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Amplifying Voices: Four Approaches to Constructing Counternarratives that explore the Black Experience in the Workplace

Abbie Salcedo
Texas State University

Jeremy W. Bohonos
Texas State University

At his Second Inaugural Address in 1861, Abraham Lincoln implored the "better angels of our nature," urging the American people to unite (Lahti & Weinstein, 2005). Yet, nearly 160 years after Lincoln uttered these words, American society remains divided along racial lines (Bobo, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Opie & Roberts, 2017). Racism has been evident throughout the years (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013), with the earliest manifestation being slavery (Bowser, 2017). Anti-Blackness was motivated to lessen Black suffering and allow those in a position of power to recognize and respond to White Supremacy in forming and implementing policy and systems (Dumas, 2016). The infamy of anti-Black racism has continued to influence American history, inspiring significant social movements, such as abolitionism (Flores, 2020), anti-lynching campaigns, the Civil Rights Movement (McDermott,1999), and the #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement (Bowser, 2017; Garza, 2014). It is no wonder that scholars continue to find this subject highly captivating and continuously introduce new theoretical frameworks to study this phenomenon. One of the current leading frameworks for research regarding racism is Critical Race Theory (CRT), an element of which is Counterstorytelling (Dixson & Anderson, 2018). Counterstorytelling is an effective way of promoting the real and accurate accounts of minoritized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). The terms "Counterstorytelling" and "Counternarratives" will be used interchangeably throughout this article.

Scholars have an obligation to produce counternarratives to racism in the workplace and to evaluate them critically. A more complete, more inclusive narrative must be told by scholars and practitioners in order to give voice to those who have been marginalized. Scholars and practitioners

examining anti-Black racism in the workplace can assist in the acknowledgment of racist distortions and contribute to an agenda for social change by conducting research that centers on Counterstorytelling as the methodology. This conceptual paper presents a critical analysis of carefully selected publications that demonstrate major methodological patterns in the study of Black employment experiences. To better understand and combat workplace racism, this paper draws on previous work by identifying crucial methodological contributions that Adult Education and Human Resource Development scholars would want to emulate.

Workplace Policies Aimed to Mitigate Racial Discrimination

Employees, former employees, and applicants are legally protected against employment discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, and disability under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. As such, most organizations have policies and programs intended to mitigate racial discrimination and other discriminatory practices. Despite this fact, racial discrimination in the workplace remains pervasive (Bohonos, 2020; Byrd, 2018; Sisco, 2020). According to Fekedulegn et al. (2019), 60% of Black U.S. workers report experiencing racial discrimination in the last 12 months. These findings are based on a sample composed of 40 million U.S. workers over 48 years of age.

Moreover, according to U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) statistics on workplace racism, racism-related charges accounted for 33% of the total charges filed in 2019 (EEOC, 2019). It is worth noting that this figure reflects a decline, with racism-related discrimination charges in previous years hovering closer to the 40th percentile. This decline could be attributed to the Black Lives Matter movement (Cole, 2020), as well as variations in how White Americans perceive their Whiteness (Bohonos, 2019), which may have a palpable impact on how they approach racial politics. The decrease in 2019 can be perceived by most as a good thing, as it indicates that organizations are taking a keener interest in nurturing inclusive workplaces; however, it does not negate that racism still exists in the workplace environment. Further evidence of the ongoing influence of Anti-Blackness in the workplace can be seen in the stark differences in employment rates, pay, and wealth, and by high-profile acts of anti-Black violence—including workplace noose tyings (Gould et al., 2018; Griffith, 2019). Resisting anti-Blackness in the workplace starts with understanding how racism operates in this setting.

Subtle Forms of Racism in the Workplace

Since the promulgation of the Civil Rights Legislation of the 1960s, racism has transformed into more subtle and aversive forms (Dovidio et al., 2017). Rooted in White supremacist ideology, which it seeks to reinforce and maintain, systemic racism is deeply entrenched, intertwined (Bobo, 2011; Bowser, 2017), and insidious (Dovidio et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2007). As such, it has become harder to identify and tackle this problem. This section discusses some of the common subtle forms of racism in the workplace, including racial microaggression, disparate impact, and micro-assaults.

Research on workplace discrimination refers to these subtler forms of racism as "racial microaggressions" (Sue et al., 2007). In their study, Sue et al. (2007) defined racial microaggression as a verbal or non-verbal indignity targeted at a marginalized group of people. Racial microaggressions can occur either intentionally or unintentionally. However, it is not

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uncommon for workplaces to exhibit more blatant and overt forms of racism. Racial discrimination can emanate from various sources in the workplace setting, including Human Resource Development (HRD), supervisors, co-workers, colleagues, clients, patients, and even an organization's policies and practices (Bobo, 2011; Bohonos, 2019; Byrd, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Opie & Roberts, 2017; Sisco, 2020; Sue et al., 2017). Consequently, racial discrimination is prone to create a work environment that is hostile and toxic (Bohonos, 2020; Byrd, 2018; Opie & Roberts, 2017; Sisco, 2020), which can have more significant implications on both the targeted victim(s) and the organization as a whole (Bobo, 2011; Sue et al., 2007). Before looking at the specific ways racism impacts the workplace, it is vital to understand how racial microaggressions operate in this environment.

As previously noted, racism is deeply ingrained in workplace structures and, as such, exhibits itself in many ways (Byrd, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Opie & Roberts, 2017; Sisco, 2020). One area in which racism operates is Human Resources, specifically recruitment and hiring (Epstein, 2005; Ezorsky, 2018). In other words, one's race can dictate whether they are hired or not. Quillian et al.'s (2017) study, for example, examined the disparities in call-back rates and job interview invitations among White and non-White applicants with the same qualifications. Their meta-analysis reported in the Harvard Business Review noted 24 field experiments performed since 1989, representing over 54,000 applications across more than 25,000 different positions. Further, Quillian et al. (2017) found that, on average, Whites received 36% more call-backs than Blacks.

It is important to note that racism does not always occur directly or intentionally. An employer may set specific rules or policies that appear to be neutral but are later found to be discriminatory. For instance, an employer may request recruiters only to hire Princeton University graduates. However, due to the low population of Black students that attend Princeton, this selection procedure could exclude Blacks, resulting in more non-Blacks being hired for the job. This form of racism is commonly referred to as disparate impact under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Conversely, actions that are deliberate and intended to cause harm through exclusion are deemed "micro-aggressions" (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions are brief, everyday verbal, behavioral, or environmental insults that transmit hostility, derogation, or negative racial slights and insults to persons of color, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Narrowing the focus on Black women

It is widely recognized that while women groups represent the most highly educated demographic by gender (Fry, 2019), Black women are far more likely to face day-to-day discrimination at work than non-Black women and men (Huang et al., 2019). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the number of Black women with Bachelor's degrees and Associate's degrees rose by 75% in the academic year 2000/2001 and 110% in 2015/2016 (De Brey et al., 2019). The significant rise in credentials attained indicates that the number of Black women qualified to take on professional roles has increased. Yet, among U.S. employers, there is still a wave of skepticism related to their ability to work. Huang et al. (2019) reported that 42% of Black women claimed that they had to offer additional evidence of their competence. Yet only 16% of

all men in the survey had to do the same. This finding reinforces the idea espoused by the concept of intersectionality, that one's social and political identities intersect to create different experiences of discrimination and privilege (Byrd, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989).

Racism in the workplace also exhibits itself in promotion and compensation benefits (Betsy, 1978; Bjerk, 2007; Dawkins et al., 2005; Ritter & Taylor, 2011). This has resulted in a massive wage gap based on both race and gender. As reported in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Black men earn about 87 cents for every dollar earned by a White man (Miller, 2020). On the other hand, Black women made only 63 cents for every dollar earned by White, non-Hispanic men. Moreover, Byrd (2009) found that Black women who succeed in breaking the glass ceiling by achieving executive and senior-level positions experience discriminatory practices, such as validating themselves repeatedly, disempowering situations, mythicizing stereotypical images, and exclusion from robust social networks.

Breaking the Cycle, By Breaking the Silence

While it has been established that racism continues to exist in the workplace (Byrd, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Opie & Roberts, 2017; Sisco, 2020), the question remains as to why such practices persist. Opie and Roberts (2017) attempted to answer this question, arguing that some of the factors that promote the persistence of workplace racism include a failure to acknowledge the existence of racism, the controversy over the significance of Black Lives Matter, diversity, and the racial power dynamics in the workplace.

Matters of racism and discrimination tend to invoke discomfort. For this reason, some people intentionally choose to stay in the dark on the issues of social injustice, which some researchers refer to as "moral exclusion" (Opotow, 1990; Tepper et al., 2011). However, Byrd (2018) concluded that staying silent causes more harm by promoting power and privilege. Byrd (2018) also emphasized the need to develop relationships among people who differ based on the social justice paradigm. This argument is founded on the idea that the lack of response to social injustice often divides people. Lastly, the scholarly literature notes that the status of Black people in the American workplace can be elevated by breaking the silence and acknowledging the fact that racism is still deeply ingrained in society. One of the recommendations made as to how to combat social injustice in the workplace is breaking the silence (Byrd, 2018; Collins, 2019; Hurt & Callahan, 2013; Sisco, 2020).

Fundamentally, notions of social justice should be ingrained in organizational culture to promote inclusivity in the workplace (Byrd, 2018; Collins, 2019; Hurt & Callahan, 2013, Opotow, 1990; Sisco, 2020, Tepper et al., 2011). The current article contributes to racial justice efforts by illustrating how Black people's narratives can provide vital insight into how HRD practice can be advanced to combat workplace racism by understanding the importance of Counterstorytelling.

WHAT IS COUNTERSTORYTELLING?

The power of a story goes beyond just conveying facts and information— they enable us to make sense of the world. Stories reveal our history, culture, experiences, and more, allowing us to learn from each other. Delgado and Stefancic (1993) described Counterstorytelling as a tool used to convey the lived experiences and knowledge of those groups whose stories are not often told or those on the margins of society. Since majoritarian stories stem from a legacy of racial privilege, the idea of racism and discrimination is perceived as natural (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993; Ikemoto, 1997). Sadly, sometimes even marginalized people buy into and retell the majoritarian stories told by those in power. Counterstorytelling is an effective way of promoting the real and accurate accounts of minoritized groups. When relating a counterstory, scholars push back against harmful majoritarian representations of POC (James-Gallaway & Barber, 2021). They do so while maintaining cultural and theoretical sensitivity (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Cultural sensitivity is the ability to accurately read and interpret informants' meaning as members of sociohistorical groups (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Conversely, theoretical sensitivity is the researcher's capacity to construe and give meaning to data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These concepts can be seen as the two dimensions of Counterstorytelling. Theoretical storytelling is an individual's capacity to interpret and generate accurate and meaningful information.

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We, as researchers, have an obligation to produce a body of "counternarratives" that can help us understand how racism works in the workplace. A more complete, more inclusive story must be told by scholars and practitioners examining anti-Black racism in order to give voice to those whose voices have been silenced. Scholars and practitioners can help in the recognition of racist distortions, the potency of majoritarian myths, and so contribute to an agenda for change by conducting such studies. It's possible that our study methods—the direction and substance of our investigation—can make a difference.

Origins of Counterstorytelling

Counterstorytelling is a product of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which emerged around the mid-1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT is a theoretical framework that allows people to better understand oppressive and domineering social structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This theory is founded on the idea that the construction and maintenance of race and racism are endemic and permanent. It is also a movement comprising scholars committed to challenging racism and its associated social, legal, political, and educational consequences (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Patton et al., 2011). Moreover, CRT scholars see the established claims of objectivity, neutrality, color-blindness, and meritocracy as smokescreens for promoting the self-interest of majoritarian groups in society.

CRT scholars identify four genres of counterstories: other people's narratives, personal stories, composite stories (Hunn et al., 2006), and chronicles (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1989). Personal stories refer to first-hand accounts of experiences faced by people of color. This could include how they experience and deal with racial discrimination, harassment, and disadvantage. Other people's stories are individual experiences retold. An individual's story holds massive power on its own. It could potentially create an even more significant impact when it is retold because while it starts as an individual experience, it gains validation through the act of retelling. Conversely, composite stories are an accumulation or synthesis of several individual stories. Chronicles are fictional stories that convey an individual's belief and a perception that is not too conflicting for others to read.

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Purpose of Counterstorytelling

Counterstorytelling is a method that is used to break the narratives proposed by the majoritarian. White privilege is usually expressed through majoritarian storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). These stories are also known as bundles of "presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings persons in the dominant race bring to the discussion of race" (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, p. 462). Notably, majoritarian stories distort and silence people of color's experiences by implicitly making assumptions and bestowing negative stereotypes about people of color (Ikemoto, 1997).

 Following CRT ideas, majoritarian stories are not only stories about racial privilege but also reflect other forms of privilege such as gender, class, and more (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Patton et al., 2011). Accordingly, Counterstorytelling attempts to popularize a more honest account of the world around us by exposing the flaws in majoritarian stories and the tenacity of White privilege. It challenges established conjectures and belief systems related to marginalized persons. Furthermore, this method of examining racism does not produce a more accurate understanding of the reality of the situation. Instead, it challenges people's understanding of "truth" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Besides exposing dominant racial ideologies and revealing truths, Counterstorytelling also seeks to create a space for community voices to build a narrative that defines their own experiences and lives. As Solórzano and Yosso (2002) claimed, just as stories have been used to silence and exclude minoritized groups, counterstories can also empower and afford them a voice. In this way, Counterstorytelling elevates minoritized groups' sense of social, political, and cultural cohesion and educates others on their social realities. That said, counterstories are not always developed in direct response to majoritarian stories. Doing so carries the risk of allowing the familiar story to dominate the discourse (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Further, by putting a human face to the experience of often-marginalized groups, Counterstorytelling can help promote racial justice. This is because counterstories link aspects

from both the story and current reality to create an entirely different world from either the reality or story (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

METHODS

This conceptual paper provides a critical analysis of a variety of purposefully selected articles that exemplify important methodological trends in researching Black experiences in the workplace. The researchers initially identified these articles while conducting literature reviews related to social justice in HRD (Authors, 2016), racism in the workplace (Authors, 2019), Black women's career development (Authors, 2020), and critical race theory (Authors 2021a; 2021b). In previous writings, the authors have engaged with these texts in a summative fashion or focused on concepts from the articles with high salience to the main themes of previous projects. The current paper reengages with this literature by highlighting key methodological contributions that Adult Education and Human Resource Development scholars may wish to emulate as we attempt to better understand and resist workplace racism. Articles were purposefully selected to highlight a wide range of approaches to exploring Black experiences in the workplace. Additional considerations for selecting scholarship involved the second author's perceptions of how strongly various articles have challenged his graduate students as they have worked to understand workplace racism in his HRD seminars. After the key articles were selected, the researchers provided brief discussions of the methodological traditions from which the articles emerged, briefly discussed other similar race-conscious scholarship, and worked to highlight how these articles can advance methodological understandings regarding Black experiences in the workplace and workplace racism.

Methods Used in The Construction of Counterstories

While Counterstorytelling is a qualitative research methodology (Dixson & Anderson, 2018), CRT researchers interested in workplace settings have used various research methods to inform the construction of their counterstories. This section presents four approaches commonly used to construct counterstories, including phenomenology, autoethnography, case studies, and hypothetical examples. This section also illustrates how these approaches are used to replace narratives that only reflect the majority perspective with those that include the perspectives and lived experiences of minoritized populations.

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Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative inquiry utilized to help researchers learn from others' experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). Based on this philosophy, all meanings and values ultimately originate from the lived experiences of human beings. This view arose from the idea that items in the external world exist independently (Qutoshi, 2018). Accordingly, phenomenology strives to understand consciousness by studying the essential conscious elements such as structures and acts.

Johnson and Christensen (2019) underline how phenomenology affords researchers insight into their participants' "life-world," allowing them to understand their personal meanings. A "life-world" refers to a person's inner world, specifically, their consciousness and experiences. Johnson and Christensen (2019) highlighted how researchers employed a phenomenological approach to establish their participants' experiences and offer a detailed explanation of the dynamics of meaning-making processes. The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of the participant's experiences. Specifically, what was experienced and how it was experienced. This approach captures both the phenomenon and human experience.

There are two main types of phenomenology: transcendental and hermeneutic approaches (Neubauer et al., 2019). Transcendental phenomenology, as developed by Husserl, looks at how objects or situations are constituted in pure or transcendental consciousness (Neubauer et al., 2019). Conversely, hermeneutic is an interpretive approach to phenomenology that is conducted through reflective and empirical activities (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Sisco (2020) takes a phenomenological research approach to construct counterstories based on the experiences of Black research participants who work in U.S. corporate settings to demonstrate their resiliency in the face of racism. Specifically, this study highlights the coping strategies and self-preservation mechanisms utilized by Black professionals when navigating racialized social systems. Racialized social systems are perceived as those that prioritize Whites and thus promote social divisions. The rationale behind adopting a phenomenological research approach was to ensure that the study captured both the phenomena and human experience. Taking a Black-conscious approach, the author isolated studies that mainly addressed Blacks' career progression for the literature review portion. She then applied the concept of work incivility to deduce the experiences of Black professionals in the workplace. A total of five mid-level to senior-level employees worked for the same corporation but represented different occupations in this study. They each underwent three separate interviews, bringing the total number of interviews performed to fifteen.

Based on Sisco's (2020) findings, four primary strategies for overcoming workplace incivility were identified. Participants employed techniques identified as "safeguard Blackness" and "safeguard personal narratives" to counteract stereotypical threats that undermined their racial identities (Sisco, 2020, p. 425). Participants also "micro-target opportunities" and "micro-manage expectations" techniques to mitigate race-related barriers that hindered their career development (p. 425). When asked to discuss an encounter that involved safeguarding their personal narrative in the workplace, a participant said:

> There was a time when one of my coworkers was discussing something and used the word "Indian Giver." I don't think the other people around understood what that meant, [but] I didn't have the conscious just to push that aside. . . I think as individuals and as corporations we should have those courageous conversations. I had to make sure I didn't lose myself in the situation. It was personal for me. It's a conversation that they're having at the "water cooler," but to me, it's something that I live. They have the privilege not to worry about race if they don't want to because it's not required for them to succeed in life. Yet, it affects me if I want to or not. (Sisco, 2020, p. 426).

The findings suggest that workplace incivility against Black professionals is still pervasive. As such, this study has several implications for various stakeholders. The Black professional in corporate America offers ideas on how they can become more resilient to the challenges they encounter and thereby achieve success. Most importantly, this study is highly appropriate for human resource developers. It offers insights into how they can better address racial bias by encouraging racial discourse. Further, Sisco (2020) also calls for more race-conscious research that adopts social-cultural theories to better understand Black professionals' lived experiences.

Phenomenology affords researchers various advantages (Qutoshi, 2018). Most notably, it enables scholars examining anti-Black racism in the workplace to better understand a research participant's interpretation and meaning-making process through lived experiences, which could help develop new theories. Moreover, it enables researchers to collect data that is more natural rather than artificial (Qutoshi, 2018; Sisco, 2020). Because of its focus on others' lived experiences, the phenomenological research approach is often applied in studies focusing on counterstories (Qutoshi, 2018). However, many HRD researchers are usually skeptical about adopting this research method because it presents analytical and interpretation challenges. For dependable and credible results, researchers must describe rather than explain their findings to maintain high levels of subjectivity.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a qualitative research method used to evaluate personal experiences to better comprehend different cultural experiences (Mendez, 2013). It incorporates tenets of ethnography and autobiography to produce an autoethnography. Ellis and Bochner (2000) refer to autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). Autoethnography can encompass the study of the researcher's personal accounts, the researcher's experience while performing a particular study, or a parallel assessment of the participants' and researchers' experiences (Mendez, 2013). Further, Ellis (2007) states that the process of "autoethnography involves a back-and-forth movement between experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience" (p. 14).

Mendez (2013) also notes that autoethnography allows people to reflect on the narratives presented, impacting their lives. Reading a cultural and social account of an experience is informative, allowing others to better understand the realities they were oblivious to before. Like any other method, autoethnography presents some shortcomings (Mendez, 2013). Notably, it is impossible to predict how the target audience will react to the narratives presented. Accordingly, their response might be unpleasant. Autoethnography requires the researcher to be vulnerable and honest in exposing their inner thoughts and feelings.

In her autoethnographic study, Overstreet (2019) invites the reader into her world as she explores her racialized experiences during her first year in academia. She draws from various theoretical frameworks, including the Strong Black Woman schema. In addition, the author also frames her experiences in light of the D.C. female superhero, Vixen, who carries multiple marginalized identities as she is an immigrant from Africa and, in some versions, lesbian. Aside from her

identity, what also makes the Vixen a great metaphor is her "work situation," whereby she is surrounded by powerful White men who continuously try to control her.

Overstreet (2019) explains how her White colleagues contribute to a general undermining and patronization of the Black woman. These occurrences cause Black faculty to be made self-conscious about attire, hairdo, or how they speak. Overstreet described an experience that caused her to question whether her feelings were valid:

> I entered a faculty meeting wearing a head wrap and, as I signed in, the staff member at the table handed me an agenda and loudly called me by the name of another Black faculty member while directing me to her assigned group. I knew my assigned group because I had spoken with this same staff member in advance and agreed to be the group's recorder. I signed my own name and quietly corrected her, but she had moved on, so I walked to my group puzzling over the mistake. The other Black faculty member and I looked about as drastically different as two people could—height, shape, skin tone (pg. 29).

Accordingly, this autoethnography revealed considerable disparities in how women in academia are treated. The author discusses these disparities under three themes: microaggressions, tokenization, and being othered. Overstreet (2019) shared her experience with tokenization and reported having been included in certain meetings, not because of the professional value she offered but by virtue of her skin color, which at that point in time would benefit the institution. Like other articles surrounding anti-racism in the workplace, this study exposed how microaggression was perpetuated in the workplace. However, by taking an autoethnographic approach to Counterstorytelling, Overstreet crafted an exceptionally evocative text that demonstrates multiple ways that hostile and derogatory treatment affected her as a Black woman. These evocative accounts allow for other people of color to see themselves and their experiences in her stories while helping White readers to develop more profound empathy and understanding regarding the effects of intersectional marginalization. Other CRT-based approaches to workplace autoethnography have used collaborative approaches to contrast the racialized experiences of White and Black authors (Bohonos & Duff, 2020) to show similarities and variations in how different POC experience race and racism depending on how it intersects with their other identity markers (James-Gallaway & Turner, 2020; Minnett et al., 2019; Squire et al., 2018), and how anti-Black racism can pervade all-White workspaces (Bohonos, 2019).

However, there are several limitations (Mendez, 2013) to using autoethnography as a study approach that must be considered. Because readers form their own interpretations of stories, their reactions to these stories may be unpleasant (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). In addition, it relies on the researcher's willingness and ability to openly communicate their most private thoughts and emotions (Mendez, 2013). There are several ethical issues (i.e., reliability of the narrative or sharing details of an individual without their consent when making observations) to consider while doing an autoethnography because of this limitation.

Case Study approach

The case study approach has its origins in clinical medicine, whereby physicians typically record a patient's case history and personal history (Crowe et al., 2011). It allows for comprehensive, multi-faceted explorations of complex challenges in their real-life setting. This approach's core

tenet illustrates the subject's need to explore any phenomenon in-depth and in its natural context (Crowe et al., 2011).

Three types of case studies have been identified: collective, instrumental, and intrinsic (Crowe et al., 2011). An intrinsic case study is usually performed to learn more about a unique phenomenon. In this case, the researcher should attempt to establish what distinguishes this phenomenon from others. An instrumental case study entails taking a specific case and using it to gain a broader appreciation of a phenomenon or issue. Finally, the collective case study requires the researcher to examine several cases simultaneously or consecutively, still, to gain a more profound appreciation of a particular thing.

Embrick and Henricks (2013) relied upon a case study to explore how racially equal or unequal epithets and stereotypes are. As the authors point out, racial stereotypes and slurs directed towards Whites by non-Whites tend not to hold as much weight or affect their life chances in the same that they would have if the roles were reversed. To achieve this goal, the authors took their case study approach, whereby they spent six months observing the staff's interactions at one of the bakeries owned by an organization called "Whitebread" and several of its distribution depots. Soon after, the supervisors, workers, and low-level managers from these businesses were subjected to comprehensive semi-structured interviews lasting two to three hours. Interviewees were selected according to the snowballing technique, culminating in 38 respondents. The researchers also used participant observation to give richness and depth to their description of the case.

From the findings, Embrick and Henricks (2013) revealed that epithets and stereotypes had unequal outcomes depending on race. In this case, it impacted factors such as psychological wages, work evaluations, and employment opportunities. For instance, due to the manager's personal bias and belief in the stereotypical views of Black people as lazy, incompetent, lacking work ethic, and undependable, individuals from this demographic were rarely hired. The participants also reported that people of color were often punished much more severely and rarely rewarded compared to their White counterparts. When it came to epithets, it was established that White workers often used racial slurs such as "wetback" and "nigger" to signify inferiority.

Conversely, workers of color did not feel the need to utilize White slurs to show inferiority. This case study effectively demonstrates how White supremacy gets maintained through symbolic ways that reinforce inequalities. Other case study approaches to counternarratives framed by CRT (Lewellen et al., 2020) have been used to explore how Black women's experiences with racism are shaped by other underexplored aspects of diversity, including personality type and linguistic heritage and how aspects of class related to workplace racism (Embrick and Henricks, 2015).

The most prominent criticisms of case studies are their inability to generalize and lack of rigor (Crowe et al., 2011). The validity of the research is usually questioned because of the researcher's personal involvement and influence in the study, which may bias the results. Consequently, critics argue that the results of a single study cannot be trusted or extended to the wider community.

Chronicles, Storytelling, and Hypothetical Scenario-Based Approaches

In addition to other methods addressed above, many researchers who use CRT have used storytelling approaches (sometimes referred to as chronicles or hypothetical scenarios) to construct counternarratives that illustrate points about race and racism (Bell, 1992; Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Lewellen & Bohonos, 2020). Lewellen and Bohonos (2020) utilized humorous chronicles as a form of narrative research in the CRT tradition without jeopardizing the intended objective of education, and without upsetting or appearing condescending to the reader. For instance, they presented a comedic chronicle centered on a Black protagonist who demonstrates a variety of coping and resistance strategies in conversations with a well-intentioned, but culturally insensitive White professor. In the example below, "Tina" interacts with a "White Male Coworker," who the authors identify as a well-intentioned though comedically and insultingly naïve ally:

> WMC: (Hurriedly getting out of his chair) Excuse me, sir? SIR! Can I help you? Who are you here to see?
> Tina: Ummmm. Seriously? … Doug, I've worked here for four years. You don't recognize me?! (Smiles incredulously)
> WMC: Oh, Tina?! Oh my gosh! Sorry! I didn't recognize you! (Scowling) I know I told you to cut it all off, like me, but I didn't think you'd really do it! Wow. What exactly happened to your hair?! (Reaches slowly to touch Tina's hair, again)

The situation "Tina" finds herself in is not unique among people of color in the workplace. The use of humor and storytelling allows the authors to introduce a serious topic in a less intimidating form, thereby inviting readers to interact with the content they can more easily identify with. The use of hypothetical scenarios allows these authors to elucidate the "double bind" (Carbado & Gulati, 2013, p.1) experienced by Black employees who face conflicting pressures to "Act White" or "Act Black" and the perils associated with each approach to racial performativity. In the series of hypothetical examples, these authors can advance nuanced discussions of intersectionality in the workplace that would be otherwise difficult to capture using more traditional approaches to data collection.

IMPLICATIONS

This paper has important implications for those who wish to better understand racism and the appropriate approach to examining this phenomenon. Combining the critical race methodology with counterstories offers space for future research to advance HRD and adult education by helping those of the dominant culture better empathize with individuals who experience marginalization. Counterstorytelling can enhance HRD practice in several ways, including enriched training materials, inspiring more imaginative approaches to anti-racism, and enhancing the psychological well-being of minoritized employees. The use of published counter stories can enliven diversity training materials to help all participants to get a better sense of the lived realities of facing racism on a daily basis, as well as to provide real-world examples of how microaggressions and systemic racism can negatively affect Black employees. Additionally, as Collins (2019) has called for a radical reimagining of how we pursue diversity and social justice

in the workplace, counter stories can provide a starting point for poignant and specific conversations relative to organizational justice that go beyond calls for additional training and potentially damaging diversity branding initiatives (Byrd, 2018). Additionally, counter storytelling can enhance the psychological well-being of minoritized employees by helping them to feel seen and to know that they are not struggling alone. This can be particularly important in workplaces that are lacking in diversity and where minoritized employees may experience counterstories that reflect their situations as lifelines as they swim in otherwise troubled waters. These lifelines have the potential to, not only help minoritized employees cope with hostile environments, but promote a sense of empowerment to resist. Our call for additional counterstorytelling in HRD can also help HRD professors to answer the call for greater emphasis on diversity in the HRD graduate curriculum (Alfred et al., 2020; Bohonos et al., 2019)

One limitation of this article is that our discussion of approaches to Counterstorytelling in organizational contexts included just four, when in actuality, there are many different approaches, including those informed by historical analysis (James-Gallaway & Ward Randolph, 2021). Critical race theory & education history: Constructing a race-centered history of school desegregation (pp. 330-342). In M. Lynn, and A. Dixson (Eds.), The handbook of critical race theory in education (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.), ethnography (Bohonos, 2020; Hughley, 2012; Jacobs-Huey, 2006), portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), composite narratives constructed from an analysis of social media content (Rabelo et al., 2020) and responses to open-ended survey questions (Bohonos et al., 2019). Each of these can be used to directly compare the types of racial narratives forwarded by people from various positionalities.

CONCLUSION

For far too long, scholars that have adopted methodologies that center on Eurocentric ideologies (Scheurich & Young, 1997; Stanfield, 1999) have allowed themselves to be influenced by majoritarian stories (distortion and omission of the lived reality of minoritized individuals, which fail to recognize the contributions made by people of color in this nation's development. Majoritarian stories do not account for the histories, experiences, and lives of people of color. For this reason, counterstories are a vital educational tool and are indispensable to academia. By extension, using a counterstory approach can help people better understand how racism operates through privileged systems, creating an incentive for challenging the status quo. HRD scholars and practitioners should build a repository of knowledge where we may document everyday feelings, understandings, and emotions concerning race and antiblackness, and other types of social and structural discrimination. As an intentional effort to eradicate racism, scholars should continue to tell the counterstories of those relegated to the bottom of society and promote this method as a means of resistance.

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Abbie Salcedo, PhD, MBA, conducts research focused on racial disparity in the workplace, intending to provide knowledge that can be used to define and advocate for solutions to the limited mobility and growing inequality that marginalized people experience. She also serves as the Departmental Director of Operations & Strategy at The University of Texas Austin's Dell Medical School.

Jeremy Bohonos is an Assistant Professor of Adult Education at Texas State University. His research focuses on organizational (in)justice with a special emphasis on race and racism in the workforce.