that mattered to them, in the way they appeared most close to them.

Indeed, there is more that organizations can do to truly advance justice through social media posts. It is one thing to celebrate International Women's Day, LGBTQ+ Pride Month, or MLK Day, and it is another to explicitly name history, context, and relationship to oppression and power. Only a small number of posts reflected these important dynamics. As a result, there is great opportunity here for organizations to use popular social media platforms as a way to support and educate.

While reactive posts are helpful to name the real-time processing occurring by chapters and members, additional follow-up is needed, to show how that process, in turn, became action toward (re)new(ed) sentiments of equity and justice. With a few exceptions, the latter was not prioritized in the social media posts we reviewed. Outside of several posts in June 2020, very few organizations used social media to grapple with their identities and organizations' relationship to oppression and power (e.g., this may have appeared in other ways, however, absent from social media posts). As such, some initial questions come to mind; for example, what *can* these chapters say about DEI issues, given their relationship to their inter/national organization? What posts did the chapter want to make but were denied based on organization policies/procedures regarding official chapter social media accounts? What messages were posted but eventually deleted? What stories were posted that did not live on as permanent? What posts were internal contentions for a chapter? Perhaps these questions also exist as limitations of this study - that we will never know the answers or that the descriptions change with time. And, still, social media pages exist as a sort of time capsule for the public to take note of how chapters, even simply, talk about issues of DEI in their organization and society. As such, some recommendations are provided to inform students, practitioners, and researchers.

Recommendations for Practice

First, we recommend chapters do a critical analysis of their own social media, regardless of the race/ethnicity makeup of their organization. Campus-based advisors and inter/national headquarters staff can (continue to) engage student leaders who oversee social media or communications for chapters. Furthermore, advisors (campus SFL professional, local chapter advisor, and headquarters staff) should be encouraging students to engage in their campus' resources/services for continued education and engagement with programs, events, initiatives, and even courses that speak to cultural competence and humility. This can lead students to consider the nuances associated with posts about DEI issues and events. Perhaps students serving in a social media or communications role for the chapter receive elevated support for what and how to post about DEI-related topics during council meetings and/or inter/national programming for officers. Perhaps, these roles should have a certain level of cultural competency in order for students to describe certain events and periods of time (e.g., naming George Floyd's murder as a part of police brutality and not simply "an incident;" talking about Stonewall and LGBTQ+ Pride

beyond a parade and party). While there are institutions and organizations doing some of these efforts locally and more broadly, additional focus can be placed on ensuring learning is passed down from one executive board to the next, and as both leadership and current events change in real-time.

Such competency can include training that is also supported from the top down. What inter/national organizations post from headquarters is often mirrored by chapters, and the same type of training is warranted for staff at the inter/national level. Further, offering training to alumni chapter advisors on explicit and implicit messaging that can be conveyed through social media along with DEI issues of importance may be additive. This type of chapter advisor training may be particularly impactful for chapter advisors who are not adept at using social media or who are not well-versed in DEI issues. Finally, we wonder what history is taught and known in these HPWS spaces. For example, we implore campuses and organizations to be making strong connections between their organization history and the problems we see today (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia); much like Dodge et al. (2019) illuminated, the same interrogations should be conducted publicly by all NPC organizations, and sororities/fraternities more broadly.

Recommendations for Future Research

Aligned with the methodology for this study, there is more than enough content to analyze, and through multiple ways of knowing. This is a change in both society and SFL more broadly, that statements (even) exist in this context, and that there are researchers and practitioners with the skills to do the analyses. Future research might examine the motivations and limitations of posts. Moreover, this study specifically began with HPWSs who have been identified as racially diverse to serve as the source of our data collection, so what would DEI-related social media posts convey if the chapters were identified in another identity-based way? Other considerations for future research could look at the political or bureaucratic ways posts are made. For example, what informs students' knowledge about posts? Who posts what and why? What role does response play in posting (e.g., to keep on or turn off comments)? These questions can be explored in different ways through additional qualitative studies.

Next, network analysis may offer additional nuance in exploring the performative aspects of social media posting. Future research may incorporate all chapters on a campus, or all chapters associated with an NPC organization, and not solely those racially diverse as we have explored in this study. This might also include looking at how a specific organization espouses messages and then how they translate that to individual chapters. For example, researchers might ask who is responsible for coordinating DEI efforts or programming, how–if at all–are boards diverse, or what discourse analyses reveal regarding other public statements. Finally, considering how sororities and fraternities engage on

and with social media across council membership (e.g., NPC, NIC/IFC, MGC, NPHC, UGC) may warrant additional exploration. In this research, we found Instagram posts to be the most popular form of social media used by the nominated organizations. However, future researchers ought to consider the role that social media platforms such as Tik Tok may have on chapters' and members' commitment to DEI, particularly in light of the rise in popularity of #BamaRushTok and the numerous HPWS members at institutions nationwide with their own version of #RushTok occurring in the last two years. Likewise, sites such as Facebook may present for a different audience (e.g., alumni members); we wonder how or if those posts differ based on that audience.

Conclusion

We found DEI-related posts as a way students used their "voice" in different ways, and most notable around June 2020 and during Pride Month. Perhaps if HPWSs care–or have the capacity to care–about racial justice and queer issues (including the individual members themselves), now is the time to show it. "Using their voice" for a cause, as many posited, should be turned to action, and constant pressure for the many pressing issues appearing for women, and people in society more broadly. Overall, social media has the potential to be an important tool for conveying an organization's values, mission, and priorities. How students, advisors, campus-based professionals, and inter/national organization staff engage in these conversations (or ignore them) sets the tone for collegiate sorority members and arguably for campus more broadly.

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