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Speaking Truth from the Margins: The Experiences of Black Women Faculty at PWIs is a qualitative study that examines the lived experiences of tenured and tenure-track Black women faculty as they navigated predominantly white institutions (PWIs) prior to and during a period of intense social and racial unrest in America. The study examines these experiences against the backdrop of a public health crisis and global pandemic of 2020. Through a Black feminist lens, this research analyzes the stories of Black women faculty and the nuanced ways in which they experienced and navigated their institutions, balanced their scholarship, and managed their personal lives during this time. The research findings indicate the responses and actions of each institution to the social and racial conflict of 2020 and the support provided to Black faculty on their campuses. The evidence from the study suggests increase levels of cultural taxation during and since 2020, and disparities in student evaluations and the tenure process, which contributes to poor campus climate and overall retention of Black faculty. As a result of these findings, I offer suggestions for change that could potentially aid in increased representation and retention of Black women faculty at PWIs.

SPEAKING TRUTH FROM THE MARGINS: THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN FACULTY AT PWIS AND THE ADDITIONAL WEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC AND SOCIAL UNREST OF 2020

by

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Approved by

Dr. Kathryn Hytten
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the Black women faculty who have come before me and paved the way for so many other Black women faculty. Your commitment to disrupting and deconstructing systems of inequality in academe has forced open the doors of diversity, equity and inclusion in spaces that were not built for us. Thank you for breaking the silence and letting voices ring loud from the margins. Through you and with you, we move from the margins to the center. I honor you and I salute you.

In Loving Memory of Dr. Rochelle Brock

To my dad, Joseph, who passed away in 2020, I did it, Daddy! These past three years have been tough, but the memories of your smile and humor were my light on many dark days. To my mom, Pearl, my prayer partner, and trusted confidant, thank you for always being there. Your prayers have held me up. Mom and Dad, thank you for teaching me to dream big and for helping me understand I can do all things through Christ. You are my foundation and the shoulders on which I stand. I am who I am because of you. You are living epistles of God's goodness and grace. What example you have been to all of us. I love you both, and I miss you, Daddy!

Finally, I dedicate this work to my husband, Shawn, and our three sons, Keshawn, Kealen and Kamryn. You are the wind beneath my wings. I am able to soar because of your love and support. You have done this work with me. Thank you for sacrifice and loving me through it.

APPROVAL PAGE

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I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

All praise and glory belong to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for leading and guiding me every step of the way. None of this would have been possible without you.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Black women are among the most marginalized groups in the United States, and issues with intersectionality, which create overlapping systems of disadvantage, pose a real threat for many. For Black women in academic settings, particularly at predominantly white institutions, the intersectional oppression related to both race and gender can act as a barrier to equality in these spaces. Unfortunately, the voices of Black women have been historically silenced or ignored in predominantly white institutions, which has limited not only their professional growth and development, but also limited their pedagogical freedom and autonomy in the classroom and impacted retention. In these settings, Black women often experience systemic inequalities and subtle acts of racism and discrimination. Though they may not be overtly stated, microaggressions are heard and felt with resounding clarity. The combination of intersectional oppression, racism, and discrimination presents a huge obstacle for these educators, especially for those who seek to bring awareness to social justice issues and transform classrooms into spaces that help to raise the critical consciousness of their students. The enactment of social justice pedagogy, including the decentering of whiteness, in predominantly white spaces is challenging and is a threat to those who resist or reject principles of social justice. However, the burden to continue the fight for representation for those who are marginalized is greater for Black women educators who must not only defend their intellect, but also negotiate their race and gender at the same time. The knowledge and experience these women bring to the field of higher education should be valued and supported. Their knowledge and experiences provide opportunities for universities to close knowledge gaps through research and teaching and provide students with diverse perspectives (Bollinger, 2007). It is, therefore, problematic to have very little representation of Black women faculty at predominately white institutions (PWI). Black

women faculty make up less than four percent of full-time faculty at higher education institutions nationwide. The percentages are even less at predominantly white institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Students, particularly those from more affluent backgrounds, miss out when they do not have the opportunity to glean from experiences, knowledge, and expertise of Black women professors.

2020 Social Unrest

Although there has been significant research in the area of social justice reform on predominantly white campuses (Patton, 2016; Abel, 2020; Bryant et al., 2020), there is a need for more study of the barriers that Black women educators face while attempting to decenter whiteness and enact a social justice pedagogy at predominantly white institutions. This is especially true during a period of racial unrest. In the Spring of 2020, America experienced one of its most controversial social incidents since the Jim Crow era. George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man was murdered by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For 8 minutes and 46 seconds, officer Derek Chauvin buried his knee in Floyd's neck. Floyd's cries of "I can't breathe" and "mama" did not affect the officer's decision to keep his knee on Floyd's neck. As result, George Floyd died. Immediately, "video footage capturing his death circulated widely on social and broadcast media, prompting demonstrations across the United States" (Buchanan et al., 2020). The senseless killing of George Floyd sparked outrage from citizens across the country and shed a light on America's problematic relationship with racism and discrimination. The year 2020 brought with it fights for justice that addressed the historical heritage and legacy of strained race relations in America. These fights for justice are ongoing in 2023, even as there has also been backlash and conservative retrenchment.

Colleges and universities across the country also felt the sting of social protests and the impact of racial and social unrest in the aftermath of Floyd's death. Many students, faculty and staff joined the Black Lives Matter Movement and other social groups to protest again racial injustice (Flaherty, 2020b; King et al., 2020; Kolodner, 2020). They also called for colleges and universities to recognize structural racism and the impact it has on minorities and commit to making positive changes in policy and practice. In response to these demands, many campus administrators and departments released solidarity statements to show their commitment to their campus community, particularly Black students, faculty, and staff. However, some of these statements failed to address their historic connection with racism or their complicity in sustaining the oppression of Blacks through maintenance of white supremacy. In addition, actions behind those statements have yet to come to fruition in many places. For example, Penn State University joined many other academic institutions in voicing their disdain for the tragic events and "issued statements of "support" and "compassion" for communities and individuals long subjected to what President Eric J. Barron identified as "trauma, pain and frustration" created by everyday U.S. cultures of "hate, bias and racism" (King et al., 2020, p. 3). To show solidarity with marginalized communities, Barron established a Presidential Commission on Racism, Bias and Community Safety which released draft recommendations at the conclusion of 2020. Although a commission was established and draft recommendations were submitted, omitted were "President Barron's declared priorities or specific implementation plans…or any references to increasing the underrepresentation of black faculty throughout the academy" (King et al., 2020, p. 3).

In addition to Penn State, three southern PWIs released statements in the wake of George Floyd's death. For example, in May of 2020, Duke University issued the following announcement.

> The Undergraduate Admissions Office at Duke University supports and stands in solidarity with the many voices on campus in affirming that Black lives matter. We share the pain of the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and so many others to racially motivated violence, and support our Black students and all Black members of the Duke Community. We know we have work to do, and we specifically commit ourselves to the work of anti-racism in our office, in our processes, and in our interactions with the public. We understand that as a university in the South we have a special responsibility to enroll Black students, and we commit ourselves to actively recruiting and enrolling a diverse Black community.

In addition to Duke University, Wake Forest University released the following statement from President Nathan O. Hatch on May 30, 2020.

> To our African American students, staff, faculty, families, alumni, and extended community members specifically, I realize that this time of tragedy comes in the middle of a global pandemic that is adding suffering and claiming lives disproportionately and keeping us apart when we would typically reach out to one another for comfort. I vow to continue supporting you in these troubling times, standing with you as we address issues of social justice and driving our community to do better. We cannot ignore injustice or wish away racism and bigotry. Now more than ever, we must confront hatred and uphold one another in times of great division and inequity. Though we are not together on

> campus during this national crisis, we will always be linked by our pursuit of truth and our commitment to each other — as Wake Foresters and as human beings.

On May 29, 2020, Chancellor Jay Perman of the University of Maryland released the following statement:

> This week, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, a brutal act that recalled other recent killings of black Americans. We acknowledge with one voice the structural racism that's taking the lives of our fellow citizens, and we stand in solidarity as we speak out against racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, discrimination against our LGBTQ and immigrant communities, religious intolerance, and bigotry of any kind. We are justly saddened, angered, and frustrated by these acts of brutality and the lack of action when black men and women are killed. Mindful of public health guidelines, we also affirm the right of our communities to protest safely and peacefully to address their legitimate concerns. We believe that public colleges and universities are obligated to help end inequity and to promote social justice. We draw on the leadership and wisdom of our students, faculty, and staff, many of whom confront these issues every day through their teaching, research, and activism. We encourage all members of the UMD community to seek support, if needed, and to involve themselves in addressing these challenges. We urge our students and colleagues not only to vote, but to help safeguard and improve our democracy.

Although these universities made statements to show their support of Black students, faculty, staff, and other marginalized groups on their campuses, it is important that these universities continue to act and facilitate discussions around their commitment to anti-racism and implement policy changes that will positively impact the experiences of these groups.

While many institutions have made statements in support of social change, we know much less about the inner workings and actualization of those changes within the institution; limited research and anecdotal accounts that suggest that this work often falls to Black faculty and staff, making their work even more challenging. Often, actionable items – the heart of social justice work – tend to fall on those who are already experiencing the weight of social and institutional oppression, which creates an even greater challenge for members of these groups.

Problem Statement

Georgiana Rose Simpson was the first Black woman to earn a Ph.D. in German from the University of Chicago in 1921. The challenges that she faced with racism and discrimination while obtaining her degree and finding employment after graduating were directly related to the duality of being Black and female. Wilson (2006) noted that many universities during the early 1920s did not hire Black women unless they were teaching home economic courses, relegating them to the stereotypical nurturing roles. Since that time, many Black women have obtained terminal degrees; at the same time, many of those who obtained teaching positions experienced discrimination and marginalization (Green & Mabokela, 2011). Like Simpson, many have struggled to find their place at PWIs. Racism and sexism have played major roles in the lives of Black women and these forms of oppression continue to shape their experiences (Collins, 1989; Bell, 1993). In addition to being white racially dominated, PWIs have also been traditionally white male dominant and white ideologically centered. Bell (1992) notes that institutional Eurocentric interests are sustained, replicated, and remain dominant due to critical mass. This is problematic because "unexamined historically situated White cultural ideology embedded in the language, cultural practices, traditions, and perceptions of knowledge allow these institutions to remain racialized" (Gusa, 2010, p. 465). Critical race theorists argue that it is important to

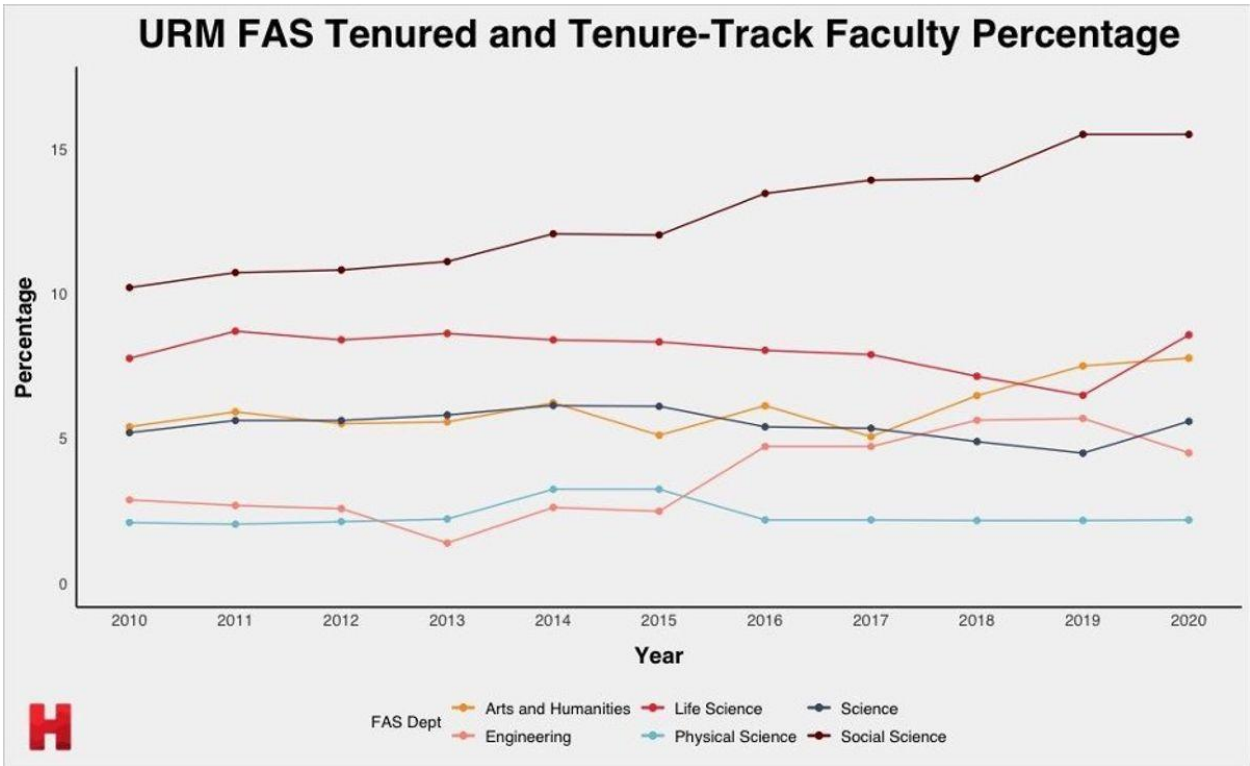
acknowledge the permanence of racism that is structurally embedded in PWIs, especially private PWIs, and to understand how structural inequality impacts Black women faculty who serve at these institutions.

Historically, Black women faculty have experienced significant inequalities at PWIs. These inequalities contribute to "high levels of isolation, stress and fatigue among female faculty, continuing unconscious and deep-seated discrimination and stereotyping by male colleagues, and a remarkably unbreakable glass ceiling" (Monroe et al., 2008, p. 217). Unfortunately, many Black women in the academy are subjected to gender-based inequalities as well as other forms of discrimination related to race.

Due to negative experiences with discrimination and racism and lack of institutional support, Black women faculty can potentially face multiple challenges on predominantly white college campuses. Martin et al. (2019) noted that Black professors are endangered and more susceptible to injustices as compared to their white counterparts, "especially given that PWIs, in particular, as structurally white institutions, are seen as sacred white spaces in which black bodies – black professors – represent an antagonism in that their presence cannot be adequately incorporated into the structure" (p. 2). Although Black faculty are present at PWIs, they are few in number, which can create a sense of hyper focus or hypervisibility in the academy. The hyper awareness of blackness adds another layer to Black women faculty's positionality. Research shows that Black women faculty experience isolation, invisibility, microaggressions, and other forms of racial and gender discrimination in academic spaces (Pittman, 2012; Walkington, 2017). A lack of representation of Black faculty at PWIs reveals much more than issues related to recruitment and retention. Martin et al. (2019) argue their absence points to a "set of practices and processes that are raced, gendered, and classed, policies and practices that have their origins

in the history of racism and the development of the religion of whiteness in America" (p. 2). A lack of representation has the potential to send a resounding message to the faculty, staff, and students regarding the equity and inclusivity of these spaces. Yet, many PWIs advertise their efforts to embrace diversity and create equitable learning environments. However, these institutions continue to struggle in these areas. As a telling example, the chart below indicates the percentage of underrepresented minority faculty at Harvard and further illustrates the phenomenon.

Figure 1. Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Percentage



The above graph shows the percentage of tenured or tenure-track faculty members per department who identify as underrepresented ethnic minorities (URM) out of the total. The data span from 2010 to 2020. The data collected shows the percentage of all faculty who identify as URM. This included Latino, Black or African American, Native American, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander identities. The data shows fairly slow growth of URM faculty over time

(Harvard University Annual Report, 2021). Although the data represents the combined number of URM, which includes African Americans, it does not specifically provide data on the number of Black women faculty at Harvard, which is considerably low since the total number of URM is less than 4 percent. The lack of Black women faculty representation is not limited to Harvard. National statistics from fall 2018 show that out of the 1.5 million faculty in degree-granting institutions, only 4% were Black and female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Historically, PWIs have been breeding grounds for oppressive practices, particularly among Black female faculty, regardless of their policies on diversity and inclusion (Matthews, 2016). The challenges that these women face can be even more daunting in the face of social unrest.

While research has been conducted on a large scale to explore the challenges of Black women faculty at large public institutions (Edwards et al., 2011; Patitu & Hinton, 2013; Walkington, 2017) there is limited research on the experiences of Black women faculty at private, predominately white institutions during periods of social conflict and civil unrest and while institutions responded with expressed commitments to diversity, inclusion, and social justice that were often not backed by any specific actions.

With the recent social and racial tensions of 2020, Black students, staff, and faculty are questioning the sincerity of diversity and solidarity statements due to poor campus racial climates, failure to enact social justice policy changes, and lack of institutional support. Many Black students and faculty believe that the statements are "empty rhetoric," because "after countless demonstrations and despite numerous pledges, the numbers of Black faculty members stay stagnant and Black student enrollments haven't increased" (Kolodner, 2020). In a telling example, the University of Iowa halted its diversity efforts only five months after making solidarity statements, specifically recommending that all diversity, equity, and inclusion work be

temporarily suspended (Flaherty, 2020a). The chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Rebecca Blank, released a statement after the death of George Floyd that received unfavorable responses. She stated, in part, "To our Black and Brown students, staff and faculty, I want to say unambiguously: You belong here, you are important to this campus, your lives matter and I am committed to your safety" (Kolodner, 2020). However, members of the Black Student Union "feel like it's completely lip service, with no actions and no specific next steps" (Kolodner, 2020). The takeaway then, is that some perceive campus statements as a litany of words with minimal to no real action. It is important for institutions to go beyond "words and gestures" and work to create real change. It is my hope that this study will fill in gaps in the research on the experiences of Black women faculty as they navigate PWIs, as well as provide PWIs with deeper insight into the issues that impact Black women faculty, and some ideas for creating substantive changes to policies and practices at predominantly white institutions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study is to explore Black female faculty's lived experiences as they navigated predominantly white institutions (PWIs) prior to and during a period of social injustice and racial tension in America. I examine these experiences during a period of intense social and racial unrest and the pandemic in late 2020. I pay particular attention to the stories of Black women faculty and the nuanced ways in which they experienced their institutions during this time. Through their stories, I gained knowledge about some of the ways each institution responded to the social and racial conflict of 2020 and how they supported Black faculty on their campuses. After careful analysis of the data collected from Black female faculty at these institutions, I offer suggestions for change that could potentially aid in increased representation and retention of Black women faculty at PWIs.

Research Questions

Two broad research questions guide my study:

1. What are the experiences of Black female faculty at predominately white institutions?
2. What impact did the pandemic and social and racial unrest of 2020 have on the lived experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs?

Motivation for, and Significance of the Study

This study is particularly important and interesting to me as a Black female professor working at a private PWI during a historic and monumental time of social unrest in this country. This has been a time where I and many others in higher education, especially Black faculty, are calling for action. The responses from PWIs have included verbal commitments to changing the culture and climate of their campuses. However, I am interested in how my participants experienced the actions taken to support the verbal commitments, particularly how policies, programs, and curriculum might have been restructured in support of Black faculty, social justice initiatives, and for the improvement of campus climate and student learning.

While pursuing my doctoral degree, I have also been teaching at a predominantly white, private university for the past five years. My experiences at an elite PWI have shaped my research and influenced my decision to further investigate the experiences of other Black female professors at private predominately white institutions. As a Black female professor, I have found it difficult at points to navigate white supremacy, white privilege, racism, and microaggressions at the university, while also maintaining my own identity, and finding support and resources for faculty who looked like me. With a small number of faculty of color on campus, I have also found it difficult to find support groups and safe spaces to reflect on my experiences on campus. This has led to isolation and failed and sometimes abandoned attempts at resistance due to fear of

retaliation and lack of collaboration and support from other faculty of color. In addition, I have also dealt with higher expectations and demands (as compared to my white counterparts), unfair evaluations, and attacks on my intellect as a Black, female professor. The stress and emotional labor involved in navigating this terrain can be traumatic for Black, female professors. This stress is compounded during times of social unrest.

This research is in no way an indictment of the university, administration, colleagues, or students where I have worked. It is, however, meant to bring awareness to historic, systemic problems and hopefully provide some ideas for action, while providing universities with potentially productive ways of addressing racism and discrimination on their campuses. It is my hope that my research will also add to the existing literature on Black women faculty's experience at PWI's and provide new insight into the experiences of Black women faculty, especially during periods of social unrest. My study is also intended to provide other Black faculty with insight on how to navigate predominately white higher education spaces, especially when there is intense public discussion and scrutiny of racial issues. It is further my hope that through this research, I can provide institutions with suggestions and strategies for improvement, and ways to effectively enact policies that positively impact the experiences of Black faculty and ultimately improve campus climate.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I explore the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs through the frames of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Black Feminist Thought (BFT), and Critical Race Feminism (CRF). These theories help to illuminate the relationship between systemic racism and white supremacy at PWIs. They have assisted me in bringing attention to the challenges of enacting institution policy reform in both word and deed. These theories also provide resources

for understanding and disrupting systemic and structural forms of racism. In combination, these theories provide tools for both critique and possibility.

Since my study deals with examining how racism, discrimination, and white supremacy might impact the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs, I use CRT to establish the connection among racism, white supremacy, and the experiences of Black women faculty. I specifically looked at the ways in which racism operates at PWIs to reinforce systems of oppression for Black women faculty and how institutional discourses legitimize these practices. Research was necessary to bring awareness to Black women's experiences with covert racism, discrimination, and white supremacy at PWI's. The conditions under which Black women faculty at PWI's work and how these conditions might affect their progress and retention deserved further investigation. My own identity as a Black woman who works at a PWI significantly influenced my interest in this study. I have experienced covert forms of racism, discriminatory practices, and white dominance in the workplace with little to no support from campus administrators, policy structures, or mentors.

In conjunction with CRT, I draw upon some tenets of Black Feminist Thought, a theory which brings into focus the experiences of Black women, their intersectionality and positionality in relation to class, gender, sexism, oppression, and racism. This theory is extremely useful in understanding the experiences of Black women faculty at PWI's. Black women are among the most marginalized groups in this country. They not only have to deal with issues of gender bias but also with issues of racism. For Black women, this positionality can be conflictive. Studies have shown that Black women faculty face stereotypes such as the "incompetent" Black educator, and the unapproachable, mean with an attitude, Black woman, which inhibit knowledge transfer, and negatively impact performance and evaluations (Aguirre, 2000; Stanley,

2006; Muhs et al., 2012). These stereotypes are based on white ideologies, and a preference for whiteness in white academic settings. Drawing on BFT, in this research I address issues of intersectionality, identity negotiation, resistance, and isolation that Black women faculty experience at PWIs. I also explore the role that white supremacy and hegemony play as barriers to support and to the enactment of policy changes.

Similarly, Critical Race Feminism (CRF) has been used to examine the intersection of race, class, and gender in the experiences of Black women (Berry, 2010; Kridel, 2010). In addition, CRF contributes sociological and historical lenses to exploring the experiences of Black women (Few, 2007). For these reasons, CRF is useful in the study of the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs. I agree with Berry (2010) that "critical race feminism places me and my sisters as women of color in the center, rather than the margins, of the discussion, debate, contemplation, reflection, theorizing, research, and praxis of our lives as we co-exist in dominant culture" (p. 23). Like CRT and BFT, CRF also supports using narrative, storytelling, and counterstories as strategies to disrupt dominant narratives and discourses. All of these elements were significant in this research study as I sought to understand the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs. I describe each of these theories in more detail below.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory historically stems from the field of critical legal studies, which seeks to address legal issues of racial inequalities in society. Lynn et al. (2002) suggest that Critical Race Theory (CRT) recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of the American society. Beginning with the assumption that institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture, critical race theory has been used by scholars in examining existing power structures which are based on white privilege and white supremacy. Such power structures

perpetuate the marginalization of people of color. Scholars use CRT to analyze the challenges and effects of race and racism on educational structures, practices, and discourses.

In recent years, CRT has expanded to address issues of racial inequality in several branches of society, including education. Critical race theorists examine the ways in which racism is perpetuated in society and ways in which the dominant culture wields power over marginalized groups. This framework helped me to explore how these issues impact Black women faculty and examine existing power structures and how these structures perpetuate white privilege and white supremacy. One characteristic of CRT that is central to the study was storytelling or counter storytelling, in which marginalized people share their experiences, helping to facilitate understanding of the multiple positionalities of marginalized individuals and groups of individuals. I use this framework to analyze the prevalence of white privilege/supremacy and the centering of whiteness and white interests on the four campuses in my study. The CRT framework allowed me to bring into focus the experiences of minoritized people with microaggressions, internalized racism and oppression, and systemic racism in academic settings.

In a study that is particularly relevant to my research, Gusa (2010) used Critical Race Theory as a framework to discuss the normalcy of whiteness and whiteness as a fixed structure in the educational system that complicates the effectiveness of diversity practices and policies. She uses CRT to discuss how racist ideology and structural and institutionalized racism at PWIs impact marginalized groups and overall campus climate. Gusa (2010) notes that "research has shown that African Americans experience their campuses more negatively" than whites (p. 465). This is primarily due to discrimination, racism, microaggressions, and white-based educational practices that create these negative experiences.

Similar to that of Gusa, in this research, I examine how racism, discrimination, and white supremacy impact the experiences of Black at PWIs. I looked to CRT to establish the connection among racism, white supremacy, and the experiences of Black women faculty. It is important to look at the ways in which racism operates at PWIs to reinforce systems of oppression for Black women faculty and how institutional discourses legitimize these practices. The conditions under which Black women faculty at PWIs work and how these conditions might affect their progress and mental states have been understudied.

Black Feminist Thought

In addition to CRT, my research will exemplify some tenets of Black Feminist Thought (BFT), which brings into focus the experiences of Black women, particularly their intersectional position in relation to class, gender, sexism, oppression, and racism. This theory is extremely useful in framing the experiences of Black women faculty at PWI's. Moreover, my research focuses on issues of equity and access in education as they relate to women of color, particularly Black women and on the silencing and marginalization of Black women in educational settings.

Mowatt and Malebranche (2013) use Black Feminism as a framework to study intersecting identities and to discuss the systemic oppression and academic invisibility of Black women. Similarly, I used this framework to bring to surface the experience of Black women faculty and how they navigate PWIs, which are historically sites of contention for minorities, particularly Blacks. Mowatt and Malebranche (2013) suggest that "the Black/female/body is under constant subjugation, scrutiny, and marginalization even within an academic setting, wherein the expectation is that people will be valued and judged for their ideas, not their race and/or gender" (p. 645). In other words, every aspect of the Black women is under scrutiny in the academy. This is a major problem that deserves further investigation.

Black Feminist Thought focuses on the experiences of Black women specifically and their struggle to minimize and ultimately eliminate inequalities related to race, gender, and class. Using CRT and BFT, I was able to analyze the experiences of marginalized groups, such as Black women faculty, and understand the dynamics between race and inequality through the strategies of storytelling or narratives. A central tenet of Black Feminist Thought that informed my study is that of standpoint epistemology. Standpoint epistemology emphasizes that those who understand and have experience with a phenomenon are the ones best suited to evaluate and make claims about its meaning (Collins, 2000). BFT offers a unique way in which to gain insight into the complexities of the challenges that Black women face with gender, class, sex, and race. It creates room for Black women to share their experiences and contributions to their work and society. Patricia Hill Collins (2000), creator of Black Feminist Thought designed four tenets for qualitative researchers to consider:

- lived experience as a criterion of meaning (what scholars call standpoint epistemology),
- the use of dialogue to assess knowledge claims,
- the ethic of caring, and
- the ethic of personal accountability

All of these tenets aid in helping researchers understand the interviewee as a participant with agency and history. Black women faculty offer a unique perspective on issues of racism, discrimination, and white supremacy at PWIs. The second tenet addresses the use of dialogue or the talk between subjects. Collins (2000) argues that all knowledge is valuable and should be tested for the presence of empathy and compassion. The third tenet of BFT is centered around an ethic of caring. Proponents of this tenet encourage talking from the heart with emotion as a guide to bridge the gap between intellect and emotion. Finally, the “ethic of accountability” was

designed for individuals to be accountable for their personal knowledge claims and individuals cannot be separated from the ideas that they create and share. Moreover, those at the metaphoric bottom have a unique view and position from which to explain social ills. The standpoint of members of marginalized groups, such as Black women faculty, offers a unique perspective on issues of racism, discrimination, and white supremacy at PWIs. I drew from this theory to unearth the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs.

Critical Race Feminism

Similar to and building upon CRT and BFT, Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is a critical approach to understanding of how race, class, and gender intersect which provides sociological and historical lenses to the experiences of Black women. The term critical race feminism was first coined by Richard Delgado (1995). The theory was initially used in law to address the legal status and rights of women of color. Since then, critical race theorists and feminist scholars have also incorporated CRF in their research. Critical Race Feminism can be used to examine the intersection of race, class, and gender in the experiences of Black women, but does not limit itself to any one racial and/or ethnic group (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Berry (2010) noted that

> critical race feminism focuses on the issues of power, oppression, and conflict centralized in feminist theory. It also leans on many of the tenets and elements of critical race theory: (a) addressing essentialism and antiessentialism and intersectionality, (b) the normalization of race and racism, (c) addressing interest convergence. (p. 151)

I use CRF in this study to explore the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs to assist with better understanding of the needs, desires, and barriers they face in those environments. Research from a critical race feminist perspective can also provide Black women

with strategies for coping and support resources for professional growth and development. O'Connor (2002) expressed "the need to examine institutions, policies, and social interactions and their expression in a particular space and time" (p. 856). Therefore, the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs can also be used to address structural racism within institutions that impact forward progress.

Discrimination, racism, and white supremacy are securely rooted in the fabric of many PWIs. These practices are not as overt as they have been in the past, but they exist and are in operation in often covert ways and are systematically ingrained to maintain inequality, perpetuate white supremacy, and preserve the status quo. While these systems of inequality work to benefit the dominant group, they are problematic for marginalized groups who suffer under these systems. I use Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Thought, and Critical Race Feminism as frameworks in my study to better understand how racism, discrimination, and white supremacy impact the experiences of Black women faculty in the academy.

Conclusion

The research on the experiences of Black women in higher education, particularly in predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is still ongoing. Although most of the research on Black women faculty suggests that they experience inequality in many forms, these women also experienced unique challenges at predominantly white institutions during the most recent period of social unrest and racial tension in the past two years. Through this research, I was able to unearth current social realities, and identify embedded systemic and structural problems that Black women faculty continue to face and the impact these have on their social and emotional wellbeing and ultimately their careers.

In order to change the climate for Black women at PWIs, we need to better understand and systematically address their experiences with racism, macroaggressions, microaggressions, and white supremacy. These systemic inequalities may contribute to the limited number of Black women represented in higher education. We also need to understand the policies and expressed commitments to supporting these faculty members, and whether they influence these women's experiences, especially during a climate of racial unrest. Through qualitative research informed by CRT, Black Feminist Thought, and Critical Race Feminism as frameworks, I examined the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs and to study policies and practices at the institutions where they work.

Overview of Chapters

The experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions must be documented in order to find solutions to the problems of race, racism, discrimination, white supremacy, and attrition of Black women faculty at PWIs. It is important to understand what factors contribute to the lack of representation and what measures should be taken to improve the experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions. The cries for representation are loud and urgent (Kelly et al., 2017). However, the responses from predominantly white institutions to these cries have often been in words only. This study is designed to specifically highlight the experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions and the circumstances of those experiences.

In chapter two, I provide an in-depth review of the literature that informs this study. I begin with a historical overview of racism in higher education, paying particular attention to who was provided access and who was not. I then discuss the presence of Black female faculty in higher education and their experiences with racism and discrimination and institutional responses

to hostile campus climates. In chapter three, I discuss the methodology, participant selection, research design, data collection, and data analysis strategies I used to conduct this study, as well as discuss issues of trustworthiness and limitations. In chapter four, I explore the themes that emerged from my interviews around existing challenges that Black women face at PWI prior to, during, and since the start of the pandemic and social unrest of 2020. In chapter five, I take a deeper dive into how participants navigated the pandemic and racial unrest of 2020, highlighting the major themes that I identified in analyzing their interviews. Finally, in chapter six I discuss the findings, offering recommendations and suggestions for future research and change within PWIs to counter the challenges Black women faculty face in these spaces and work towards additional representation and retention of Black women faculty.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Oppression is historical and is woven into the fabric of America. Women have been oppressed in this country since its inception. For women of color, they are doubly oppressed, as they are discriminated against on the basis of both race and gender. This is evident in almost every area of life for women of color, especially in the field of education. Women of color are significantly underrepresented in higher education, particularly at predominantly white institutions. The racial conflicts and challenges related to intersectionality have played a significant role in the opportunities made available to Black women at predominantly white institutions. The number of Black women who find their way into these academic spaces is small. In fact, of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2018, only 4% were Black female. Of that 4%, only 2% were full professors (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2021). Comparatively, the numbers for Back female representation are even lower at predominantly white institutions. Jones and Slate (2014) noted that the percentages of Black faculty at PWIs were lower than those of Back students enrolled. In addition, these institutions saw decreases in the percentages of full-time Black faculty between 1996 and 2016 (Krupnick, 2018). In these settings, Black women often experience covert forms of racism and barriers to advancement, which might contribute to dissatisfaction and ultimately their exodus.

The presence of Black women faculty on campus is critical as they "simultaneously assume the roles of scholars, researchers, educators, mentors, service providers, and social change agents, sometimes with aspirations for advancement up the hierarchy of supervisory, management, and administrative goals" (Harley, 2008, as cited in Wallace et al., 2014, p. 45). However, the fact that these women are underrepresented means that there may be underlying systemic problems that inhibit their inclusion. According to Wallace (2014), Black women

faculty often "work in isolation that can have detrimental effects on morale and job satisfaction, which may cause some of them to leave the academy altogether" (p. 45). This isolation is exacerbated when internal and external climates are unsettled. Lack of diversity and poor campus climates contribute greatly to the experiences of Black women at predominantly white institutions. Studies have shown that more diversity can contribute to a more well-rounded university population and can lead to less discriminatory acts on campus (Vanalstine, 2015). However, many predominantly white institutions struggle to provide a climate that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable for all, and therefore struggle to hire and retain Black women faculty. In this literature review, I discuss issues related to campus climate, diversity, and discrimination which impact the overall success and retention of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions.

I organize this literature review into six major sections. First, I discuss the history of racism in higher education. Second, I explore the systematic challenges Black women face in higher education, focusing in particular on white supremacy. Third, I describe the experiences of Black female faculty at PWIs and their challenges with microaggressions, stereotyping, and finding safe spaces. Fourth, I examine how Black women faculty utilize coping mechanisms such as negotiating their identities, self-silencing, isolation, and the creation of counterspaces to navigate PWIs. Fifth, I discuss PWI's rhetorical push for diversity and inclusion in contrast to inconsistency in establishing processes and policies that support the hiring and holistic development of Black faculty at these institutions. Finally, I discuss how PWIs might effectively impact the issues of diversity and inclusion and support Black female faculty as they pursue longevity at PWIs.

History of Racism in Higher Education

Racism and white supremacy are deeply rooted in the history of the United States. Racism, discrimination, and inequality are part of America's legacy. These ideologies have been engraved in the foundation of the American landscape, and the practices that are part of these ideologies have created a divide between people from different races, genders, classes, and abilities. Moreover, these ideologies contribute to the production and maintenance of social stratification, as well as gaps in learning and social mobility for minorities. The weight of oppression has impacted schooling significantly. The history of education in America cannot be adequately explored without discussing its entanglements with racism and discrimination. Minorities in this country have faced tremendous difficulties in schools throughout history. The practices of discrimination, racism, and segregation created an unequal education system in America.

Since its inception, there has been controversy and debate about the nature and purpose of the education system. Decisions about who could and could not attend school, or where students could attend school, have always been made by power wielders, particularly white men. Since this country was established, white males have led education efforts and catered them specifically towards other whites. In fact, for almost two centuries after the first institution of higher education was established in America, "no black student received a degree in any shape or form from an American college or university" (Slater, 1997, p. 47), and as late as the 1960, many of our nation's most prestigious PWIs in the South did not admit blacks (Slater, 1997). Although Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was established to prevent discrimination and exclusion from participation in any program receiving federal funds, even as late as 2003, higher education institutions had made only limited progress toward increasing the representation of Blacks

among their faculty (Perna et al., 2007). Whites have always been afforded better educational opportunities, better schools, better facilities, more experienced teachers, and an overall better-quality education. This centering of whiteness has caused great harm to Blacks and other minorities in this country. Blacks and other minorities have historically fought for the rights to equality in education well into the twentieth and twenty-first century.

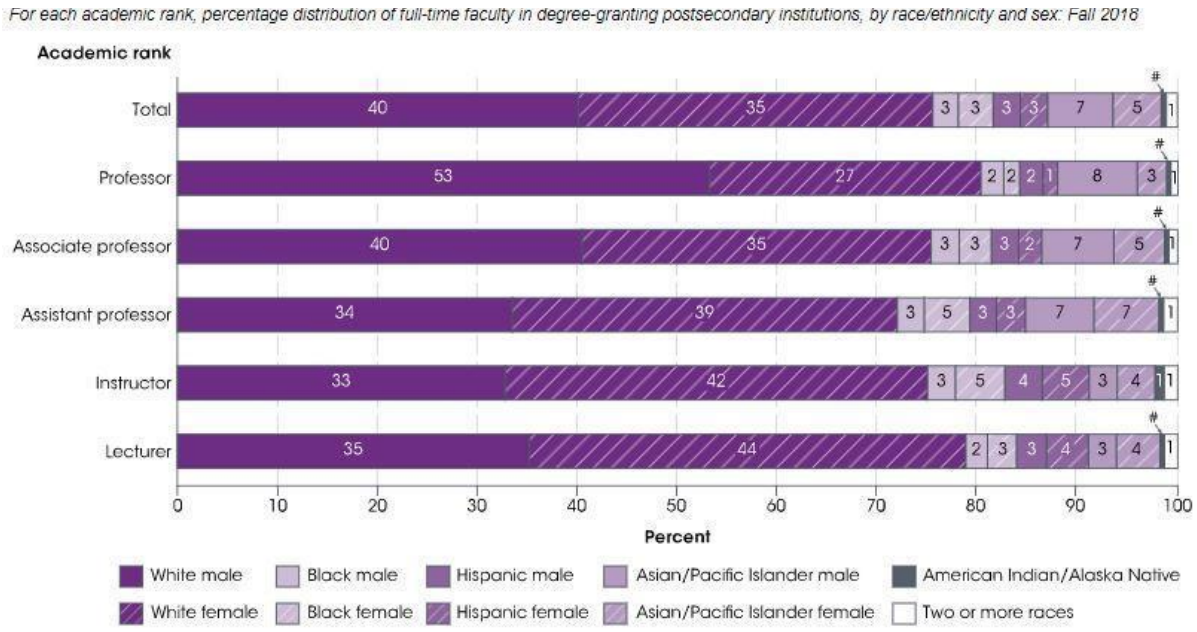
Systemic Challenges of Black Women in Higher Education

Institutional racism is not a new phenomenon. Black people have been discriminated against in the American education system since its inception. Historically, laws in America were designed to prohibit the education of slaves. It was against the law for slaves to read and write. These laws were specifically instituted to maintain the system of oppression and white supremacy that formed the basis of American colonization. After the Civil War, Blacks began to gain access to education through the benevolence of missionaries and the creation Black operated schools (Allen & Jewell, 2002). However, Jim Crow laws would further thwart the progress of Blacks with their "separate but equal" mandates. Those with power and privilege maintained their positionality through oppressive tactics against marginalized groups, for example, through blocking access and resources, which has had residual effects that continuously hinder the forward progress of people from these groups (Moore, 2017; Bell et al., 2003). Black women have found these challenges especially difficult to overcome due to their double minority status.

Black women made their entrance into higher education more than a century ago, first at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and later at white institutions. However, few researchers have systematically studied their experiences with racism and sexism in the academy. Carter et al. (1988) note that "historically, black women have been one of the most

isolated, underused, and consequently demoralized segments of the academic community" (p. 98). Oppression has deep roots in higher education. Pittman (2012) argues that in higher education, one illustration of racial oppression is the underrepresentation and distribution of Black faculty. In colleges around the country, Blacks hold very few academic leadership positions. Beyond being underrepresented, Black faculty are concentrated in lower faculty ranks (i.e., 6.2% of assistant professors, 5.4% of associate professors, and 3.2% of full professors, Pittman, 2012, p. 82). The numbers are even more shocking for Black women scholars. The figure below shows that in Fall 2018, out of the 1.5 million faculty in degree-granting institutions, only 4% were Black female faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

Figure 2. Full-time Faculty in Degree-granting Postsecondary Institutions



This chart gives a clear picture of the inequality that exists within higher education institutions. When comparing the "small percentages of Black and white women who are full professors…with the overwhelming majority of white men who are full professors, this data reveal that race- and gender-based discrimination—whether overt, subtle, or institutional—

continues to permeate the academy" (Wallace et al., 2014, p. 46). Many Black women faculty are promoted at slower rates in the academy and often remain in the lower ranks, which means they receive lower wages. Their challenges in obtaining and advancing in academic positions contribute to high levels of stress, fatigue, isolation, continuing unconscious and deep-seated discrimination and stereotyping by male colleagues, and a tremendous amount of difficulty breaking through barriers to success (Monroe et al., 2008, p. 217). The challenges that women face in general are even more complicated for Black women in the academy, who also face racial discrimination.

White Supremacy

Race, identity, and attitudes toward privilege, power, and supremacy have played major roles in American history and issues related to these topics have undoubtedly spilled over into American schools, including higher education. Since the creation of the first educational institution on American soil, whites have maintained controlling interest and dominance in American schools. Throughout the history of most predominantly white institutions in this country "oppressive practices have long manifested to protect white property rights" (Patel, 2016, p. 663). Whites have enjoyed structural advantages and privileges that minorities have not. In this system of white supremacy, education can be used as "a tool… of systemic racism" (Blackmore, 2018, p. 59). White supremacy, as described by Gusa (2010), is a system that confers racial dominance on [Whites] from birth.

> White privilege is the conferred dominance of Whiteness. This interlocking privileged dominance may take an active form, such as overt racism or an embedded, systemic form that, along with the White ideology of meritocracy and individualism, can lead to the failure of many Whites to detect bestowed privilege. (p. 470)

With this superiority, whites believe that their "ideas, knowledge, values, societal roles and norms, and understanding of history are universally and exclusively correct" (Gusa, 2010, p. 472). This view makes it difficult for some whites to see how they might be complicit in perpetuating injustice.

Black professors face significant racial challenges due to the continuing legacy of white supremacy. However, the impact is often even more severe for Black female professors who hold double minority statuses at PWIs. Historically, these institutions that are built on the foundations of white ideology and supremacy are in no hurry to dismantle or deconstruct those privileges and willingly hand over or share the power that has been transferred to them through white privilege. White privilege refers to the "advantages that are taken for granted by whites and that cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context …such as government, community, workplace, schools, etc." (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 24). Those who hold racial power are rarely willing to advocate for others or see the advantage in creating change that compromises their status. Even with high attention to diversity at these many predominantly white institutions, Black women faculty are still only represented in single digit percentages, and they "have not made significant headway in the academy. They continue to be clustered in disciplines considered to be traditional or 'feminine,' in the lower academic ranks, and in part-time or temporary positions" (Patitu & Tack, 1998, p. 8). In a study conducted by Patitu (2002) on the experiences of five African American women faculty in higher education, one participant noted frustration in the institution's diversity efforts, citing that the institution was behind the curve when it came to recruiting, mentoring, and maintaining faculty of color. Slow advancement in these areas is another way the PWIs remain complicit in perpetuating whiteness and inequality.

One way in which whiteness is perpetuated at white institutions is through white ascendancy or white dominance. Being white has its advantages. In fact, "being perceived as white carries more than a mere radical classification; it is a social and institutional status and identity imbued with legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 24). Cheryl Harris (1993) calls this "whiteness as property." Whiteness as property is marked by the right to ownership based on being white, and this privilege and or entitlement attributed to whites can be traced back to the foundation of the United States and the institution of slavery. Evidence of white supremacy in higher education is clear when Black presence or representation is assessed at predominantly white institutions. At most predominantly white institutions, the population of faculty, staff, and administrators consists of 80-90% white people (Kayes, 2006). The disproportionate number of whites in these environments creates an often implicit and hidden system of advantage and dominance. White opinions and ideologies are favored and control these spaces.

Predominantly white institutions of higher education are typically breeding grounds for the systemic racism that perpetuates white supremacy. Black women who work in these environments often experience issues with lack of support, harassment, denial of necessary resources to perform their job functions, verbal abuse, and face being ignored, isolated, and alienated (Patitu, 2002). Such racist contexts decrease their access to equality, limit their capital in these spaces, and further entrench white supremacy at these institutions. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) described the intersections of property and Whiteness in four distinct terms: "1. Rights of disposition; 2. Rights to use and enjoyment; 3. Reputation and status property; and 4. The absolute right to exclude" (p. 19). In other words, being white has unspoken benefits that are not afforded to others and often negatively impact people of color. Although the issues of

whiteness and privilege are present and imposing to minorities in predominantly white institutions, they are often invisible to whites. However, the effects are felt significantly by people of color, and resultantly shape their experiences at predominantly white institutions. Elon et al. (2018) noted that "microaggressions, tokenism, impostorship, and racial battle fatigue attest to the psychological torment regularly visited upon Black humanity in higher education" (p. 188). The experiences of Blacks at PWIs must be made visible to the academy and should not be ignored. The voices of the invisibly visible must be heard in order to provide equitable spaces for Blacks at PWIs.

Black Women Faculty Experiences at PWIs

Blacks have suffered under overt racism in America for decades. Although legal discrimination was outlawed in this country with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the discrimination never actually ended. The discrimination that Blacks face now is more covert than overt. This is often reflected in the academy. Experiences with racism and discrimination and the effects of systemic and structural disadvantage can be crippling and negatively impact the experiences of Black women in the academy. It seems that some of the old slavery ideologies of the past have remained a staple in many universities in America. Squire et al. (2018) suggest "that old ideologies and tools for oppressing and marginalizing people of color are connected to newer strategies of repression and policing within universities" (pp. 2-3). This policing of Black bodies in universities is manifested through policies, behavior, and school culture. Matias (2015) details her experiences with whiteness and pain in what she calls the academic neoplantation, suggesting that many faculty of color are expected to

> sit next to [their] white administrators, those who expect [them] to behave like Uncle Toms… under the surveilling eyes of the college's administration, [and] like trained dogs

> [they] are expected to bark a false truth about the romance of being a faculty of color in the academy. (p. 62)

Matias (2015) notes that she was "forced to sit back and be an observer, not a participant…forced to follow white suit by denying the reality of race" (p. 63). Whiteness, colonialism, and imperialism, which were essential to slavery and the establishment of plantations still "exist within our higher education institutions today… and campuses [are] engage[d] in contemporary plantation politics" (Matias, 2015, p. 63). Dancy et al. (2018) extend this plantation theme, discussing the relationship between white universities and the exploitation of Black bodies, noting, for example, that "Black athlete bodies are accumulated and fungible within historically White institutions" (p. 185). In addition, newly hired Black faculty express "feeling targeted and tokenized for their racial identity…As opposed to being recruited for expertise in their academic field, Black faculty are hired to implement institutional diversity initiatives or teach diversity to White colleagues and students" (Kelly et al., 2017, p. 307). Black faculty often become higher education service workers, completing activities that take away from more important work (in terms of promotions), including research. However, when Black faculty decline service and mentoring tasks, they can be perceived as troublemakers (Kelly et al., 2017). People of color, and particularly Black people, are "exploited in various ways for economic gain at the sake of their humanity" (Squire et al., 2018, p. 3). Faculty of color can suffer under the unrealistic expectations of their "new master," monitoring their bodies and interactions to appropriately assimilate and conform to the White institutional norms.

Describing the challenges of people of color in higher education, Matias (2015) shares counterstories which "reveal how the invisibility of whiteness in the academy creates a plantation-like renaissance that exploits faculty of color" (p. 1). Matias explores the concept of a

new or revived plantation, what she calls a neoplantation. The site of the neoplantation is the university, in which white ideology is prevalent and Black bodies are commodified to enhance business. Too often faculty of color are reduced to faces and bodies on websites and brochures, and researchers of color are purchased in "five-to seven-year tenure-tracked increments so that one plantation appeals over others, as if faculty of color are spectacles (DeBord, 2006), caged in like the Filipinos during the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair" (p. 3).

In addition to exploitation to enhance visibility of diversity and support diversity initiatives, Croom and Patton (2016) argue that Black women faculty are "exposed to racially toxic environments that act as the catalyst for their numerical underrepresentation, as well as their invisibility" (p. 16). Existing literature further supports the gravity of racial and discriminatory practices at PWIs. Pittman (2012) conducted a study of 14 Black faculty members at a Midwestern doctoral-granting research institution and found that 81% of the faculty interviewed believed race played a significant role in their campus experiences, while 71% reported their race-related experiences on campus were negative. In research on discriminatory practices at PWIs, Zambrana et al. (2017) argue that "chronic racial discrimination or daily microaggressions play a role in the frequency with which everyday discrimination is experienced. This includes being treated with less respect and living in an environment of fear, insults, threats, or harassment" (p. 210). Similarly, Aguirre (2000) noted that "women of color encounter more barriers to professional socialization and success in the academic workplace" than any other group (p. 52). Although Black women faculty face significant and varied barriers at predominantly white institutions, particular reoccurring barriers highlighted in literature include racial microaggressions, stereotyping, racial battle fatigue, and resistance from students.

Microaggressions

A common form of expressed racism in the academy is microaggressions. Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). In a study conducted with 10 Black women in senior leadership positions, Holder et al. (2015) noted "racial microaggression themes including environmental manifestations, stereotypes about Black women, assumed universality of the Black experience, invisibility and exclusion" (p. 164). These microaggressions often come from a racialized perspective and often target Black women and other marginalized groups. For example, a person of color may be treated as if he or she is not qualified for the job or told they only got the job because of affirmative action. Another example is a Black woman being told her voice is too loud or being asked why she always looks angry. These microaggressions create toxic, hostile work environments that can lead to confrontations and job loss.

Black men and women alike experience gender and racial microaggressions. However, in their study on the prevalence of perceived racial microaggressions, Donovan et al. (2013) surveyed 187 Black women in higher education and found when compared to Black men, Black women were at a distinct disadvantage due to the intersection of racism and sexism. This dual status often puts Black women in double jeopardy because they may experience discrimination given their dual lowered societal status as Black and female. What's more disturbing is that 96% of Black women "report experiencing microaggressions at least a few times a year (Donovan et al., 2013), indicating the pervasiveness of microaggressions" (Gomez, 2015, p. 127). These

statistics represent an alarming phenomenon for Black women, especially if the degree to which these women experience microaggressions continues to increase.

In addition to the intersectionality of race and gender and the disadvantages that come with that intersectionality, Black women are also often expected to carry the burden of being a spokesperson for their race and gender group. McCabe (2009) argues that "experiences such as these [unrealistic expectations], covert verbal and non-verbal indications on the part of professors or peers that they are different, leave black women with a sense of anxiety and isolation" (p. 142). McCabe (2009) also reports that at predominately white institutions, Black women "expressed frustration over others expecting them to represent their entire racial or race-gender group" (p. 142). The constant exposure to racial and gender microaggressions such as racist jokes, minimizing racial situations, and expecting group representation can, over time, negatively impact one's mental and emotional well-being and job security. Unfortunately, this is a reality for most Black female faculty in the academy and many struggle to contend with and navigate these oppressive tactics.

Navigating Stereotypes

Racial stereotypes are not merely figments of the imagination. They are a reality and part of the lived experience of many people of color. Historically, Black women have faced barriers related to negative stereotypes in the workplace which may cause them to be excluded in many ways and treated as invisible. Some of these negative stereotypes include mammy, supportive women, superwoman, crazy woman with an attitude, hostile, aggressive, and intellectually inferior (Holder et al., 2015). In a study on the effects of workplace stressors in the lives of 47 Black women in Tennessee, New York, and Massachusetts, participants noted that "workplace stressors …were primarily based on stereotypes held by their employers and coworkers that

hampered their ability to secure employment or be promoted" (Hall et al., 2012, p. 220). This phenomenon is true for many Black women who decide to teach at predominantly white institutions. They often face the challenges of dealing with historic stereotypes and prejudices held by some white people on campus. When they do not live up to these perceptions, they are viewed negatively.

In their study of Black women and racial and gender inequality in the workplace, Reynold-Dobbs et al. (2008) tie the history of slavery and racism in American to the pervasive stereotypes such as mammy. Much like the mammy on a plantation, who's only job was to be the nurturing caretaker for white plantation owner's family, Black women in the workplace are often expected to perform similar nurturing roles that take up their time and limit their mobility. Negative images and stereotypes of Black women in the workplace can impact their ability to progress professionally and often produce damaging effects. The role of mammy has established itself in the workplace. Black women who are viewed as Mammy are oftentimes placed in support-type positions in organizations with very little vertical mobility. Black women who exemplify this image may be limited to minority, diversity, or other support-typed positions, which allows for little to virtually no vertical mobility (Reynold-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 12).

Black faculty often report an excessive burden of service at PWIs. These burdens come in the form of a disproportionate number of appointments to university committees, and heavy student advising loads with Black students (Kelly et al., 2017). Once these roles have been assigned, the opportunities for Black women faculty to progress within the organization may be limited or nonexistent. This puts them at a disadvantage in the tenure process, thus forcing them to continue these practices and carry the extra burden or leave the university. Too often the expectation is for Black women faculty at PWIs to embody the mammy role of being "caring,

self-sacrificing, and devoted to the welfare and preservation of whiteness much like mammies did while working in the service of white slave owners or mistresses" (Merriweather, 2019, p. 73). Unfortunately, problems arise when Black women faculty do not conform or

> coddle and kowtow to the needs of students, colleagues, and the institution and fail to perform the role of mammy. Attempting to maintain professional and personal integrity in one's work at the expense of the mammy stereotype threat may be characterized in unflattering ways: not being a team player, questionable judgment, or doubting ability. (Merriweather, 2019, p. 74)

Again, this labeling serves as a punishment and means by which to withhold information, opportunities, and promotions for noncompliance and conformity to white, dominant ideology. The backlash Black women faculty face is very similar to the backlash that slaves received when they refused to comply with the masters demands on the plantation. If Black women resist the role of mammy, they become the new representation (neo-slave) of the disobedient slave who must be watched and receive constant correction. This correction does not come with physical lashings in the contemporary higher education setting, but the psychological effects may be much the same.

Another stereotype that Black women faculty encounter and work to combat at PWIs is the notion that they lack intelligence or are not as competent as their white colleagues. This is a perception that Black women faculty struggle to overcome not only with students, but also with the many white faculty and staff on campus. The external conflict that Blacks encounter on a daily basis has the ability to impact them physically, emotionally, and psychologically. In fact, "in order to survive psychologically and physically in a predominantly white institution and environment, [Black women faculty] often develop navigation skills... and alter [their] language

and [express themselves] differently to avoid confirming negative stereotypes of Black women" (Dickens & Chavez, 2017, p. 767). As a result, some of these women remove "aspects of ethnic cultural identity to assimilate to the dominant White culture" (Dickens & Chavez, 2017, p. 761). Stereotypes such as assumptions about lower intelligence, lower class, and criminality of Black people and the challenges that come along with these stereotypes often manifest in forms of self-hating and internalized racism that may additionally plague some Black Americans (Watkins et al., 2010; Gomez, 2015). Consistent stressors of racism, discrimination, and microaggressions can negatively impact one's mental health.

Racial Battle Fatigue and Emotional Labor

Many Black faculty on predominantly white college campuses face racial discrimination on a consistent basis, whether in overt or covert ways. Constantly dealing with these attacks can cause what Smith (2010) coined as racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue is the physical and emotional distress that one feels "from frequently confronting racially based dilemmas as part of their postsecondary experiences" (p. 266). He argues that the stress and trauma related to daily battles with racism, as well as macro and microaggressions, can cause psychological effects. Smith (2010) states that

> racial battle fatigue is manifested when the physiological, psychological, and emotional strain imposed upon persons belonging to racially marginalized, oppressed, and stigmatized groups becomes too much to bear. A certain amount of these individuals' emotional and physical energies that could otherwise be used for productive and creative intellectual ideas and professional development goals are dedicated instead to fighting against or warding off the daily doses of racism, or macroaggressions and microaggressions, they encounter. (p. 269)

Racial battle fatigue can cause high levels of stress that may result in psychological conditions such as anxiety, anger, and frustrations that can lead to physiological symptoms that can be debilitating (Smith, 2010). These stressors and psychological issues can cause paralyzing effects that hinder performance and limit opportunities for advancement.

In her research describing her experiences with whiteness and pain in the academic neoplantation, Matias (2014) discusses the danger of consistent racial conflict among Black faculty on white college campuses. She uses counterstorytelling, a strategy of critical race theory, and womanist prose to paint a picture of the emotional labor that she and other faculty of color experience through daily interactions with racism. She also discusses racial battle fatigue, which she describes as the "response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that results from facing racism daily" (p. 1). While racial battle fatigue is characterized by the physical and psychological stress imposed on racially marginalized groups, in part due to the amount of energy used to cope with racism and daily microaggressions, emotional labor involves the actual work enacted by marginalized groups in white academic settings. Miller et al. (2019) argue that "faculty of color are more likely than their White peers to perform more service-related duties and serve in 'diversity' capacities on committees, which are largely unrewarded in tenure systems and lead to cultural taxation" (p. 492). Additional diversity work in and out of the classroom, service activities, advising and mentoring students of color, while managing daily microaggressions, all add to the burden of navigating PWIs. Problematically, many Black women faculty experience emotional labor and racial battle fatigue consistently at PWIs. They also face resistance from students and colleagues who question their intelligence and competence.

Student Resistance

Black women faculty at PWIs often face resistance in the classroom, particularly form white students, that may trigger self-silencing. In her study on the student perceptions of classrooms and professors at a predominantly white university, Hendrix (1997) found that students regularly question the credibility of Black professors and held them to more stringent standards than they do white professors. In fact, many Black women faculty suffer harsh treatment such as harassment and verbal abuse from students (Pope & Joseph, 1997).

In a study exploring classroom teaching challenges faced by Black faculty at predominantly white universities, McGowan (2000) describes three patterns in the accounts of Black women faculty regarding classroom interactions with white students: (1) critiques of teaching effectiveness, (2) challenges to faculty authority, and (3) lack of respect from students. As Black women faculty face attacks on their intellect and challenges to their authority, they also have to negotiate their race and gender, while simultaneously combatting the stereotypes of the nurturing mammy or the mean, "loudmouth," Black women. In addition, many faculty members of color report negative experiences with students inside and outside the classroom. These experiences include challenges to their authority and knowledge, disrespectful attitudes and behavior, and misguided complaints about their teaching to senior faculty and administrators (Stanley, 2006). Faculty of color also report negative student comments on evaluations, which can impact their morale and satisfaction with the campus climate (McGowan, 2000). In a study of Black faculty and academic racism conducted at Penn State University, 8 out 10 Black faculty participants reported experiencing racism within the first three years of appointment. Black faculty reported being "called racist names by students" and subjected to racial slurs that have appeared on Black faculty's vehicles and written in student evaluations of teacher effectiveness,

including the term “nigger” (King et al., 2020). These stereotypes and negative interactions within the white academic community have caused many Black women faculty emotional and intellectual hardship. Black women faculty have struggled to find mentorship and support within their disciplines or campus communities.

Black Women Faculty Navigating PWIs

Negotiating Identity

Black women hold a distinct positionality of double marginalization that has the potential to offer unique experiences in the workplace. This positionality can influence how Black women show up or present themselves in the workplace (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). One issue that Black faculty members struggle over in practice is double consciousness. Goings et al. (2018) discuss double consciousness, saying it may also “encompass social identities such as race, class, gender, family…and professional identities. Together, these identities and the contexts in which they evolve impact how Black school [faculty] see themselves, make decisions, and think about how others perceive them” (p. 36). This identity conflict forms the basis of the internal struggle that Black faculty experiences as part of their desire “to be accepted and respected members of society, and their desire to have a voice” (Collins, 2001, as cited in Wallace, et al., 2014, p. 45). However, in the desire to be accepted and respected in the academy, Black women often have to navigate double consciousness.

The concept of double consciousness was first coined and recognized in the late 1800s by W.E.B. DuBois. DuBois noted that people of color carried a labor intense burden that other groups did not have to bear. This burden of “having to perform the dominant culture’s norms as well as your own” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 68) creates an internal dynamic that alters Black people’s freedom to fully express themselves, physically and emotionally, in white spaces.

It also presents an internal struggle that results in suppression and often denial of self to fit into the existing dominant culture norms. In his book, *Souls of Black Folk,* DuBois (1903) explains that double consciousness is,

> a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (pp. 2-3)

This two-ness that DuBois describes is the divided self that produces the internal struggle that some faculty of color experience at PWIs. The desire to be one's whole self, while also acknowledging the expectations of white American standards, is pervasive and unyielding. This double consciousness often causes one to negotiate, shift, or perform their identity differently in predominantly white spaces than they might at home or with family and friends.

Every educator brings their identity with them to their respective academic locations. However, those identities are often challenged when teachers of color feel the need to assimilate or dismiss their own language and cultures to meet the demands of the dominant culture or to fit in. Incidents of struggling to fit in a white world are far too common for Black people. Their performance, which is rooted in double consciousness, is what Jackson (2002) refers to as identity shifting or identity negotiation, "which is the alteration of one's actions, speech, and appearance to adjust to cultural norms within a given environment" (as cited in Dickens & Chavez, 2018, p. 760). Specifically, identity shifting involves not only changing how one speaks, but it also can alter one's behavior as well as other facets of the individual's sense of self. Jones

and Shorter-Good (2004) suggest that the process of identity shifting is a conscious act, and the individual is often fully aware of his or her behaviors. Whereas other times, the "shifting is done unconsciously in an automatic manner by changing one's thoughts and ways of thinking to fit in with a dominant social group" (p. 34). Dickens and Chavez (2017) note that "Black women may shift their identities to conform to the professional standards and dominant cultural values of the workplace among colleagues…while also managing the expectations and values associated with their roles in Black communities" (p. 760). This shifting or double consciousness often takes place in white spaces, and Black women find themselves utilizing "multiple competing and contradictory identities that make it difficult or nearly impossible to have a collective and integrated identity" (Goings et al., 2018, p. 35). This reality can result in conditions of trauma in educational settings for Black women faculty at PWIs. This inner struggle has the potential to produce negative feelings that are internalized and cause individuals to "to question, belittle, and degrade themselves—as this is what happens to those living under oppression and hatred" (DuBois, 1903, p. 13). This conflict with identity and professional presence among Black women faculty is not only a problem that needs to be addressed in the academy, but in the Black professional community as a whole. The emotional labor involved in consistently negotiating one's identity is exhausting and can negatively impact the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs, especially when there is also a negative campus climate. Campus climate plays a major role in Black women faculty's experiences and how they navigate the campus.

Self-Silencing and Isolation

In addition to utilizing navigational skills to cope with negative stereotypes, many Black women faculty take on a resistance posture in response to these stressors. They experience what is called the frozen effect, which inhibits their ability to do their job well. The frozen effect is the

process by which individuals remove themselves from toxic environments and situations to avoid additional harm brought on by racism or discrimination. This process is achieved through self-silencing. Dickens and Chavez (2017) suggest that the frozen effect is:

> consistent with the self-silencing concept, which suggests that to create and maintain safety within relationships, women may silence certain feelings, thoughts, and actions. It is possible that Black women who face discrimination silenced themselves to prevent further experiences of discrimination and to reduce being viewed as threatening (Bryant et al., 2005). Over time, self-silencing may contribute to a decline in self-esteem and feelings of losing one's self. (p. 767)

The trauma that many Black women faculty experience due to discriminatory situations and practices in predominately white academic spaces can cause physical, emotional, and psychological issues that negatively impact their lives and profession. To counter the effects of self-silencing, which often leads to isolation, Black women faculty take on resistance strategies by making allies and connecting with communities of color or by "creating academic [groups] with Black women or other women of color" (Walkington, 2017, p. 59). This "creation of parallel institutions within academe is to ensure the physical survival of the Black woman academic" (Hinton, 2010, p. 399). However, this burden should not rest upon Black women faculty alone. It is vitally important for the academy to acknowledge these struggles and work to change them.

Coping and Counterspaces

As the research has shown, the predominantly white campus can be a hostile environment for Black female faculty. In order to cope with the racial discrimination, stereotypes, and white dominance that most experience in at PWIs, Black women faculty often retreat to internal and

external safe spaces. These spaces are sometimes referred to as counterspaces, or places in which Black women create or identify communities that support each other as they navigate their marginalized identities on campuses. A main characteristic of counterspaces is the sense of belonging that members of marginalized groups feel when their needs are shared and supported by those of a larger group (Case & Hunter, 2012). Many Black women faculty retreat to these spaces, because they feel isolated or excluded in the regular academic setting. These Black women experience what Collins (1999) calls the "outsider within" status. According to Collins (1999), "outsider-within identities are situational identities that are attached to specific histories of social injustice—they are not a decontextualized identity category divorced from historical social inequalities that can be assumed by anyone at will" (p. 86). In consideration of this concept, Howard-Hamilton (2003) noted that African American women in higher education

> have been invited into places where the dominant group has assembled, but they remain outsiders because they are still invisible and have no voice when dialogue commences. A sense of belonging can never exist because there is no personal or cultural fit between the experiences of African American women and the dominant group. (p. 21)

As an alternative to the oppressive climate that often exists at PWIs, Black women faculty have created their own social and academic counterspaces as a means of coping with incidents of racism, discrimination, and white supremacy. These "counterspaces serve as sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solorzano et al., 2000, p. 70). In these counterspaces, Black women faculty can find solace in sharing their experiences with others who share aspects of their identity and gain valuable insight on how to navigate white territory.

In an effort to combat some of the negative experiences that Black women faculty face at PWIs, Black feminist scholars suggest that Black women should be involved in networks that provide support and opportunities to connect with other Black women scholars. These networks act at safe havens for Black women faculty, as these spaces are created from them and facilitated by them. West (2017) defined a professional counterspace as "a professional development opportunity intentionally designed by and for similarly situated, underrepresented individuals to convene with one another in a culturally affirming environment, where the reality of their experiences are held central " (p. 285). These spaces are critical not only for the social, emotional, and professional growth and development of Black women faculty, but also for their retention at PWIs. In a study on the impact of counterspaces on African American female administrators, West (2017) found that African American women in higher education who engaged in counterspaces enhanced their professional advancement and personal development and were better prepared to deal with microaggressions.

Campus Climate

How faculty, students, and staff experience the campus climate affects their views of the entire campus community. This is especially true when it comes to issues of racism in our current environment. However, those who are most directly impacted by the decisions institutions make in regard to diversity, inclusion, and equity are often members of minoritized groups. Predominantly white institutions have historically struggled to foster a healthy campus climate, and many are left with chilly or hostile climates in which marginalization and discrimination are a direct result of persistent white ideology and white supremacy (Gusa, 2010). At PWIs, white culture permeates the language, traditions, and learning requirements, making them all sites of racialization. This whiteness of spaces is something that typically has not been

considered or examined sufficiently as campuses attempt to diversify the racial composition of the faculty.

Discussions of campus climate involve the experiences of individuals and groups on a campus and the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals. Hurtado (1992) suggests that campus climate consists of the attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Climate involves the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential. A healthy campus climate is grounded in respect, infused with consistent dialogue that is inclusive of various perspectives, and shows evidence of civil interactions. Although exchanges across lines of difference may not always be comfortable, they are necessary for the growth and development of the campus community. Campus leadership should consistently measure the health of the campus climate by evaluating the perceptions of members of the campus, the experiences of individuals on the campus, and the perceptions of the institution's actions toward creating an inclusive and equitable environment.

In order to create a positive campus climate that embraces diversity, Smith et al. (2007) argue that "faculty and administrators to help eliminate a hostile campus racial climate in a proactive effort to create a true multicultural, racially diverse, and welcoming university environment for all students" (p. 579). A positive campus climate that embraces diversity is especially important for Black women scholars in the academy who bear the brunt of covert racial and gender discrimination on college campuses. In fact, leaders and administrators should recognize the expertise and value that Black women bring to the academy. Patton and Haynes (2018) suggest,

> constructing a vision of Black women as possibility models requires that institutional leaders do several things. First, they must contend with the uneasy tension of recognizing

> that previous approaches to institutional change contributed to rebuilding the "Master's House." Second, they must grapple with their own silencing and erasure of Black women, while simultaneously benefiting from their labor as students, administrators, faculty, support staff, and custodial staff. (p. 12)

Institutional leaders may be able to recognize past failures in changes to the campus climate and how they might have been complicit in exacerbating issues of racism and discrimination.

Additionally, for institutional change to be transformative it must actually advance racial equity. This means being proactive and creating new policies and procedures to positively affect change. However, this should be done in cooperation with diverse groups of people on campus. In effect, what "institutional leaders should consider is their capacity and willingness to galvanize diverse groups of people and allow space for the voices of those most marginalized to occupy the center" (Patton & Haynes, 2018, p. 13). However, centering the voices of the most marginalized would call for a significant cultural shift from universities. This can be a difficult challenge for predominantly white institutions, but one that they must be willing to accept, particularly since this type of culture shift may create a more positive campus climate. It is important for leaders at PWIs to analyze the ways in which their schools are structured and how issues of inequality might perpetuate injustices and maintain the status quo. It is equally important to examine how covert discriminatory practices might impact the social mobility, academic advancement, and overall life chances of marginalized groups, particularly Black women. In a study focused on the experiences and concerns of Black faculty at PWIs, Ross (2016) showed that many Black faculty experience some form of racism, both covert and overt, at these institutions. Some examples of these experiences were lack of mentorship, social

isolation, discrimination in the classroom, limited opportunities for participation, tokenism, and overall lack of respect. Coleman and Stevenson (2013), in their study of racial stressors at PWIs, noted that faculty who experienced more racial discrimination perceived their school to be insufficiently committed to diversity mission and action, lacking in support for racial questioning, and avoidant of racial conflict. In addition, faculty who had more experiences with discrimination were more likely to have high racial stress and professional racial identity suppression. Likewise, their racialized experiences influence their sense of climate. Similarly, Patton and Catching (2009) show that African American faculty experience racial profiling, are considered to be "out of place" on campuses and are subjected to assumptions of whether and where they belong in the on the campus. As a result, many operate in climates where their professionalism is heavily questioned by students and colleagues and consequently, they struggle to establish their legitimacy in the classroom (Sule, 2011, p. 174). In a focus group with 10 African American faculty members teaching at predominantly white institutions, McGowan (2000) found that white students were more likely to "critique their [Black female professors] classroom effectiveness, challenge their authority, have a lower level of respect, and report their concerns and critiques to the professor or to his or her superior" (p. 715). These are challenges that many Black women faculty face at PWIs. However, identifying and addressing these issues disrupts systemic inequality and creates opportunities for Black women faculty and other historically marginalized groups.

In order for real changes to take place, PWIs must fully embrace diversity to ensure that a nurturing campus climate exists for all. Leaders at predominantly white institutions must be diligent and work to include members of minority populations and seek to create and sustain equitable practices that benefit all. However, historic systems of white supremacy and ideology

can be counterproductive and often thwart efforts to improve campus diversity and overall climate.

Retention Efforts

Colleges and universities across the country tout that they value diversity and feel it is important to recruit, hire, and retain racially diverse faculty. However, the internal structure of these institutions, particularly PWIs, often do not reflect the diverse population which they claim to value. Studies from the fall of 2018 show that only 6% of all faculty at institutions within the United States are Black. Out of that 6%, only 4% are Black female faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). In addition to these alarming statistics, Black faculty are also concentrated in lower faculty ranks. The number of Black faculty at predominantly white institutions continues to decrease, in part due to incidents of microaggressions and hostile racial climates (Kelly et al., 2017). Many Black faculty are seen as incompetent by their colleagues (Stanley, 2006) and often face resistance from white students. Pittman (2012) argues that in higher education, one illustration of racial oppression is the underrepresentation and distribution of Black faculty. In a study on the experiences of 19 Black faculty members at predominantly white institutions, participants reported "being recruited heavily, then having to prove they were qualified to be faculty, and then having no institutional support in place to retain them… Black faculty [also] noted a lack of consistency across the institution and wide variation from supportive environments to racist and hostile environments" (Kelly et al., 2017, pp. 310-312), which ultimately led to dissatisfaction and issues of retention. The lack of Black representation has led to campus protests and demands that more Black faculty members be hired throughout the academy (e.g., Flaherty, 2015; Libresco, 2015; Strauss, 2015).

In addition to adverse campus community issues that impact the retention of Black faculty at PWIs, the issue of commodification of Black faculty also negatively impacts retention. Problematically, PWIs often recruit and hire Black faculty as a means to implement diversity initiatives or teach diversity to white colleagues and students, instead of for their expertise in their academic discipline (Essed, 2000). Black faculty are placed at a disadvantage when they are hired under these intentions. They are faced with having to prove themselves and they often question their place in the academy (Stanley, 2006). The stress of this positionality is even more daunting when students and white colleagues perceive that Black faculty are diversity or affirmative action hires (Stanley, 2006). This ultimately places Black faculty in the uncomfortable position of being the Black representative for diversity and other service tasks, which takes time away from doing activities most important to long-term success and ensuring promotion (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Unfortunately, the number of Black faculty at PWIs will continue to decrease if institutions fail to commit to critical policy changes and strategies to retain Black faculty.

Anti-Racist Policies

In 2020, leaders at many PWIs expressed solidarity with members of marginalized groups in their communities. In order for PWIs to put their statements of solidarity into practice, they must commit to anti-racist policies. These statements cannot exist as words only. They must be backed with strategic efforts to dismantle the structural inequality and white ideologies that exist within the foundations of their institutions. Out of the many solidarity statements that were made by colleges and universities across the country, very few discussed their long-term strategies for change. According to a research study conducted by the Education Advisory Board (2020), “While some institutions identified longer term initiatives such as *developing anti-racism*

trainings and advancing the *recruitment of faculty of color*, they did not provide a timeline or specific metrics to measure success" (p. 1). In the study, researchers examined 130 statements on racial injustice and anti-racism from colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. Out of those statements, only a few institutions offered substantive and systematic approaches to tackling racism on their own campuses. Across the sample, only a quarter (26%) of statements clearly identified priority areas to address racism on campus. In fact, "these institutions focused on specific challenges in their communities such as education and awareness of systemic racism, reevaluating campus security measures, and collecting data on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts" (EAB, 2020).

In a study analyzing the statements and actions taken by 230 institutions after the death of George Floyd, the National Association of Diversity Officers (NADOHW) and (NASPA) Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (2020) reported that 85% of the of institutions that issued statements after the death of George Floyd indicated that they acted on issues related to racial justice in response to this tragedy. In addition, "approximately 67% of respondents indicated that they collected some kind of new data to inform their strategies for taking action" (p. 16). However, timelines and specific implementation plans were not discussed.

Action plans with specific timelines and implementation processes show strong commitment to issues affecting marginalized groups at these institutions and positively work toward dismantling structural inequalities and the negative campus racial climate. Words without action are lifeless. They die quickly if they are not examined, cultivated, and purposed for action. In order for colleges and universities to create real change, continued efforts toward enacting anti-racist policies are necessary. At the same time, institutions need to implement a range of strategies to support Black women faculty members.

Support for Black Women Faculty

There are a number of ways that colleges and universities can retain Black women faculty and positively impact their racial campus climate. One way to do this is through the campus support initiatives. Of primary importance to Black students and faculty is the creation and maintenance of an anti-racist environment. An institution that embraces the concept of anti-racism is more likely to be socially just and less likely to perpetuate the status quo of white ideology. In their analysis of three works detailing inclusive excellence designs to help campuses integrate diversity efforts, Milem et al. (2005) suggested that simply being in an environment committed to antiracism can impact students' attitudes and beliefs. The same is true of Black faculty. Commitment to anti-racism and racial social justice supports the push for racial unity and retention of Blacks at PWIs.

In addition to creating anti-racist environments, PWIs can establish support for, and retain Black female faculty, through mentoring opportunities. In her study of the experiences of Black faculty teaching at PWIs, Butler-Perry (2006) noted that strong mentors, even cross-race mentorship experiences, have been found to be a great benefit to faculty of color in learning the ways of the institution. However, Black women faculty often go without mentors at PWIs. As a result, many are stalled in the tenure track process and fail to be promoted. Based on their research on the presence of faculty of color in academe, Turner et al. (2008) suggests that "faculty who were not successful in the tenure process often lacked mentorship to aid their incorporation into academia… scholarship [of] successful faculty revealed that mentorship was a critical support to their professional success" (p. 148). In their research, they showed the importance of quality mentoring in the academy, particularly for Black women faculty who are already at a disadvantage. Dissatisfaction and isolation in the academy have been well

documented. For example, in their study exploring the current racial climate for Black and Hispanic faculty at three flagship, predominantly white universities, Fries-Britt et al. (2011) found that Black faculty felt invisible and isolated because of a lack of guidance or relationships with colleagues who could have enlightened them on what to expect and how to respond to the expectations that they would encounter in the academy. This isolation causes Black faculty to avoid interactions with others who don't share their racial identities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an overview of racism in higher education and the experiences of Black women at predominantly white institutions. I began with a brief history of racism in higher education to provide historical context for understanding the impact that racism and discrimination have had on Blacks in education. I reviewed the research on the systemic challenges that Black women face in higher education, before discussing the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs. I also explored the literature on microaggressions, stereotypes, racial battle fatigue, emotional labor, and student resistance, as they are significant to and predictors of the experiences and successes of Black women faculty at PWIs. I then discussed the strategies that Black women faculty employ in an effort to navigate PWIs. These strategies included negotiating their identities, self-silencing, isolating, and creating or locating counterspaces that allow for free expression of self. Finally, I provided some insight on campus climate and the support provided to Black women faculty at PWIs. Ultimately, the research shows that white supremacy is prevalent on campuses and contributes to the perpetuation of inequalities and negative campus climates, which ultimately impact retention of Black faculty. Alternatively, anti-racist policies and support initiatives for Black women faculty can help to transform PWIs.

The research I reviewed in this chapter attempts to address the historic problems of racism and discrimination at PWIs. The intersectionality of gender and race further complicates these problems. While Black women have historically struggled over and battled with sexism and racism socially, the current context of heightened social tensions makes additional research on the experiences of Black women at PWIs especially timely. The purpose of this study is to address that gap and add to the existing literature on the experience of Black women faculty at PWIs. In the next chapter, I discuss the qualitative methodology I used to explore this topic.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to learn from lived experiences of Black female faculty as they navigated private, predominately white institutions (PWIs) both before and during a period of social injustice and racial tension in America in 2020, while simultaneously living through and experiencing the social conflicts of a pandemic. It is important to acknowledge that Black women faculty faced significant challenges at PWIs prior to 2020. Flaherty (2020) suggests that Black women are underrepresented in tenure track positions in academia. In addition, they face challenges with microaggressions, overburden of service, emotional labor and so many other racialized issues at PWIs (Krupnick, 2018). While Black female faculty have historically dealt with existing inequalities related to the intersectionality of race and gender, it is important to understand how the social injustice, racial tensions and the pandemic might have further impacted Black female faculty at PWIs during 2020.

Although many predominately white institutions produced compelling statements to show their solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM) during the heighten social and racial tensions of 2020, predominately white institutions have faced criticism for releasing solidarity statements and enacting task forces but affecting little to no changes in regard to policies and practices that impact Blacks on their campuses. For example, a University of Pennsylvania associate professor of religion and Africana studies, in response to diversity efforts on that campus stated that “These individual campus diversity initiatives are not tackling the structural issues behind what happens to faculty when they get to these campuses” (Flaherty, 2020c). In many cases, although statements have been crafted and diversity reforms have been initiated, they seem to only serve as a band-aid that when ripped away reveals the deeper, festering wounds of systemic and structural inequalities.

While there is significant research on campus protests in response to systemic racism and racist incidents at PWIs (Kelly, Gayles, & Corbetti, 2017; Flaherty, 2015; Libresco, 2015; Strauss, 2015), there is less research on Black women faculty experiences during these traumatic events and the institutions' responses and commitments to this double minoritized group. More research in this area is necessary. In addition, little is known about how Black female faculty experienced PWIs during the pandemic. The burden of the pandemic weighed heavy on Black female faculty, not only because of their existing positionalities and disproportionate representation at PWI, but also because of the existing inequalities that were magnified as a result of the pandemic. For example, many Black female faculty experienced increased personal and professional stressors due to loss of daycare, closing of public and private schools, new online learning requirements, and increased responsibilities added to an already overflowing cup (Onwuachi-Willig, 2021). In this study, I identified four PWIs as sites for analysis to study how Black women faculty experience these institutions, particularly in the light of racial upheaval and reckoning of 2020, while simultaneously navigating the realities of a pandemic.

In this study, I examined the experiences of Black female faculty who were tenured or going through the tenure and promotion process at PWIs during this time period. The goal of this study is to add to the existing literature on the experiences of Black female faculty, disrupt the status quo in academe, and provide space for Black women faculty's stories to be shared and their voices to be heard. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the dialogue on the existing inequalities that impact Black female faculty, while also creating conversation around effective social and racial justice policies and practices, professional socialization, campus climate, and other factors that contribute to the retention and success of Black women faculty at PWIs.

Rationale for Qualitative Design

To explore the nuanced ways in which Black women faculty experience PWI, I used a basic qualitative research methodology to conduct this study. Definitions and characterization of qualitative research are wide-ranging, and there are many different ways to engage in qualitative research across a range of diverse fields. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a situated activity that allows the researcher to explore the social world through observations and experiences. Basic qualitative research consists of collecting data such as fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, recordings, memos, and life stories. Through the lenses of Black Feminist Thought, Critical Race Theory, and Critical Race Feminism, I center the lived experiences of Black women faculty in this study. I utilized the qualitative research methodology because it allowed me to gather, organize and interpret those experiences in a meaningful way.

Qualitative research design has also been used as justification for specific reform or change (Creswell, 2003). In light of this, institutions might find the results of this research useful in creating changes that support the retention, growth, and success of Black women faculty. Likewise, these findings may also be of interest to Black women faculty as they seek to find coping mechanisms for the stressors they navigate at PWIs, as well as administrators, colleagues and students who wish to support Black women faculty.

I chose a qualitative method because I wanted to develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs. I also wanted to learn about the forces that impact those experiences such as racial campus climates, existing support structures, policies and practices designed to address racism, and barriers to advancement. I sought to understand the stories and experiences of the Black women faculty who form the basis of this research. Since a

qualitative approach is appropriate for research that attempts to uncover and make meaning of specific experiences (Patton, 2003), I utilized this approach in my study.

Research Questions

Two questions guided my research:

1. What are the experiences of Black female faculty at predominately white institutions?
2. What impact did the pandemic and social and racial unrest of 2020 have on the lived experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs.

Site and Participant Selection

Historically, the South has been a site of contention in regard to race and racism. It is a battleground for racism, segregation, and social injustice. I selected four private PWIs in the South as sites for exploring the experiences of Black women faculty during the pandemic and a period of social unrest since 2020. These schools are similar in size, demographics, and population of the representative study group, and characterized as predominantly white universities. Each university is considered medium-sized, and the student population at these schools ranges from 5,000 to 15,000 students. The racial demographics of three of the schools range from 69% to 81% white. The Black student population at these school range from 5%-6%. The other school has a white student population of 46% as well as a significant international population. However, Black students only make of 7% of the total population of students. This is only 1% more than the other three schools. The percentages show that Black students are underrepresented at this school as well. I also chose these universities because I know Black female faculty who work at these institutions, thus providing me a point of entry to find potential study participants. Moreover, these colleagues have helped me to understand some of the interworking of these institutions and have shared their experiences working there, leading me to

believe that they would be good sites to understand the challenges that Black women face at private, Southern PWIs. Starting with these colleagues, I used a convenience sampling method to identify potential participants. This sampling technique helped me to gain access to hidden and marginalized populations. The use of convenience sampling allowed me to "enroll subjects according to their availability and accessibility… this method is quick, inexpensive, and convenient. (Elfil & Negida, 2017, p. 1). I selected ten participants working at these four universities to participate in the study.

The target group for this study was full-time, Black women faculty who were tenured or going through the tenure and promotion process in 2020. The initial process I used to recruit participants was to contact Black female faculty on these campuses who I already had a relationship with to obtain a list of potential participants and participant contact information. I also used the campus directory to further collect participant contact information. Once I identified a pool of potential participants, I invited participants via email to participate in the study. The email included an explanation of the study and an invitation to participate in a 60–90-minute interview conducted via Zoom, and a shorter follow-up interview, to share their experiences. This was a tedious process, because it often took a couple of weeks to confirm interviews with participants due to the heavy schedules of each participant. In addition to their normal schedules of teaching, research and family obligations, they were also inundated with a high level of service work on campus that allowed very little time or space for anything extra. This made finding participants for the study challenging. Therefore, I used another strategy to increase participation. I encouraged initial participants to share the study information with other Black female faculty at PWIs. This proved to be an effective strategy, as I was able to attract more participants who were interested in sharing their experiences.

Once I identified participants, I sent a second email that included a consent form and additional information about the interview process to all faculty who agreed to participate in the study. In this email, I also provided the time and location of the interview and an overview of some of the broad topics to be discussed in the interview. I informed participants that all interviews would be conducted on Zoom, which they all appreciated due to the time constraints that each participant was under. Using the Zoom platform to conduct the interviews proved effective (1) because it was easily accessible and convenient for participants; (2) it allowed participants to operate in a familiar space, which provided a level of comfortability for participants to speak openly and freely; and (3) because using the video and audio functions in Zoom allowed me, as the researcher, to fully participate in the interview process and engage with participants.

Researcher Experience and Participant Recruitment

In this study, I interviewed 10 Black women faculty at four predominantly white universities in the South. As a graduate student seeking to move into a tenure track position upon graduation, it was important for me to understand the challenges that Black women faculty face in obtaining these positions, and the challenges they face while working in these positions. It was also very important for me to listen carefully to these participants and the intricacies of their work. I wanted to be able to tell their stories as they would tell their stories. Something that stuck with me throughout the interviews was something that Dorothy, one of the participants who I will introduce later, said to me. She said, “not everybody knows how to cradle my story.” By that she meant that the person who tells a Black woman’s story needed to be someone who can identify with them and understand their struggles. For the most part, their stories were my stories, and in many ways, their trauma was my trauma. This knowledge made it very important

for me to keep a reflexivity journal during this process. According to Russell and Kelly (2002), keeping a reflexivity journal allows the researcher to examine "personal assumptions and goals" and to clarify "individual belief systems and subjectivities" (p. 2). I used my reflexivity journal to process and analyze my thoughts and feelings to control any bias in my reporting. However, there were a few things that differed between me and the participants in this study. First, each of them had already attained that which I am reaching for. Each participant had already successfully completed a doctoral program and earned a terminal degree. Second, each participant had secured a full-time tenure track position at a prestigious university. This provided some separation from their experiences.

Prior to each interview, I spent time researching each participant to get a sense of who they were professionally and to better prepared for the interview. Before starting each interview, I introduced myself and shared a bit more about my background to ease any anxiety that the participants might have about the interview process. I also used this time to engage with each participant, providing space for them to share preliminary information about themselves and break the ice before starting the interview. This initial process seemed to provide the participant with a certain level of comfort, as there were often laughs and giggles. Participants also shared their excitement about the study and their appreciation for me having the courage to take on "such necessary and timely research," as noted by one of the participants. This process allowed me to gain a base level understanding of each participant and to begin to build rapport and gain their trust. Participants were seemed engaged and willing to share details about their experiences during the interviews, I suspect in part due to the level of comfort and confidence in knowing that their stories would be told with integrity by someone who shares many aspects of their positionalities.

Participant Profiles

There are a lot of hidden figures in Black history who have not gotten the recognition they deserve, in particular, the extraordinary Black women who worked as engineers, computer programmers, mathematicians, and project leaders at NASA during the 1950s and 1960. These women were critical to the success of the Space Race program. However, much of their success was credited to the white men and women they served under or alongside, leaving them and the recognition for their work in the shadows. Among these were Miriam Mann, the first Black women to work as a "human computer" at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in Langley, Virginia. Dorothy Vaughan was a supervisor in charge of the West Computing staff of other Black women. Mary Jackson started out computing in the West area but eventually became the first Black women engineer at NASA in 1958. Christine Darden started working at NASA as a computer in 1967. She faced extreme discrimination in her position, not receiving a promotion for eight years. Katherine Johnson was also a mathematician who worked for NASA during the height of segregation. Her math calculation helped to send astronauts to the moon and bring them back safely. Other notable figures such as Annie Easley were instrumental in developing software to launch satellites into orbit. She was an advocate of diversity and dismantling racism at NASA (Heidman, 2015). In addition, Janez Lawson was a chemical engineer and the first Black person to work in a technical position in the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at NASA. Lessie Hunter, Melba Roy Mouton, and Jeanette Scissum all made significant contributions to NASA space operations.

The visible invisibility of these hidden figures reminds me of the many Black women in the academy who work tirelessly in their fields, yet struggle for recognition, promotion, and overall equality as compared to their white counterparts. Their work and contributions to the

academy are significant, just as the works of the great hidden figures of the past. Therefore, in honor of these Black women and their work, I have given each participant a pseudonym that represents one of the extraordinary hidden figures of the past. The participants in this study work at a medium-sized, private, predominantly white universities in the southeastern region of the United States. As I noted earlier, the student population at these schools ranges from 5,000 to 15,00 students. Only 5-7 percent of the student population at the four schools were Black or non-white students. The women in this study practiced in various disciplines that ranged from education to politics to medicine. However, in an effort to maintain their anonymity since there are so few Black women on the tenure track at these four schools, I do not name their disciplines or the departments where they are located.

Miriam is single with no children, and she has spent the majority of her life pursuing her profession. Miriam attended all predominantly white schools growing up and throughout college. None of her family members attended a four-year university, and only one has an associate degree. She was the first in her family to receive a four-year degree, and the first to get advanced degrees. Miriam said that school was always easy for her, and she never had a problem. She admits "I was a self-proclaimed nerd, and I was proud of it. I went through school with no problem." Her inspiration to continue her education came from a desire to complete what her family members were not able to complete.

While attending graduate school, Miriam's advisors saw something unique about her and pushed her to pursue a PhD. She was originally pursuing an advanced degree in another discipline and pretty much had her mind set on a career path. However, she was convinced when her advisor said, "you are good at research, you should go for the PhD." Since she loved research, and her graduate school professors were good at asking big questions, she decided to

go for the PhD. In addition to that advice, he was also advised to get as many degrees as she could, because as a Black women scholar, she had to have more than her white colleagues. Her advisors told her "I think the PhD is critical for freedom. As a Black woman scholar, you have to have it. You will be challenged. We are all presumed incompetent." From that point, Miriam was determined to get her PhD to avoid the challenges that Black women scholars face and to debunk the stereotype of "presumed incompetence."

After graduating from a prestigious predominantly white university with her PhD, Miriam, completed a two-year post doctorate at a "quant university in the South." It was also a PWI. However, after she completed a year of the postdoc, she had not received any information about the renewal of it for a second year. With this in mind, she began applying for full-time faculty positions outside of that university. Fortunately, she was highly recruited by her current university, and at the time of the interview, she was completing her ninth year there. She spent the first year as a Visiting Professor before moving to the rank of Assistant Professor. In 2020, she was seeking tenure and preparing her dossier for review. Miriam excelled in skillfully navigating her terrain and negotiating and mediating situations to advance her own and other's careers.

Dorothy is middle-aged, married and has children. At the time of her interview, Dorothy had just completed her 12th year at the university. She chose to only share information about her education starting with her graduate school. After earning her PhD from a PWI in 2009, she applied for and accepted a postdoc position at her current institution. Initially, her interest was in administration, but her advisors encouraged her to take the teaching route because of her passion for mentoring and coaching students. Dorothy completed two years of her postdoc before applying for and accepting a tenure track position at the university. She was in the process of

preparing her portfolio for promotion at the time of the interview. Dorothy is well-known and respected in her community and among her peers. What stood out about Dorothy was her intellectual prowess, commitment to her faith and serving others, and her courage to speak up for what she believes.

Mary is married with children. She was recruited to the university and has been working there for eight years. Prior to being hired in her current position, she taught at two other predominantly white institutions. The first was a very large university with over 30,000 students, and the second was a medium-sized university, comparable to where she works now. All of her work experiences have been at predominantly white institutions, including her own education. She felt like her particular background somewhat prepared her for the culture and ways of thinking that are expected at her current university. However, having that capital did not exclude her from the racism and discrimination that she experienced in the workplace.

Mary came to the university with the promise of obtaining a tenure track position. However, that promise did not come to fruition as quickly as she would have liked. In fact, her position was put on hold after the administrator who hired her left the university. Although the administrator who had recruited her promised a tenure track position, nothing was in writing. At that point, Mary was given a long term, non-tenure track teaching professorship. She expressed her discouragement with the process, recalling “I left a secure position and salary. I would've been fine to stay there, but I really wanted a tenure track position.” It took six years for that position to materialize. Mary faced some of the traditional challenges that researchers suggest that Black women faculty face in the tenure process. Mary was going through the tenure and promotion process during 2020. She received tenure in 2021. Mary’s most significant qualities were bravery to fight and ability to endure adversity.

Christine did not do a postdoc after graduating from her PhD program. Instead, she taught at the secondary level and did some adjunct teaching prior to applying for and receiving a tenure track position at her current institution. Christine is currently in the fourth year of the tenure process and preparing her portfolio for evaluation. Christine has the skillful ability to influence others to accept her knowledge and advice. She is strategic and intentional and can move in spaces that others in her identity group may not be able to do as easily.

Katherine is a mother and wife, who was educated at predominantly white schools her entire life. In addition, all of her career experiences have been at predominantly white institutions. She earned her doctorate in 2012 and remained at her graduate institution in a temporary position for two years prior to accepting a postdoc position at her current university. She was in a postdoc position for one year. Once that position ended, she transitioned to a limited term position for one year. In both of those positions, Katherine said, “I had the title of assistant professor, but I wasn't on the tenure track.” After three years, the position was converted from limited term to tenure track position. Katherine worked in two other positions over a four-year period, before transitioning to a tenure track position. She received tenure in 2022. Katherine exhibited a generous and supporting nature, beautiful spirit, love for her family and desire for equality.

Annie is single and a first-generation college graduate. Annie completed her doctoral degree in 2020 and was recruited for a postdoc position within the university upon graduation. However, after only a few months in the postdoc position, she was hired for a tenure track position. Annie is now in her second year at the university and still learning what is required for tenure and promotion in her current position. What stood out about Annie was her inquisitive nature and her ability to ask tough questions even when it is not popular to do so.

Janez completed her undergraduate degrees at historically Black universities before attending and receiving her PhD from a large, predominantly white, public university in the South. Janez began her career at the university in 2004 and has worked in several departments throughout the university and was the participant in my study who had received tenure at their university. Janez has been at the university, performing various teaching roles for over 17 years. She is currently an Associate Professor, preparing her materials for promotion to Full Professor. Janez exhibited a very caring and peaceful nature. What stood out was her willingness to help, and her ability to negotiate and create opportunities for herself and others.

Lessie earned her undergraduate degree from a historically Black university and her graduate degrees from prestigious, predominantly white universities. Lessie earned her PhD in 2015 and began working as an adjunct instructor at her current university before applying and being hired for a tenure track position three years later. Lessie most significant qualities was her passion for her work and desire to extend her services beyond the four walls of the university, providing service and connecting others to important resources.

Melba earned her PhD from a prestigious, predominantly, white university in the South. Melba spent the first part of her career working in public education. She accepted a full-time professorship at her current institution in 2015. She was going through the tenure process and preparing her portfolio in 2020. Melba's leadership qualities made her stand out, as well as her ability to provide opportunities for her people to grow and thrive, and the respect that she has gained for the work that she does.

Jeanette received all of her education at predominantly white schools. Jeanette started her career in the corporate sector before she made the decision to return to graduate school to pursue the PhD. She is new to her institution and secured a tenure track position right after

graduation in 2020. Jeanette displayed the characteristics of youthful innocence and optimism about the future. However, she was fierce in knowledge and ready to lead the fight for change at her institution.

In the table below, I share some of the significant similarities, key demographic and background information of the 10 participants in my study. The backgrounds of the participants varied based on the following characteristics: marital status, children, recruitment to the university, years in practice, tenure status, and representation.

Table 1. Black Female Faculty Characterization

Name	Marital Status	School-age Kids	Gateway to PWI (Recruited, Internal, External Applicant)	Years at PWI	Tenure Status in 2020	Only Black Female in Department
Miriam	Single	No	Recruited	9	Up for Review	No
Dorothy	Married	Yes	External	12	5th year	No
Mary	Married	Yes	Recruited	8	Up for Review	Yes
Christine	Married	Yes	External	4	4th year	Yes
Katherine	Married	Yes	Recruited/Internal	8	Up for Review	Yes
Annie	Single	No	Internal	2	1 year	No
Janez	Married	Yes	External	18	Up for Review	Yes
Lessie	Married	Yes	External	7	4year	Yes
Melba	Married	Yes	External	7	Up for Review	Yes
Jeanette	Single	No	External	2	2 years	No

Data Collection

In this qualitative study, I used a two-phase interview method, intermittent note taking, and a reflexivity journal to collect data. This approach allowed me to carefully analyze and make meaning from the data I collected. For the first round of interviews, I began with an open-ended question, which opened the dialogue and allowed participants to get comfortable with the interview process (Litchman, 2010). Taking advantage of the intermittent note taking method, I was able to listen carefully to participants as they shared their experiences and engage enough to quickly ask follow-up questions when needed. Wolfinger (2002) suggests that this method is important for preserving important information collected in the interviews. In addition, I used my reflexivity journal to note my own thoughts, reactions, feelings, and initial interpretations. The first interviews lasted for an average of two hours, with a range of one and a half to two hours each.

The second round of interviews each lasted between one and two hours. I began by providing participants with an opportunity to review the transcript from their first interview, elaborate on previous comments, and offer new information. I also prepared a set of questions in advance based on my own review of the transcripts, and followed up on areas of interest that they brought up in the first interview. Conducting two interviews with each participant allowed me to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of my participants. In addition, the use of multiple interviews assisted with enhancing the reliability and trustworthiness of the data.

I began interviewing participants in May 2022, nearly three months after IRB approval. Initially, it was very difficult to secure participants for the study. This was not due to lack of interest. It was partially due to the busy schedules of each participant and partially due to the lack

of participants who met the criteria for the study. There were very few participants at the four PWIs who were full-time, tenured, or on tenure track, Black women faculty. Not surprisingly, these schools had a number of Black women faculty who were adjuncts or non-tenure track, full-time instructors. I completed the twenty interviews in August of 2022. I took time to review each interview, adding my intermittent notes for each one immediately following each interview session. Within the next one to two weeks, I uploaded each interview to Descript to be transcribed. After each interview was transcribed with Descript, I listened carefully to each interview, correcting errors, and updating and editing the computer-generated transcripts to ensure their accuracy.

Interviews

I collected data from interviews with Black women faculty members who work at four Southern, private, predominantly white institutions. Although I had a list of interview questions to pose to participants, I used a semi-structured format. This allowed me the "freedom to diverge slightly from the script…and probe within each participant's responses" (McIntosh & Moore, 2015, pp. 4-5). A semi-structured approach also allowed for participants to expand on areas of interest to them as well as provide rich descriptions of their experiences.

Prior to each interview, I shared a consent form with participants. The consent form requested permission for the interview session to be recorded and transcribed. It also requested the signature of the participants. The letter soliciting participants is included in Appendix A. The interview questions are included in Appendix B. I used the Zoom meeting platform to conduct the interviews, because it allowed me to record video and audio simultaneously. This not only ensured the accuracy of the interviews, but it also allowed me to naturally engage with the participants.

Transcription and Coding

Immediately following each interview, I rewatched the video to add to my notes. I chose to take the time to do this in order to assist with interpreting the data as accurately as possible and to avoid any issues with information loss due to time lapse. I was also able to add to my initial notes during this review process. I then uploaded the videos to Descript to create a transcript of the interview. I then reviewed this again to ensure an accurate transcript within two weeks of the interviews. I repeated this process for the second round of interviews.

Once I had updated each transcript to ensure it was accurate, I used NVivo to analyze the transcripts to begin to identify major themes. This software helped me to use a systematic coding process that provided a structure for comparing and understanding the data (Maxwell, 2005). To start, I used a qualitative research approach called inductive coding (Creswell, 2002). This is a ground-up approach in which the codes come directly from transcripts, in contrast to a priori codes, which are determined in advance (based on the research literature and theoretical framework). To assist with the process, I used NVivo to extract data from the interview transcripts. In the initial stage of coding, I marked each transcript with initial codes in the form of a key word or words. This process produced 138 distinct codes. Some of the major codes were equity, tenure, support, safe space, resistance, Black faculty, evaluation, self-care, mentorship, isolation, and teaching. I then examined the data to look for recurring or similar codes, which I collapsed into broad categories (Allen, 2017). Next, I used the query function in NVivo to create a cluster analysis of similar words.

I created 42 categories out of the data collected. After analyzing the transcripts with these categories in mind, I looked for ways to further collapse the categories into a smaller number. For example, I grouped the respect, racism, nurture, equity, difference, conflict, and threat,

categories together under the broader category of Teacher Evaluation. From there, I identified the key topics that I discuss as themes in my findings chapter. The final themes and sub-themes are outlined in table 2 below. The process of coding, summarizing, and re-presenting data into categories and themes helped me to provide a systematic account of the experiences of my participants (Allen, 2017). Through this process I was able to identify, describe, analyze, organize, and report themes. I list the themes and sub-themes I generated from this study in the table below.

Table 2. Black Women Faculty Experiences Existing and During 2020 Themes and Sub themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Challenges of Black Women Faculty	Microaggressions Racism and Discrimination Isolation Hypervisibility & White Gaze Imposter Syndrome & Code Switching
Tenure and Promotion	.
The Pandemic and Social Unrest of 2020	.
Trauma and Emotional Labor of 2020	The Stress of the Pandemic The Shift to Teaching Online
Cultural Taxation and Overburden of Service	Overburden of Service
Managing Health and Self-care	.
Support Systems and Critical Mentorship	Professional Mentorship Finding Resources and Being a Resource
Campus Climate and Barriers to Success	Support for Black Women Faculty Creating Real Change

Data Analysis

I designed the data analysis process for this study to privilege the lived experience of the Black women faculty who participated in this study. The first step in the data analysis process was to transcribe the interviews. I used the software program Descript to do the preliminary transcription. From there, I listened to each interview while editing and updating the computer-generated transcript. In addition to ensuring the accuracy of the transcripts, during this process I wrote thoughts and insights I had using the notes function in Descript. In addition, I began to identify initial themes across data sets and triangulated the data with the notes and reflective journal to increase the validity and reliability of the finding. I share my findings in two data chapters. In chapter four, I discuss the broad challenges that Black women faculty face at private, predominantly white universities. In chapter five I discuss the findings that emerged from my research on Black women faculty experiences at these universities specifically during a period of social unrest and the pandemic of 2020.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting this study, I followed the guidelines set forth by the IRB at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I secured approval from the IRB to begin the research process with human subjects before I began recruiting participants. I provided each participant with consent forms to participate in the study, describing the goals of the study, data collection and analysis processes, and data storage methods I used for the study. In addition, I gave each participant a pseudonym to secure their identity and privacy. In addition, I notified participants that they could withdraw from the study at any point in the study without explanation of their choice and that I would provide them with transcripts of their interviews for feedback.

Trustworthiness

According to Birt et al. (2016), trustworthiness is the bedrock of qualitative research (p. 1802). Trustworthiness can be established through various techniques used by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four ways to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. Since the researcher is directly involved in the data collection process as a function of qualitative research, it is important for researchers to "ensure that those participating in research are identified and described accurately" (Elo et al., 2014, p. 2). To ensure trustworthiness in this study, I made every attempt to limit bias by carefully reflecting on my positionality, assumptions, and questions throughout the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that reflexivity is an important component of transparency in qualitative research. I maintained reflexivity by journaling throughout the research process and writing a brief reflection after each interview. Because I am a Black female who is aspiring to be a tenured, full time faculty member, I recognized how my own positionality might impact the study. Therefore, journaling proved useful in my reflection process, and reviewing my journal and notes helped me address my own biases and assumptions. For example, in one journal entry, I reflected on participants negative experiences with student evaluations. It was important for me to address my own feelings surrounding student evaluations, due to my previous experiences with them, in order for me to eliminate any potential bias in interpreting participants' data. In another entry, I wrote about white male student interactions with Black female faculty. This was another area in which I had negative experiences. However, journaling about my own experiences helped me to bracket them so that I did not filter the data through my own preconceived assumptions and biases. I also employed follow-up interviews and

member checking to assess the trustworthiness of my interpretations. The use of different sources of data, including interviews and documents, also enhances trustworthiness (Patton, 1990).

I started the research process by conducting initial interviews. The initial interviews provided me with some understanding of participants' individual experiences. However, to limit my own bias in interpreting the data, I actively involved the research participants throughout the study to gather feedback on my interpretation of their responses, what researchers call member checking. Each interview lasted between one hour and thirty minutes to two hours. The second interview served, in part, as a member checking process in which I followed-up with each participant, asking for clarification and feedback on my initial interpretations. During this process, I briefly reviewed their responses to previous questions with them, as well as my initial interpretations. I also asked participants to add content, provide clarity, or adjust their wording as they deemed necessary. This process also afforded me an opportunity to gather more information and ask additional questions that emerged out of my initial review of the data. In this process, I followed the advice of Birt et al. (2016), who write that "the transcript of the first interview foregrounds the second interview during which the researcher focuses on confirmation, modification, and verification of the interview transcript" (p. 1805). My intention for conducting a second interview with each participant was to allow them to reflect on their responses to the interview transcript, gather feedback on my initial findings, ask additional questions, verify my interpretation of member responses, and collaborate with participants on making meaning of my data.

Limitations

As is the nature of all qualitative research, I aimed for depth over breadth or generalizability in this study. I worked with a small sample of participants at four university

campuses. I was interested in exploring the experiences of Black female faculty at PWI both as they entered the profession and at one snapshot in time, so it was difficult to assess whether the campuses where they worked were engaging in change over a long period of time. The context of these campuses may overlap with other private PWIs across the country, although my findings are invariably somewhat idiosyncratic to these campuses.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to understand the experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs, and determine the impact, if any, that the social unrest of 2020 and the pandemic happening simultaneously had on those experiences. I was especially interested in their experiences in the context of race, racism, discrimination, and white ideology and supremacy that so often permeates these environments. It analyzed their experiences in relation to the existing research and also to see if new trends were emerging post-pandemic.

I conducted qualitative research utilizing interviews and drawing on critical race theory, Black feminist thought, and critical race feminism because their tenets center the intersectionality of race and racism, challenge the dominant ideology, and make room for counter-narratives and storytelling. I analyzed the experiences of Black women faculty, from the perspective of Black women faculty, which is contrary to that of the dominant narrative. It comes from the voices of the "outsider within." This unique perspective has the potential to impact policies at PWI, shift the career trajectory of Black women faculty, and positively impact retention of Black women faculty at PWIs.

CHAPTER V: CHALLENGES FACED BY BLACK WOMEN FACULTY AT PWIS

In this research study, I interviewed ten Black women faculty, one who was tenured and the other nine who were on the tenure track at four, private, predominantly white universities in the South. Two separate interviews were conducted, with the second interview serving a dual purpose of member checking and gathering additional information about the experiences of Black women faculty at these universities. While women in general face significant challenges due to their gender in education, the experiences of Black women faculty at private, predominantly white universities are unique. Their double minority statuses have fashioned oppositions that are more complex than the challenges of many other groups in education. The research finding indicate that these challenges, along with the additional struggles that became apparent during the social unrest and pandemic of 2020, made their positionalities and their experience at private, predominantly white universities fraught with uncertainties and tensions.

In this chapter, I discuss the broad challenges that Black women faculty have faced at PWIs. I divide this chapter into two major sections: challenges Black women faculty face at PWIS and navigating tenure and promotion. In divide the broad challenges the women in my study faced into five subsections: microaggressions, racism and discrimination, isolation, hypervisibility and white gaze, imposter syndrome and code switching. The section on microaggressions is the longest of the five sections and includes the most examples from participants in the study. I close the chapter discussing findings related to how the women faculty in my study are navigating the tenure and promotion process. In the second findings chapter that follows this one, I look more specifically at the challenges during 2020-2021, where they were navigating racial conflict and a global health pandemic.

Challenges of Black Women Faculty

Crenshaw (1991) coined the term intersectionality to explain the complex positionality of Black women as their experiences with race and gender discrimination often overlap. This intersectionality warrants a more in-depth look at the experiences of Black women, in particular those who serve at PWIs. Black women often experience that they are under constant scrutiny at predominantly white institutions (Hendrix, 1997). Research from Pittman (2012) and Walkington (2017) suggests that Black women faculty have more frequent experiences with microaggressions and other forms of racial and gender discrimination than faculty from other demographic groups. Historically, Black women experience the academy in more negative ways than many others in the academy, which is commonly due to chronic racism and discrimination, which are manifest in disrespect, insults, threats, or harassment (Zambrana et al., 2017, p. 210). The stories of participants in this study align with this research. Microaggressions are the most common forms of expressed racism in the academy. They are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273).

Microaggressions

The Black women in this study all experienced multiple forms of microaggression from both colleagues and students. Those experiences influenced how these women viewed the university and signaled to them how the university viewed Black faculty members. Jeanette's stories about the resistance she receives from white students in her classes provide a powerful example of how whiteness gets reproduced at her institution, and how the contributions of Black women are devalued. Jeanette explained that a big thing that sticks out to her when she teaches is

that “I know for a fact that when I give out grades, that the students challenge my grading much more than they do the white male faculty who taught the class before me.” What was interesting about these challenges was that she used the same exam assignment that her white male colleague had used before her. This was a standard final exam that was used across courses. However, the white male professor did not receive the same level of pushback. Students also appealed their grades less frequently in his class compared to Jeanette’s, although she used the exact same process as he did. Whereas he only received five appeals out of 180 students, Jeanette received between 30 to 35 appeals out of 215 students. Jeanette was convinced that her students liked her or at least pretended to, until she administered the final grades for the course. She recalls,

> After I gave them grades, the amount of emails [I received was excessive]. I spent days just going back and forth with students. But I got the distinct feeling that they really liked me until I gave them grades. And then it was like, who is this Black woman? Why does she think that she could tell me I'm not perfect? Like, obviously I'm perfect, and I'm going places.

A sense of entitlement was evident among these students, and this was one of the primary reasons, along with white privilege, that Jeanette experienced so much pushback. Jeanette recalls speaking with a white faculty member about the number of appeals they received. The response was “oh, not that many, a couple here and there, nothing crazy. Our students are really nice.” However, when she asked her department chair who is a white woman, if she received a large number of grade appeals, she stated, “Oh, it’s crazy. I get a ton of them. I know it’s because of my gender.” She was confident of this because her husband, who is a white male in the department, taught the same class, with the same material, and the same TA, but he only received

two to three grade appeals. Jeanette remembers her saying, “there’s definitely a gender thing, and you’re Black and you’re young. I’m not surprised.” The fact that Jeanette’s gender, race, and youth influenced how students responded to her teaching and grading practices was alarming. It is an issue that must be addressed in order to retain and support Black women faculty at PWIs. However, resistance from white students is ongoing for Black women faculty. When asked about her experiences with resistance from students, Melba shared that she had experienced pushback on her curriculum choices and with books that she selected. Students have also taken issue with the guest speakers that she brought in and with some of the required assignments.

The participants in my study implicitly and explicitly characterized their campus climates as hostile. Due to the fact that her student population is majority white, Dorothy said that she struggles with how far to push her students without receiving negative reactions. She explained that Black women who teach required courses have a more difficult experience than white colleagues.

> Those experiences that you get from students can be very different, especially because I teach around race. When I teach my class around diversity in the general core curriculum, that's an elective. I dance through that class. That class is a breath of fresh air, because it's those students who want to learn more, who wanna engage, that elect to come into your class. Um, not that they treat you a whole lot better, but you have students coming in wanting to garner from you the very same topic that they're electing to learn about, versus me teaching is a required course. And if they don't like it, they cannot drop it.

Here Dorothy points to the fact that the challenges that Black women face are more intense when students are required to take their classes, as opposed to choosing to take them. They are even more difficult when race is one of the central topics in the class.

Navigating microaggressions at the intersections of race and gender was a significant issue that participants dealt with at their institutions. The microaggressions they faced were intersectional based on insults and stereotypes that encompass both racism and sexism (Lewis et al., 2016). Black women in this study reported that they had personally experienced intersectional gendered racism or knew another Black female faculty member who had. Mary noted that one of the gendered things that irritates her is when students call her Miss or Ma'am. This is a blatant sign of disrespect that she is certain only occurs because she is a Black female professor. As she reflected, she stated “I don't like it, so I normally call them out on it and say do you call Dr. Samuels, Dr. Samuels? or do you call him Paul? Or do you call him "Mr. Samuels”? Mary says that she has these conversations with students who use it as a means to disrespect or demean her and usually that clears it up. However, she still has issues with students who will test her and call her Miss or call her by her first name. She believes that is the ultimate sign of disrespect for someone who has earned their credentials.

Christine shared that most of her negative interactions with students come from white males. She described uncomfortable interactions where she felt like her expertise was in question and she second guessed herself. After a few of these experiences, she reflected “it has affected me and has sort of made me now think about how, what can I do to make sure these types of interactions don't happen? How do I, what do I do when they do happen”? She admits that she constantly thinks about how to shift those interactions with students. As an example, Christine discussed one of the classes that she teaches that deals with issues of race and diversity. It is a course that is taught by everybody in the university. She explained,

> You don’t have to be a race relations expert to teach this class. You have to have read the book and you need to be smart enough to understand the papers that are cited in the book,

> which I am perfectly capable of reading and understanding. And so, I was teaching from that perspective and was challenged a few times in discussions. It was sort of like a condescending kind of tone right, an unsolicited comment that was condescending and disruptive. That kind of thing has happened more than once in that class.

In addition to her own interactions with students, Christine discussed some of the challenges faced by other Black female colleagues in her department. She explained that there are some Black women professors in her department who have had very negative experiences with students. Whereas Christine had a couple of condescending students, her colleagues had entire classes of students who were condescending and questioned them. One interesting topic that came from this discussion was that there was an issue with colorism in the department. Colorism is discrimination or prejudice towards individuals with darker skin tones or the preference for light skin (Hannon, p. 13). Christine noticed that Black women who were not as fair-skinned as she is do not get the same reception that she received. Katherine also noticed the same thing among her colleagues. She notes that there are "direct identity markers that people may have picked up on that they feel more comfortable with, that people are willing to kinda lean into and listen to." She also mentioned that her skin tone brought with it a certain type of capital that her darker skinned colleagues did not possess. Likewise, Christine discussed her experiencing witnessing the Black women who received the most attacks on their intellect. Her reflections are worth quoting at length:

> Those people are darker than me, more objective and just less motherly. I mean, one of them is not coming back because of her experiences. And I mean, we talked a little bit about it and I just, I looked at her and I looked at me and I said, you know what? I think I know why we haven't had similar experiences. She changed her hair every week. She was

> herself but that particular type of Black woman was seen very differently than me, than my type of Black woman, the one who for the most part speaks very, you know, traditional English, right? That for the most part is pretty demure and friendly and that should not be required for someone to get the respect that they deserve in their classroom. I shouldn't have to be a motherly person to you to get the respect that I deserve. She has a PhD, just like I do. Right. We are the same, you know, in terms of our academic qualifications and our right to be at the head of the classroom. And so I just feel, I feel, I don't feel bad about who I am as a person, cuz I am being my authentic self in classroom, but it's really unfair that like there's a certain type of Black woman that gets viewed in a positive way, whereas any deviation from that puts you at risk of not being treated nicely.

In Christine's experience, it is darker and less nurturing or motherly Black women who face the biggest challenges in the classroom on predominately white campuses.

Being treated unfairly by students is something that Janez is very familiar with, however, she felt that discrimination ebbs and flows. Although she does not have consistent challenges, the one's she does have are significant. Janez disclosed that she had a couple students who got a little violent with her. She teaches a class that is fairly challenging. It is the first major course that students take in her discipline, and students in this class tend to have lower than average grades in general. Janez said "for many of them, it's the first time that they've been challenged, and often the first time they failed". Some students who did not do well were angry and blamed her for their failure. Janez remembers handing back a test to a white male student. She recalled that the student "proceeded to raise his voice at me in front of other students and threw his water bottle down on the floor, before storming down the hallway." That same day, a student from that class visited her office and scared her with his violent outburst. Janez remembers "he was so mad

because I wasn't gonna change his grade that he took both of his fists and hit my office door." Fortunately, some of her colleagues heard the outburst and came to her rescue. However, no punitive actions were taken against either of the two students who exhibited violence.

Black women in this study faced significant challenges that ranged from macroaggression that warranted punitive actions to lesser offensive microaggressions such as dismissive comments and nonverbal messages from students, colleagues, and superiors. The attacks ranged from minor to major, but the impact of those actions was long lasting. Even if some of these incidents get resolved, Black women can be left with scars and the burden of living with that trauma.

Racism and Discrimination

Broad experiences with racism and discrimination were common among my participants. Melba discussed an experience that she had with a student that was blatantly racist. Through other students, she heard that a white female used the N word when talking about her. As a result, that student was expelled from the university. What was significant about this experience for Melba was that as long as she was recruiting people to the school, they loved her. The problem seemed to be connected to the fact that her recruits were predominantly Black and female. She said,

> They love me for the connections that I have, because I've worked in a lot of places all across the state. And so, it's so funny because when my recruiting became heavily Black female, then all of a sudden, you know [they said] we don't need you to recruit anymore. You did a great job, but we're gonna put you somewhere else. See that's the little shrewd mean girl stuff right there.

This was seemingly an act of racism, since Melba's was lauded for her ability to attract great talent and bring students into the program, as long as they fit the traditional white profile. However, the recruitments of a large number of Black students to a traditionally white program appeared to be problematic.

Like Melba, Mary also experienced blatant discrimination at her university. She noted that the Dean of the department in which she holds a terminal degree was not interested in having her in the department. She recalls that there was "a problem throughout the university. There was a lack of diversity," and some of the old guards were content with the way things were, specifically the Dean. Mary came face to face with racism during one of her interactions with Dean. She recalled that the Dean's refusal to place her in a position that capitalized on her disciplinary and research interests was one of the most blatant forms of racism that she had ever experienced. She said "there was nothing else I could imagine. There was no other reason, no other explanation for her to deny me when I had evidence, clear evidence, other than, racist ideologies". However, Mary was fortunate enough to have a diversity and inclusion advocate in the dean's office who fought for her to get the position. As a result, the Dean recanted his original position and ended up creating a tenure track line for her in her discipline.

The discrimination was not limited to the Dean. Mary also felt that her colleagues did not value her as a scholar. She was not sure if it was her "race or my subject matter that they were not interested in. But they were not interested." This became evident when a colleague invited her for coffee. Not only was the invitation unusual, because no one in the department had ever invited her to anything, but it was also an ambush. During that meeting, her colleague shared,

> I just wanna let you know, no one can make the department do something that we don't wanna do. You can't, we can't force a position. And I was just like, you know, let me do a

> job talk, let me do something. You know, I will show you that I am, that I will be an asset to the department and the department can grow around my area. It's a good fit. No one's doing in the department what I'm doing. And so, I mean, I don't know if that was her way of making a connection or what, but it was again, dismissive.

Mary later became good friends with one of her white colleagues who told her that none of her white colleagues believed that she was qualified for the position she was seeking. In fact, it wasn't until her colleagues read her work, "when the line of tenure was granted and I was up for review" that they realized her capabilities and what her work entailed. Mary believed that if her colleagues attempted to learn more about her and the research she was conducting, she would not have had to prove herself over and over again.

One of the primary consequences of navigating microaggressions, racism, and discrimination is racial battle fatigue. Historically, private, predominantly white institutions in America existed to educate white male clergy or an elite class of white males who could afford to attend these institutions. Harvard, the oldest university in the United States, did not start regularly admitting Black students consistently until the 1960s, changing its admissions criteria and establishing the first affirmative action policy (Stulber & Chen, 2013, p. 39). This was during the height of the civil rights movement, when racial discrimination and social injustice were at the forefront of American life. One could only wonder about the experiences of the "firsts" at Harvard during the turbulent times of racial inequality and segregation. However, Harvard is just one example of how many private PWIs functioned up until the 1900s. Fortunately, as time has progressed, many changes have occurred in higher education. Not only have more Blacks been admitted to private PWIs, but more Blacks have been hired in academic positions. Unfortunately, the numbers are still small in comparison to the number of whites

holding academic positions at these institutions. Often, they are the sole Black person, let alone Black female, in their departments, which can be extremely isolating. Due to racial hierarchies and the centering of whiteness at most historically white institutions, Black faculty can often struggle to be seen and accepted by white authorities, colleagues, and students. Many of the participants in this study experienced feelings of isolation while working at their respective institutions.

Isolation

The social unrest of 2020 brought attention to historic systems of racism, white supremacy, and discrimination in this country. It also opened some spaces for Black faculty to freely discuss the ways in which these systems have negatively impacted their lives and created barriers to their success. Due to the hierarchy and centering of whiteness at historically white institutions, Black faculty often struggle to be seen and accepted by white authorities, colleagues, and students (Gusa, 2010). Since Black female faculty are often the "only" representatives of their race and gender in their departments, they waver between being invisible and hypervisible in their departments, and many suffer isolation due to pervasive white ideology at PWIs.

The trauma and stress that some Black women experience at PWIs is related to racism, discrimination, stereotypes, microaggressions, and barriers to success. Many of the participants in this study experienced feelings of isolation and invisibility while working at their respective institutions and bore the weight of racial trauma and racial battle fatigue throughout their tenure. For example, in describing her experience with isolation at her university, Dorothy said,

> I am a Black person walking the halls of a space that wasn't built for me and truly doesn't necessarily want me. And so, people don't have to come out and say, we don't want you here. But I understand how Black bodies take up space and move through space. So, I am

> forever conscious. You knew that your Black body made a difference [it] was disrupting the space. And the burden of that climate, because you tend to be the only Black body in that space, and for years. If we recruited more Black bodies, I wouldn't feel, you know, I would have more connection and not that climate of being the only one in my classes for semester after semester.

What was striking to me in what Dorothy shared was that this was not the first time that I heard one of the participants speak of their university in this way. Other participants used the phrase "this space wasn't built for me." Miriam also exclaimed "we all know this space is not designed for us" as she spoke about her experience with isolation as a Black female scholar at her institution. Miriam explained that most people at her university felt pressure when dealing with differences and struggling to acknowledge systemic inequities. This is primarily due to the fact that whites often do not have to confront their privilege, nor are they challenged by others to address it. This imbalance of power and privilege has the potential to further exacerbate the trauma and racial battle fatigue that Black faculty experience.

Understanding racial battle fatigue, Janez went into her university with her eyes wide open. She was fully aware of the issues that Black faculty face at PWIs, and she knew that she would be underrepresented as a Black female when she arrived on campus. Janez was the only Black faculty in her department and the second person of color in the building in which her department was housed. She noted that overtime, "few people of color cycle through, some who cycle through as adjuncts or as limited term [faculty]. But it's a fairly isolating experience, but again, I'm used to it." The fact that Janez stated that she was used to the feeling of isolation at her university was very concerning. It seemed that underrepresentation of Black faculty had been so ingrained in the fabric of PWIs that this injustice had become normalized. The issue of

underrepresentation of Black faculty was also shared by Lessie. She too was the only Black person in her department. She admits that it was awkward being the only one, and she felt the tension from her white colleagues.

> I am the only Black person in my department until this year. We just hired a new woman that's coming in and [she's] another Black woman, but there were no [other] Black people before that. She's just coming in now. I can't tell if anybody was, or if there were any Black ones before me. It was awkward. Like the way they were acting. I was just like; this does not feel welcoming. I didn't have any issues [with them]. The other thing is a lot of the people in our space have been here 30 years or more, a long time. And it's not a space where people welcome you. I had to like, kind of deal with this pressure of feeling like, I gotta know these people like they're gonna vote on me. Like I gotta figure that out.

The reality of being the only Black faculty in their departments created both external and internal conflict for some participants.

In conjunction with isolation, Black women in this study were dealing with exclusion tactics as well. Melba expressed concerns about being left out of departmental functions and gatherings. She was certain that her exclusion was due to her race and not being considered part of the traditional structure of the university or department. For example, one time Melba found out, by accident, that people in her department were getting together outside of work, and she had yet to be invited to any of those events. The exclusive practice forced Melba to look within for strength and guidance on how to move within her department. She explained that she had to learn her own way.

> I learned from department meetings. And it was almost a thing of, well, figure it out. And so, there was also an age issue too, because not only was I the only female of color, I was

> the youngest person in my department. And my colleagues had been, many of them had retired from K12, and higher ed was like their second career. So, I just had to learn it myself. I don't know any other way to explain it.

Despite being overlooked and excluded from departmental gatherings and social outings, Melba explicitly stated that she generally tried to get along with everyone. However, she remains careful around them, explaining that "several department members showed me who they were, and I have to admit, they were all women and specifically they were white women. But it's always that protect you first idea. I feel like you only let them get so close."

Much like Melba, Jeanette shared that she feels the weight of isolation within and outside of her department. She not only feels difference and isolation in regard to her race and gender, but also her age. This is quite noticeable when she attends meetings on her campus. There is usually an overrepresentation of men who are a lot older.

> In a room of 50 people, you know, maybe 50 faculty, which is only like a quarter of the faculty of the school, there's like, you know, 42 men and seven women. Most of those men are white or Asian and everybody [is] significantly older than me. And I was just like, wow, like, this is like, this is, you know, this is interesting.

In addition to feeling isolated due to her gender and age, Jeanette explained that she often feels isolated within her department. It is rare that she is acknowledged or recognized as a faculty member by students or her colleagues. I found this interesting because most full-time faculty are well-known in their departments, and most students are familiar with them because they are assigned advisors or active mentors. However, Jeanette shared,

> In general, I know for a fact [that] as I walk around [my] school, there is staff, like other faculty, like if you're not in my department, for the most part, you have no idea that I'm a

> faculty member. I can tell that people do not look at me like, oh, she's a faculty member. So, there's definitely this sense. And I get that people just think I'm a student or think I'm a staff member that they don't know. I definitely don't get the same kind of deference. I'm just like, you know, that person who walks around, unless I'm walking with one of my white male colleagues.

In addition to feeling a sense of isolation at their respective institutions, participants in the study also discussed feeling like they were always under surveillance. This surveillance is similar to what Foucault (2009) describes as the panoptic. In this carceral culture, one may not see those who are surveilling them, but they are always aware of the watchful eye. They are hypervisible to white people, and subject to the "gaze" of their more privileged colleagues.

Hypervisibility and White Gaze

As I have been describing, the academy is often a space where Black female scholars experience unique challenges. For Black faculty and students, among the myriad challenges that they face, the fixed, structural ideology of whiteness is one of the most grueling. Whiteness, a set of normalized cultural practices, prevails at PWIs, and the white gaze is enacted to reinforce and secure white standards (Lui, 2017). The racialized practices that regulate Black bodies create lasting harm and often Black women faculty face this more significantly than others. Some of the participants in this study shared that in addition to their experiences with isolation in the academy, they also felt that they were constantly under surveillance. Participants described this surveillance as "hypervisibility" or being under "the white gaze." The pressure to assimilate to white standards was heavy and persistent. One participant, Dorothy, warns Black scholars who want to work at PWIs about the ever-present white gaze.

> I warn people, if you are not ready for the white gaze, 24 hours a day, don't go work at an historically white institution, because of that white gaze. And you're like, "Well, [Dorothy], you work 24 hours?" No, but even when you're not there 24 hours, the white gaze still haunts you. While you're there, you're under the gaze. And while you're not there, you're preparing for the gaze. So, I think the white gaze is a struggle. Uh, I think the white gaze is a struggle.

Dorothy's description of the white gaze was disturbing. There seemed to be no relief from the mental anguish of whiteness. Home is usually a safe haven for people; it is a place where you can go to find peace away from your workplace. However, the white gaze, according to Dorothy, is relentless and constantly etching away one's peace of mind.

Similar to Dorothy, Miriam also felt the weight of the white gaze at her institution. She reported that "there is always someone watching you. We have to be at the faculty meeting. If you are not there, they know and ask where you were." Miriam explained that she constantly felt a strong need to be visible at all times in her department. This need to be visible was directly related to what she felt were preconceived stereotypes about Black people in the workplace. The mental struggle with the white gaze caused Miriam to overly monitor her moves within her institution. One example of this was intentionally being in her office with the door open so that her white colleagues could see her working. Miriam said that she used this tactic "to gain position and status," because when Black faculty are not present, "people oftentimes take that as a signal of something." Some of the mental stress of the white gaze was relieved when she heard her white colleagues say, "she is the hardest working woman here." However, she maintained,

> There is always hyper-visibility that comes with being a Black woman in the academy. So, I make sure to be visible. If you are not in your office, they ask why. And I wanted to

> be very intentional in shaping any signals that I was given out based on or pertaining to my work ethic and who I am as a scholar. And so, I think that being present is critical, if you aim to help people get a sense of who you are and what you do.

Although Miriam's experience with the white gaze certainly brings light to the chilly climate and stressful conditions under which she is expected to work, unfortunately, this was not an isolated situation. Annie described similar experiences with surveillance of Black bodies at her university. She explained that she was constantly under the watchful eyes of "hall monitors," and she was often asked by white colleagues "where have you been? What have you been doing?" The hyper-attentive nature of her white colleague irritated Annie. She expressed "that kind of thing gets under my skin. Like I've been working. Worry about yourself. Like, were you looking for me for [something]?" However, she maintains that even in the midst of the white gaze and the frustrations that come with it, she tries to be a happy and welcoming person.

Other participants in the study shared similar sentiments regarding feeling subject to a white gaze. Participants felt that there was no room for them to work freely away from it. Lessie said that a white professor in her department was notorious for asking students to provide information about her and her performance in the classroom. In fact, students told her that "he would stop them in the hallway and ask them about me. [Such as] how was I as a professor? And they thought it was weird. And I was like, what is happening here?" Similarly, Melba shared her experiences with hypervisibility and the proverbial white gaze was exhausting for her.

> It's very calculated in that they won't do their bidding themselves. They wanna place people around you, that they hope that you will trust and develop a relationship with. And that's how they find out what you're doing. They're never gonna ask you, "Well, what are you doing? You know, they're never gonna do that. But it's always a thing of wanting to

know what you're doing, why you're doing, how do you have the time to do that? It's calculated in that they want you on all of these committees, under the auspices of service or teaching, but asking students, what's it like to be in her class? Would you wanna take her class again? What does she teach?

The manipulative strategies that white colleagues used to gain information about her and other Black faculty function in some ways as a means to secure white standards in their department. Although these were indirect actions, there were racialized practices that had been securely fixed with the structure of the institution to control Black bodies. Surveillance of Black bodies at PWIs was a common theme among participants. These seemingly covert actions by white colleagues (which are often quite visible to Black women) create an environment that is unwelcoming, and hostile for Black women who have to endure these "white gazes" on a daily basis. In the face of this surveillance, Black women faculty employ coping mechanisms to assimilate and survive in these environments. Some of these include, but are not limited to, distancing and avoidance, engaging in religious practices such as prayers and meditation, and/or navigating anger and resignation. However, the two coping strategies that were the most prevalent among participants in this study were imposter syndrome and code switching. I list these as challenges Black women face because they must figure out how to get past feelings that they are an imposter in the academy, and because they struggle with how and when to engage in code switching on campus.

Imposter Syndrome and Code Switching

Imposter syndrome, as described by Clance and Imes (1978) is "used to designate an internal experience of intellectual phoniness" (p. 241). Women who experience imposter syndrome can often feel "anxiety, lack of self-confidence, depression, and frustration related to

the inability to meet self-imposed standards of achievement" (Clance & Imes, 1978, p. 242). While this can be self-imposed, for high-performing Black women at PWIs, this condition is exacerbated by external factors. For many, code switching, which is a modification of speech to conform to white standards, is a byproduct of imposter syndrome. While on the surface code switching might not seem like a challenge similar to racism or microaggressions, it is something that Black women have to figure out how to do in ways that help them to keep their sanity on campus. In this sense, code switching is one way that Black women navigate imposter syndrome and protect and dissociate themselves from the negative stereotypes of their white counterparts. Many of the Black women who participated in this study experienced imposter syndrome and utilized code switching as means of dealing with their realities at PWIs. Annie shared that she often feels like she is living in three different worlds at the same time due to her identity markers. When asked to elaborate further, Annie said:

> You know what code switching is? (laughter) That's what I do. I mean, I do that. That's a language. People should recognize it as a language. I code switch all day long. It's fatiguing. It's probably why I always feel so tired by the time I'm done with the day. That's what I do. I code stitch all day long. That's what it feels like. It feels like an incredible mental burden. All the time, um, trying to relate in spaces that weren't built for me to relate in, and then trying to relate in the space I'm supposed to fit in. But because I wasn't born in the country, I don't always fit in. And then now I'm in this new world of academia and it's like the training that I received, though it was good enough, was not adequate to meet where I am. Right? Which then builds this imposter syndrome business. Right? So, it's tiring, it's fatiguing, it's exhausting.

The fatigue and exhaustion from consistent racial battles brought on a significant amount of insecurities for Christine. She discussed some of the insecurities she had regarding how she presented herself at her university. The stereotypes that some whites held about Black people caused her to wrestle with conforming to white standards of dress when she first came to the university. However, what was acceptable for whites was not always acceptable for Blacks. Christine recalls being overly concerned about what to do with her hair because of those unequal standards.

> What the heck am I supposed to do with my hair? Right. I mean, I got a lot [of hair] … learning to be okay with like, just put a puff in your hair and go to work. (laughter) That has been hard. It had to be intentional on my part to not feel some type of way about this or that. Even like the last couple years I've been putting color in my hair. I was nervous about that. Like, why should I be worried about what color my hair is? We color our hair and it's fun and it's okay. It doesn't make me any less professional.

In addition to dealing with stereotype threats concerning her hair, Christine also struggled to overcome the incompetent Black professor stereotype. She admits that she was never the type of person to go ask for help or to let somebody know that she had a shortcoming. Christine said that she felt that she always had to "prove that I'm supposed to be here. Nobody can know that I need help. But I deserve to be here. I think, over time, I kind of taught myself to simmer down and conform and code switch." While Christine dealt with feelings of being an imposter prior to 2020, the racial reckoning of that time gave her a sense of self and empowerment that she did not have previously. As she reflected and compared her previous self to who she is today, Christine shared that she doesn't feel the need to hide who she really is anymore. At this point, she says what she wants to say, whenever she wants to say it and how she wants to say it, because that is

who she has become since 2020. And her department is adjusting to who she is now. Christine says,

> So, after George Floyd, everything was just nuts. But in the midst of all that, I was reflecting on the moment and like where we were as a nation and whatever. I sent my department this long heartfelt letter, basically saying, I'm in a hard spot right now because of what's going on. But I also feel like I've gone too many years just not being my authentic self and I'm not gonna do that anymore. And I would love it if I could be seen, if all of my identity could be seen and valued in the department and I would love to just be human with you. I got like five new Facebook friends. Because that was a part of my life. Like, I didn't get on social media with my coworkers. I don't want them seeing how I talk to my cousins on Facebook. Like, that's weird, but why should I be ashamed of that? Why should I be ashamed of who I am?

Similar to Christine, Lessie's mindset about how she presented herself in the workplace shifted in 2020 as well. She explained that her biggest shift during 2020 was that "I don't care what they think anymore. And I feel like we can't care anymore. We just can't care. It's changed how I even speak in my own department and share what's happening. It's changed." Jeanette, on the other hand, had a different perspective on imposter syndrome and code switching. She has grown past those preconceived notions and stereotypes about Black women that she fell prey to initially in her career. Jeanette remembers making all kinds of adaptations along the course of her career. And there were some things that she used to change about herself that she doesn't anymore. For example, she expresses more freedom in the way she wears her hair. She says,

> Eventually I came to the realization that this was actually part of me being more my authentic self. And so, I was like, this is the way I was gonna present myself. You know,

> in total. But there's still this idea of the ideal professional. And the idea of what an ideal professional is. But I try to adapt to that in a way that is still authentic to myself. So, whether that means that my hair is still in braids, but I'm still gonna wear a professional outfit, but that blazer that I wear might be a bright color instead of black or dark brown or whatever. And the way that I talk I'm of course not gonna speak in the same manner that I would when I'm hanging out with my friends, but I'm not gonna adapt my speech all the way to the point where I'm having to seriously consider and think about what I'm doing.

Being comfortable as one's authentic self and showing up in that way proved difficult for Katherine. She shared that she often felt like she needed to perform for her students in order to be accepted as a knowledgeable Black scholar. In other words, she felt that she needed to show up as someone who she was not or assimilate and conform to white standards. She explained that she was performing to gain some sense of belonging in her position, because her intersectionality of being Black and a woman made people "question her abilities as a professor and as an academic and as somebody who has knowledge and could be an incredibly intelligent person." These were preexisting assumptions. Katherine was also dealing with the issue of age or the perceptions of age and weight. She felt that she was being judged by those characteristics instead of by what she brought to the table intellectually. Because of these issues, Katherine felt that she needed to verbally present her resume to show that she belonged in that space.

> I would kind of offhandedly say in my introduction of myself, it's like, okay, we're gonna all introduce ourselves. But I would give the name of where I went to undergrad and where I went to graduate school and all of those kinds of things, and what my research interests were and so forth. And the idea of representing myself and who I was. And I felt

like that early on did get some of that buy-in. Like, oh, she went to this university. Oh, okay. Wow. Did you hear that? Okay.

However, Katherine has now shifted her thinking in regard to how she showed up at her university. The social unrest of 2020 brought with it a level of confidence that allowed Katherine to drop the imposter complex and be comfortable presenting her authentic self. She is now less concerned about what people think of her or about conforming to white standards. She says,

> I don't care about that at all anymore. I don't do that anymore. It's something that I had to come to on my own. Like, I really don't care if you think that I'm worthy of being here right now. That's my own personal growth within the system of it all. I felt like I had to demonstrate and prove myself in certain ways and like, no, you're gonna get it as we go along or not. And if you agree, then you agree. And if you don't, you don't. That's really not my problem at this point.

The most interesting take away from my discussions with the Black women in this study on imposter syndrome and code switching was that many of their mindsets changed during the social unrest of 2020, which I address more explicitly in the next chapter. Somehow, out of the trauma of those experiences, these women found their voices and the courage to speak up for themselves and to be their authentic selves. Through it all, they rose to a level of new self-awareness and boldness that speaks volumes about their resilience and staying power, even in the face of adversity, in spaces that were not built for them. Their strength and reliance were most evident as they worked to earn tenure and promotion.

Navigating Tenure and Promotion

Equitable treatment is important to balancing the scales for Black women faculty who serve at PWIs. However, the standards are not always the same for Black people as they are for

their white colleagues. This was a common sentiment among Black women faculty as they dove deep into discussions about their experiences navigating their campuses and the tenure and promotion process during 2020. During one of the most difficult times in our history, members of one of the most marginalized groups in this country were dealing with multiple points of conflict in their lives. The world was confronting and enduring issues of racism and discrimination that had resurfaced in some of the most disturbing ways that this country has seen in the past several decades. In the midst of the tragic murders of Black people that forced the world to stop and come to terms with its past, there was a healthcare crisis that brought everything to a standstill. On college campuses across the country, white supremacy was being challenged and administrators were responding to demands for change. However, the internal conflicts that Black faculty often experience prevailed. The tenure and promotion process was still a major concern for Black women faculty.

According to Flaherty (2020), Black faculty are underrepresented in tenure track positions, and many of those who are on the tenure track face challenges that their white counterparts do not face, which can ultimately negatively impact their promotion and tenure. Miriam was going through the tenure process during this time. One of the issues she discussed was the lack of available tenured positions.

> There are only so many tenure track positions. There are only so many professorships. And there are also all of these points of decision where we're evaluated, and we're rated. And I think that in many cases because of that, because of the culture where a lot of the benefits really flow to a select few, there's oftentimes the sense that your win is my loss. Your gain is my loss. You're getting something at my expense, or I need to prove myself by making [you] look bad or something like that, so there's often jockeying.

In other words, Black people can be a threat to the traditional structure of the institution. At historically predominantly white institutions, white dominance is conferred from one generation to the next. It can be difficult for Black faculty to break through the ranks and move past the old guards. For example, Mary struggled to get past an old guard in her department. She had a very negative interaction with her Dean, a white woman who had been there for some time. In a one-on-one meeting with the Dean, Mary recalls the Dean "looked me in my eyes and told me that my research was subpar and that I was not what I was explaining to her." Mary had gone to the Dean's office with documentation of the H scores (Barnes, 2017) of all faculty in her department. She explained that her score was higher than her colleagues.

> I came from two R1 institutions. I wrote and had several grants. And so, to be told that my research wasn't on par. She said, "your teaching is wonderful, great, but your research is not, you know, our faculty have research that's above this." And I show her evidence that this is not true. And there was another acting provost that was there in the meeting. And so, when I show her these H one scores as packets of her faculty that were lower than mine, she says, "H scores, no one uses those. You know, they mean nothing." And this faculty member looks at her and he says, "Well, in fact, we used them for our hires all the time. And so, it says something." And so he was, you know, sort of substantiating much of what I said. But, you know, she was clear. She said, "I have nothing for you."

This was a blow for Mary. Her promotion was in jeopardy due to factors that had nothing to do with her teaching, research, or intellectual ability. Mary felt these actions were personal and race based. Croom and Patton (2012) suggest that Black faculty are under the same pressure to produce scholarly publications as white faculty; however, in addition to that pressure, they also suffer under the weight of racial stereotyping, discrimination, and undervaluation of their

research. Mary had clear evidence of viable research, but it was discredited and deemed invaluable by one white authority figure. The burden of proof or the level of evidence required for Black faculty should be the same as it is for any other faculty member. However, that is not always the case. The tenure process is strategically ambiguous and filled with contradictions and hidden rules that can exclude and negatively impact minoritized faculty (Griffin, 2020).

Participants in this study shared that ambiguity around what is required to achieve tenure and promotion is one of the major barriers to success for Black faculty. Dorothy was fully aware of the challenges that Black faculty, particularly women, face with tenure and promotion at her university. She explained, “When you're black, the goal post is not always clear.” It was not made clear to Dorothy how much she needed to produce to gain promotion. She questioned if she needed three publications or two. Dorothy said the guidelines are never really clear, so she overproduced.

> You have to overproduce, and no one's saying to you, oh, well, you have to over produce, but I'm not stupid. I'm a Black woman at a predominantly white institution. I don't get the benefit of the doubt. So, artifacts matter, don't they? So, I show my receipts. My receipts are my articles. My receipts are the 40 something presentations. So, you gotta keep your receipts. So, in the teaching, in the service, in the research, I kept my receipts. But those receipts came at staying up late, working hard. I mean, pushing myself to the point where it has cost me my health. Many Black women will tell you the cost is high. We go so hard cuz we have to, that when we finally get to tenure and promotion, our bodies say you're here and yet wrecked. You ran me to a wreck.

Issues with the tenure and promotion process were even more stressful for Janez. Her tenure and promotion process was delayed due to ambiguity around what was required to be

granted tenure and promotion. Initially, she did not have a mentor or colleague within her department to help guide her through the tenure process. Therefore, she did not have a clear understanding as to what was required of her. In particular, she wasn't provided the same information and support as her white colleagues. It was for these reasons that Janez felt she was denied promotion. She was told that her contributions were valuable on campus, and while they were not ready to kick her out, she got the message that she had not done enough. Janez explained,

> And so that has been challenging to navigate because I think as Black women, we already carry that load of always thinking that we're not quite enough. And so that just didn't help, you know, it made, it made the struggle even harder. And so, my understanding was that the reason I was not promoted was because I hadn't done enough scholarship.

One reason why Janez had not produced enough scholarship was because she was busy helping to build her department. She was completing a significant amount of service work, which in hindsight she felt was not a good idea, because she did not receive credit for that work. However, this is an example of the overburden of service obligations that often fall on Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions. The abundance of service can come at a high cost, and most often that cost is tenure and promotion. Unfortunately, this is a reality for many Black women faculty, including Janez. She shared that she "got caught up" in the transitions that the university was making and asking her to assist with. She remembers,

> The provost saying to me that one, and he put up his finger, one publication was enough. And I was naive enough to think that was true. And to fail, to realize the changes that were occurring at the institution. So, the goal posts moved, I accept my part in what

> happened, and I'm okay with that. But I will say that lots of people have said to me, I can't believe you stayed.

While Janez certainly possessed a level of agency at the university in which she could have asked colleagues or conducted further research on the scholarship requirement, her deference to authority could have caused her to be overly trusting in this situation. In addition, she works at a university in which teaching and service are privileged over scholarship. This could have also influenced her decision to trust the provost's words. Janez's experience is indicative of plantation politics at predominantly white universities. Janez felt exploited for her knowledge and service to the university, and the university was benefiting economically from the work that Janez was producing (Squire et al., 2018). However, the reason she stayed was because she felt that despite the setback, she was on a bigger journey. Additionally, she stayed because she knew she had more potential, and she didn't want people to think that this situation defined her. Janez reported that since the denied promotions, she has continued to help the university build her program. She remained loyal to the institution and consistent in her assignment. As a result, the program has seen exponential growth and development through her work. Janez said of the growth,

> I had a lot to do with that. I essentially built the program at my university. And so, I feel fulfilled, because I now have a legacy that tells a complete story. So, that committee passed the judgment, and I think now they know that that judgment was probably wrong.

Although Janez has made peace with the situation, it does not negate her experiences or the need to create more transparency in the tenure and promotion process and ensure the process is equitable for everyone.

Transparency within the tenure process was problematic for many of the participants, and all agreed that the expectations should not shift based on an individual's race, gender, or sex. Christine shared her concern about equity in the tenure and promotion process. She told a story about the associate provost for diversity and inclusion, a Black woman who had served in that position at the university for many years. However, she had an unfortunate experience with not being granted tenure at the university. This was someone who Christine felt comfortable sharing her experiences with and receiving support from. However, that resource was no longer available once this faculty member was denied tenure. Christine recalls,

> It was interesting because I could see the structural parts of things, because she was in that position. This is an incestuous university. You know, if you graduate from here, they will find you a position somewhere. And so, she had done her undergraduate and then had gone off to graduate school. She even got her PhD and was hired but did not receive tenure. She finally left for another university, but she would help me get into meetings with people and talk with people that I needed to. But it was clear. It became clear to me that her position was in name only. She had zero power to do anything. And our university kept it that way. And I think it's still that way.

Unfortunately, Christine had very little confidence in the university providing equity and inclusion in the tenure and promotion process. All of her experiences with the process, whether it was her own or other Black women faculty, were negative. Dorothy also had deep reservations and apprehensions about the tenure process. She was preparing her portfolio for the fall of 2022. However, she explained that she was still thinking about whether she wanted to submit it or not. In discussing her concerns about the process, Dorothy said,

> I really don't believe in the old white men's way of doing things in the tenure and promotion process and really centering self. In these tenure packages, I have a hard time centering self and your tenure package is all about, look what I did. And I have no interest in looking at what I did. I actually hated the process, but I was successful at what I did. I've been a successful teacher, a successful researcher, and my name means something. So, I'm still pondering whether or not I want to go through that. But then, I remember only about 4% of people of color actually hold full professorships in this country. So, because I think of things in broad strokes, I don't think of the individual all the time, I think of the collective. If I do put in my application for full professor, it won't be because I want it, but because I know the difference that it will make and change the statistics for other Black women.

The majority of my participants felt that changing the narrative around the tenure and promotion process was necessary and must be addressed to positively impact the retention rates of Black women faculty and open the door to other Black women faculty to work at predominantly white universities.

Another issue that concerned the Black women in this study was the impact student evaluations have on tenure and promotion, especially for Black faculty. Studies have shown that evaluations are subject to racial and gender bias. Student evaluations are included in the evaluation criteria, and students are often more critical of Black faculty than white faculty (Smith & Hawkins, 2011). One of the participants, Melba, discussed her frustrations with student evaluations and the need to reevaluate the tenure criteria. Melba shared that one major factor that contributed to negative evaluations is the fact that she is often assigned diversity courses. She explained that these courses can be difficult for white students, because she teaches about

systemic disparities, critical race theory, and inequalities in schools, healthcare, and law. Melba explains, “When I teach those courses like that, my evaluations are horrible. Cause they don't wanna hear that. If I give them fluff and if I did give them course readings that make them feel good, I get the highest evaluations ever.” Similarly, Lessie shared that she also teaches around race, and in those classes her evaluations say that she talks about race too much.

> I've had some honest conversations about the nature of my classes, like having to deal with race, class, gender, and people come to me and talk about things. We talk about all kinds of people in my classes. I've had people say they don't wanna hear it. So, if they don't say it in class, they might zone out, but they definitely let me know in their evaluations that they are not happy with that. It really has shown up in the evaluations of where they're uncomfortable. I have just gotten to the point where I didn't read them this year, because I don't wanna, I just feel like it’s a personal attack on me.

Since 2020, conversations around equity in the evaluations of Black faculty have become more prevalent. For example, Lessie shared that her Dean has openly discussed unfairness in the system and has implemented a new system of evaluation “where they bring somebody else in to evaluate you, because they all have said to me that the student evaluations are lower on their kind of overall evaluation of you.” Therefore, her university is reevaluating how the evaluations process is conducted. She explained that the university is “figuring out new ways, because they are aware that people of color and women tend to get lower evaluations, which has been like in the last one or two years, kind of the conversation.” This is a huge shift in practice, that Lessie contributes to the social reckoning of 2020 and Black faculty being more vocal about the inequalities that have negatively impacted them at PWIs for years. I address additional experiences and challenges since 2020 in the next chapter.

Summary

Although the literature suggests that many Black faculty leave PWIs due to lack of representation, limited support for Black faculty, unfair treatment, and failure of the university to provide stability and job security (Kelly et al., 2017), the Black Queens in my study have persevered and defied the odds. However, their staying power in no way suggests that the work of creating equitable campus climates has been completed. There is still work to be done, and PWIs still need to dive deeper and peel back the layers of their history in order to create real change and provide safe spaces for Black female faculty to thrive and grow as scholars. Until then, these warriors will continue to tear down the walls of structural racism and shout loud until their voices are heard from the margins. We see evidence of this in how they engaged the dual challenges of the pandemic and racial reconciliation in the next chapter of this study.

CHAPTER VI: WEATHERING THE PANDEMIC AND SOCIAL UNREST OF 2020

To many, truth is relative, and changes based on one's understanding of it. However, a critical question still exists. How can one deny the lived experiences of others? Truth is hardly relative when it is accompanied by facts. Highlighting truth from the margins was a major focus of this study. While there have been many studies about Black women faculty at PWIs, what has not been discussed in much depth are the nuanced ways in which this double-minoritized group experienced the university in times of particularly challenging conditions, such as national social unrest and a global pandemic happening simultaneously. While I highlighted some of their broad experiences in the previous chapter, in this chapter I focus more directly on the impact of the pandemic and racial reckoning on Black women faculty members. As these women spoke their truths about their experiences in 2020-2021, I identified five categories of challenges and enablers in their experiences: Navigating the Trauma and Emotional Labor of 2020; Cultural Taxation and Overburden of Service; Managing Health and Self-Care; Support Systems and Critical Mentorship; and Shifting the Climate: Addressing Barriers to Success. In this chapter, I discuss these major issues in turn.

Navigating the Trauma and Emotional Labor of 2020

The year 2020 was difficult for people all over the world. It ushered in a time of significant social change and a global pandemic that impacted and transformed our ways of living, thinking, and being. In this section, I look specifically at the experience of Black women faculty and the nuanced ways in which they navigated their personal lives and their careers at PWIs during this time period. For Black women on predominantly white campuses, the pandemic and social unrest of 2020 only added to their existing challenges. Black women faculty are one of the most underrepresented groups in higher education. They make up only 4% of all

faculty of color at colleges and universities across the United States. The numbers are even smaller at predominantly white institutions (Krupnick, 2019; Jones & Slate, 2014). Historically, they are often the only Black female faculty members in their departments, which often comes with the added pressure to do more to prove themselves and carve out a space for themselves in the academy. The existing systemic challenges that Black women faculty face were further exacerbated in 2020. The murder of George Floyd coupled with the onset of Covid-19 unearthed historic systemic issues with racism and discrimination and healthcare disparities on college campuses across the United States. Colleges and universities all over the country were forced to reckon with their history and make significant changes to the "business as usual" ideology. During one of the most tumultuous times in our present history, Black women faculty in this study embraced the challenges and carried the extra weight of all that came with the year 2020.

Several participants shared that although George Floyd's death played out on the world stage, experiencing and witnessing violence is not anything new for Black people. They shared that Black people have been experiencing a range of injustices since they arrived in this country, and though it was an exhausting time for everyone, physical and emotional exhaustion is not unusual for Black people. There has always been social unrest as far as my participants were concerned, and Black people have been experiencing social, economic, political, and health challenges for years. Although struggle is a reality for many of the participants in this study, the trauma that they experienced as a result of the high-profile police murders of Black people, alongside the disproportionate health impacts of the pandemic on Black people, made these unprecedented times. Protests and riots were happening throughout the country and students were calling for action on campuses as tension around race and race relations continued to rise. Many of the women I interviewed became very concerned for their safety and the safety of their

families during 2020. However, they managed to suppress their own concerns and fears in order to meet the needs of others. Miriam discussed the extreme amount of trauma and emotional labor that she experienced during that time.

> It was an exhausting time for all of us. It was a time of reckoning for Black people. I was thinking about my 14-year-old nephew in another city, and I have uncles and aunts. None of us are safe. I spent over 180 days in isolation. But that felt normal because we always work in isolation as Black women. It was a time of reflection. I thought a lot about what I really wanted and what mattered. I submersed myself into helping others. I taught my classes in this same spot on Zoom, and I was on! But as soon as it was over, I felt that weight of exhaustion. I felt the weight of everything.

Participants in this study were particularly concerned about the safety of members of the Black community, their families, and their friends. Protests and riots were happening in the streets and on their campuses, and tension around race and race relations was at an all-time high. In addition, the deaths from Covid-19 were rising daily, particularly in the Black community (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), which was a major concern for Black women faculty in this study. One participant, Dorothy shared "the pandemic was horrible because of the amount of death in the black community." In her hometown, nearly 800 people were dying every day. She shared that the pandemic affected her emotionally because the Black community was affected. It created a level of stress that magnified her concerns for keeping her children and husband safe. Jeanette shared that she too felt extreme anxiety during this time, because people from her hometown also were dying at a rapid rate. She recalls receiving weekly text messages from her mom, who reported more deaths. Since the people who died were close friends and often the same age as her mom, Jeanette's concern for her mom's safety was

magnified. She remembers telling her mom to “stay at home. Don’t go anywhere” because it was too stressful to think about her getting Covid.

The preservation of self and the safety of loved ones loomed over Black women faculty during 2020. However, this proved to be difficult for many of the participants. Not only were my participants coping with the trauma that came with this unique time period and balancing home and family, but they were also still teaching and providing support to students and the campus at large. Janez shared that there were moments that she felt like giving up, because the social unrest during a global pandemic was too much to handle and digest. In addition to personally working through the trauma that came with George Floyd’s murder (alongside the murder of many other unarmed Black people), she also needed to be prepared to have those conversations with her students and colleagues, which had the potential of creating more trauma. When Janez received the news about George Floyd’s murder, she tried to gather herself as much as possible. However, it was difficult, and she entered her class in a very raw and vulnerable state. She recalled saying to her students:

> I know you're aware of what's happening in the world around us, and it is troubling and it's hurtful. And I acknowledge that you might be emotional, and I acknowledge that I am emotional, but in an effort for us to find comfort in normalcy, we're going to proceed with class.

Daily discussion about the murder of George Floyd and the constant reminders that saturated media outlets created more trauma for Black women faculty, and conversations in the classroom about Briana Taylor, Sandra Bland, and others who lost their lives became increasingly difficult. However, they were conversations that Black women faculty believed

were necessary to move forward and create change, particularly with their predominantly white student population.

In describing her experiences during this time, Katherine shared that she had already had enough trouble dealing with conversations about race, racism, and discrimination prior to these events. She explained “But this is my job. And so, I've trained myself in a completely different way to engage, and I have the times where I disengage.” This was her way of coping with the trauma without compromising her job. While the challenges that participants faced on campus were great, they were only a fraction of what these women experienced in other areas of their lives. The women in this study also faced challenges with balancing the social and emotional impact that the pandemic was having on their personal lives and the lives of their family members. In addition to the struggles they faced on campus, there were new challenges at home.

The Stress of the Pandemic

Traditionally, Black women faculty are known to juggle multiple responsibilities in addition to their careers. The women in this study were no different. In analyzing how managing multiple responsibilities outside of the academy might have impacted their work during the pandemic and social unrest, I found that the women in this study experienced a range of emotions, from high stress to periods of complete relief due to the absence of daily microaggressions while they worked from the safety of their homes. The stress was often connected to the new responsibilities of homeschooling their children due to the lack of childcare during prolonged school closures. In the Spring of 2020, nearly every school in the country shut down due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The shutdowns left families with limited to no childcare access, and further exacerbated and illuminated the challenges faced by members of marginalized communities. Women in study shared that the lack of access to childcare and the

new responsibilities of homeschooling their children created more exhaustion for them. Not only were they teaching others, doing service work, and trying to balance scholarship, but they were now charged with teaching their own children. One of the women, Lessie, shared that childcare was a lot for her family during Covid. She shared “It’s more than what I imagined. So, it takes away from time that I felt like I could be writing, or I could be doing something else.” This was a big factor for Lessie, as she struggled to balance her career and family. She shared that she was just trying to figure out a way not to burn herself out.

The conditions of the pandemic put a tremendous strain on the families of Black women faculty. Katherine explained that home life became increasingly challenging as the pandemic got severely worse. She said:

> Home life! Good Lord! We were in an awful place. My husband is in healthcare, so he has been in the trenches for two and a half years. Early on, we just had no clue what this was. So that that's been very difficult, especially with the amount of stress that he is going through. Because whatever's happening in your house, it's gonna have an effect on you. Just seeing people not care and have no sense of what is actually happening was awful. It just made it very tough. Also, my kids were out of school from March through May 2020. And so, I had to shift to teaching online and to, you know, teaching my kids at the same time. That was just I mean, you know, I think I've blocked a lot of it out. That was very tough.

Similarly, Janez shared that it was difficult for her to adjust to the additional work that came with the racial reckoning of 2020, as well as adjust to the new guidelines that came with teaching during the pandemic. However, she felt obligated to take on the extra responsibility in

order for her voice to be heard and to open the door for other Black faculty and students to share their experience and recommendations for change at the university.

> What can happen for faculty of color is we are often overtaxed with service on committees related to this work, so I served on a couple of those during that period. So that was additional responsibility, but I think it's important that we do it because otherwise, we might not have a seat at the table. So, I took advantage of that opportunity to be part of the conversation.

Janez shared that as her responsibilities at work increased, she had to find a way to keep her family stable and that continues today in terms of additional responsibilities. However, it was reassuring to have her husband, who is also an educator, to lean on and provide an additional perspective on the issues she was facing. Together, they did their best to keep their children grounded and aware of what was happening socially with the issues of police brutality and the resurgence of overt racism, but not to the point of being paranoid.

Although their own well-being and that of their family members was of major importance to these Black women, these were not their only concerns. Their campuses were undergoing major changes, and their job functions were changing rapidly. The shift to online teaching during the pandemic brought challenges that Black women in this study were not expecting.

Navigating the Shift to Teaching Online

Coping with the trauma that came with this unique time period was challenging in itself; however, my participants continued to work and serve at a high capacity, providing support to students and the campus at large**.** Like everyone else in higher education, the women that I interviewed made the challenging shift to teaching online in the Spring of 2020. Higher education institutions closed their campuses to students, faculty, and staff and made the decision

to do all business remotely. While the shift was necessary to aid in the health and safety of everyone, it created additional stressors for the women in this study. As these Black women were making significant changes to their teaching, Melba shared that the move to online learning was a complete paradigm shift for her. Although it was challenging and created more work in regard to modifying assignments and adjusting traditional course expectations, it also created opportunities to serve students in a more meaningful way. However, she was still dealing with the ominous presence of social unrest and the realization that "this institution is not as welcoming as one would hope to people of color." The combination of these issues added a layer of stress that Melba was not prepared for and still struggles with.

Other participants shared that the shift to online learning was a bit more grueling than they had originally anticipated. Miriam shared that she was "working to streamline assignments and change assignments and deal with students who were going kind of off the grid and hunting them down and reaching out and helping to connect them with resources." She shared that she struggled with the amount of input and energy that was required to stay afloat during that period, while simultaneously dealing with the stress of being Black on a predominantly white campus during one of the most challenging times in recent history and internalizing the trauma she was experiencing from the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many others who lost their lives to police brutality.

Meeting the additional requirements set by the institution added another level of stress for the women in this study. Lessie shared that her institution valued face-to-face learning, and there was rarely anyone teaching online prior to the pandemic. However, at the onset of the pandemic, faculty were expected to shift to online teaching with no training. Lessie shared that although shifting to online teaching was difficult, she found a level of comfort with it knowing that she did

not have to teach face-to-face and risk getting Covid or spreading it to her family. Unfortunately, things changed during the Fall semester of 2020 when faculty were required to come back to teach face-to-face on her campus. The message from campus administrators was “we want students to come back to campus. We want them to have a good experience.” Those requirements caused great concern for Lessie.

> I was nervous coming back to campus when I did come, because I have two little kids that haven't been vaccinated. And I'm just like, Lord, what am I gonna do? These students were getting COVID. Every couple of days you would get a notice in our calendar. And so, it just was like, okay. Sometimes it just seems like you're just doing the rules.

Although Lessie was dealing with some of the same stressors that other faculty members were dealing with the transitions that came with the pandemic, her situation was complicated by the fact that she also had significant concerns for her own health and the health of her two small children. However, in order for her to maintain her employment, she had to be physically present on campus to teach her classes. The combination of these stressors made this time period particularly difficult for Lessie.

Another participant, Christine shared that fall 2020 was horrible because of the mental work that went into trying to stay sane in the midst of everything that was going on surrounding the social unrest and the pandemic. She recalls having to modify all of her courses in addition to being “pushed into workshop after workshop about resilient teaching, online, teaching hybrid, high flex” and all the other different training courses related to diversity, equity and inclusion. She remembers the experience being awful. Christine said “I got no break at all, because like I said, every week, it was like, here's a workshop. Here's how you're gonna teach online.” Mary explained that the extra workload in addition to not having the necessary training to teach and

create material on an online platform was overwhelming and brought on additional pressure and stress. She shared that there was no response to faculty training requests until the summer of 2020. This was challenging for Black women faculty, who often face scrutiny in the classroom at a higher rate than any other faculty (Hendrix, 1997; Pope & Joseph, 1997). Mary suspected that the training was less about meeting the needs of faculty, but more about "every university still having to go through SACSCOC [the agency that accredits her university] social review." She explained, "If you're gonna be teaching, the university had no choice but to make sure to keep its accreditation, to make sure that faculty were trained to teach online. And so, we had to go through a series of trainings that summer, before fall, so that we were teaching" our online courses with the same depth and rigor as our traditionally face-to-face classes. The issue with requiring faculty to attend training in the summer is that it is cut into family, research, and writing time, and initially there was no pay or stipend connected to the requirement. Mary shared:

> And so, you know, of course faculty were like, we don't work in the summers. We get paid, but we're on nine-month appointments. And so, faculty came together and said, we're not doing this unless we're getting paid. So, they came to an agreement to pay stipends for this mini course which, I won't say was worthless, but it was of little value.

What I gathered from participants is that almost all of their universities were prioritizing student needs, while not sufficiently attending to the needs of faculty, especially Black faculty. One of the major concerns for some of the participants was that required training during the summer brought additional challenges for them. Those who had children had to make changes to their childcare arrangements, which was often an additional financial burden. In addition, participants traditionally reserved the summer for research and writing. The required training cut

into the time that participants would usually spend on scholarship. This is significant because historically, Black faculty face more difficulty gaining tenure for issues with scholarship than any other group (Struve, 2019).

While participants in this study were scrambling to make adjustments to their curricula and course procedures, and learning to teach online, they were also providing many accommodations for students. For example, students left their schools during spring break, expecting to return. However, that did not happen for many of them. As a result, some students did not have access to their textbook, laptops, and other school related resources. Melba shared she became a counselor to a lot of her students and found herself modifying assignments, and modifying expectations to adapt to the level of stress that students were having. She explained "I found that I got more text messages and more, um, calls asking for grace. And I had to say, look, my dear, you don't have to ask for grace. You just need to tell me what you need." Christine also shared that she was bending over backwards to make accommodations for students during this time. She recalls making many adjustments to deadlines and modifying assignments just to make sure students could be successful. She noted. "I was taking term papers on the last day of class. It was ridiculous. It was absolutely complete chaos that fall 2020 and even spring 2021." Christine continued:

> We were just exhausted and feeling like, I'm just gonna be honest about this, feeling like the students were valued way more than we were as faculty. Like all that matters is that these kids get on campus and pay for their dorm fees. Like whatever you need to do to make sure that they come, and they stay is what matters.

In addition to struggles with online learning and the push to get back to face-to-face teaching, participants shared that it was often difficult to understand the true needs of students at

their schools, because many of them were from families that were in the top 10% of income earners in the country. Lessie shared that the average student at her school pays the full tuition out of pocket, which can range from $60,000 to $70,000 per year. The stratifications of wealth and inequality at these schools largely range from students from middle class to upper middle class to very wealthy families. Although a great deal of students who attend these private schools are well off or have no financial insecurities, there is a small population of students at these schools who do not have the same advantages and who are able to attend these institutions because of financial aid. Teaching online made it even more difficult to provide an equitable learning environment for all students and added a layer of trauma for the women in this study and their marginalized students. Mary shared that the disparities became even more apparent when students were asked to turn their camera on during Zoom meetings. When the cameras were on, you could see backgrounds and the conditions in which students lived. Mary said,

> What I noticed initially were students not wanting to show their background, because it says something about their class position. So that was difficult. And so, coming to that realization was difficult. I needed to know how to maneuver, how do I address this? Do I blackout your background? Are you able to do that? I was finding ways to adjust, because I want us to be on fairly equal grounds when we're having this discussion. But it's hard.

Reaching out to students from marginalized communities was very important to some of the participants. Miriam shared that as a person with her identity in the academy, she felt it was imperative that she step up and help students with identities similar to her own who were struggling. She explained that “Black, Latinx and other traditionally marginalized students were struggling,” and she felt it was her responsibility to help. As a person with a similar identity, she understood how these new circumstances could adversely affect their progress and add to their

existing challenges. At this point, the pressure to do more was not coming from external forces. It was an internal trigger that wanted to provide some level of comfort for students in those communities.

The women that I interviewed worked diligently to create some semblance of normalcy in their classes. Although the idea of normalcy was comforting to many, it was not a reality. The women's lives in this study were anything but normal, but they consistently fought to hold on to a sense of equanimity in the chaos of it all. The amount of labor that was required of these women during 2020 sometimes did not allow time or space for them to deal with their own emotions. The need to keep going during this traumatic time was a burden that each of the participants shared. They also shifted to some extent to survival mode, rather than feeling the need to be overly productive. They admitted that they were also exhausted from the trauma, emotional labor, and mental anguish of knowing that their people, Black people, were being victimized by the people who were supposed to protect and serve them. In addition, they had some fear about being Black in such a hostile social climate. However, these Black women found the strength and resolve to straighten their crowns, roll up their sleeves, dig in their heels, and embrace every challenge. Their tenacity is something to be admired, because in addition to carrying those burdens, they were being asked to do even more on their campus to facilitate conversations, services, and programs around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Cultural Taxation and Overburden of Service

Since the murders of Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many before them, issues of race, racism, and equity have been amplified in society, and many colleges and universities throughout the country have opted to take up conversations about the historic legacy and current manifestations of racism on their

campuses. However, it has become common practice to call on BIPOC employees to carry the burden of educating and enlightening their white colleagues on issues surrounding racism and diversity more broadly. Cultural taxation is the extra burden of service responsibilities placed upon minority faculty and staff to serve as ethnic representatives and unofficial diversity consultants within the university setting (Padilla, 1994). This particular burden is often placed on minority faculty at PWIs as they carry out service to the university.

Overburden of Service

While the burden of excess service was an existing reality for many people from minoritized groups at PWIs, the traditional, though often ambiguously defined, expectation of service to the university ballooned for Black women faculty during 2020. When asked about the university's support for Black women faculty during the social unrest of 2020, Miriam explained that Black faculty at her institution who had been doing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work all along were asked to take on additional DEI work in 2020. However, when it was time to look at our other responsibilities, it was asked "why wasn't this done. We were killing ourselves and still expected to do everything else." There was no consideration or relief given for the additional DEI work that Black faculty were being asked to perform. This meant that they were still responsible for completing their core job responsibilities in addition to the DEI work. I found this disturbing, because the very people who were experiencing trauma around DEI were being asked to serve the university in those efforts, while also trying to manage the stress of possibly not meeting their core job responsibilities.

The additional service obligations proved exhausting and frustrating for the women in this study. Katherine explained the service obligations have been extremely frustrating for her, because it was so much. She explained, "everybody wants you for something. You're a Black

woman, and so, check off some boxes, right? I've been able to make some choices around it, but I've also not done a very good job of saying no until a little bit more recently." However, Jeanette was hit with service requests before she was fully hired for her current position. Therefore, she explained that her experiences with cultural taxation during the pandemic were significant, as well as the extra pull on other black faculty to serve as resources for the University in discussions about race, racism, and diversity. Jeanette was transitioning from one predominantly white institution to another at the height of the pandemic and social unrest of 2020. What was interesting is that Jeanette's department leaders and colleagues did not find her research particularly interesting initially. It was until the social unrest of 2020 that they showed any interest or considered it important. Jeanette recalls the experience being considerably traumatic.

> There was the pain that I was experiencing from George Floyd's murder, and it also playing out the way my research predicted that Black employees, after seeing George Floyd be murdered at the hands of police, would indeed experience this level of threat and negative emotions and cognitions that comes with it, which would lead you to withdraw from your job. What also happened is that both institutions were pulling on me to present and do stuff to demonstrate their commitment to the black community and black students and faculty on campus. And so, at [one school], I was asked to lead and moderate this panel of Black alumni. But I was also kind of a panelist and I talked about my research. And then at [the other school], even before I started, the school had already had this live series where once a month, they had a faculty member present their research. And so, in the summer they made it weekly. All I know is that all of a sudden, the series was weekly. And so, I was asked to present in the series, even though I hadn't even gotten

> a paycheck. I was not officially an employee yet. And so, it's, it was interesting to me that in the midst of this upheaval where everybody is like now, or once acknowledging that racism is a thing and that it impacts our daily lives, that in that acknowledgement the things that they did to like showcase this and highlight their commitment to it also pulled on Black faculty and students resources. Because obviously the people who are studying race are people who are most attuned to it, i.e., you know Black faculty and students and other faculty and students of color. And so, yeah, it was like this simultaneous pull of people wanting you to do these extra things. And yet I've been dealing with my own pain and, oh, by the way, the pandemic is happening. So, I can't leave my apartment. It was just a lot going on all at once.

Once she was fully hired at her new university, Jeanette tried to avoid the proverbial weight of service that she had grown to understand that Black women in the academy were under. She realized quickly that Black faculty in her department were being inundated with requests to join committees, discussion groups, and training sessions. Jeanette recalls colleagues telling her to stay away from anything that resembles service, especially to the university. One of her colleagues told her "Once they know your name, once you're on their radar, they just keep putting you on random committees. They remember your name." Jeanette shared that the way to avoid the request is to not let them learn your name and stay under the radar. However, staying under the radar for a Black woman at a PWI can be risky, especially since making strong connections is important to gaining tenure.

Much like Jeanette, Annie also felt the added pressure to do additional service work during 2020. She explained that she has a natural love for serving, but the overwhelming number and emotional intensity of requests to serve during 2020 were excessive and came at a cost. She

explained that there were new task forces popping up each week that she was asked to join. Annie shared,

> I am a helper by nature. Culturally, it takes a village for me. Like that's how I was raised. I'm gonna try to help you. But then it's at my own expense. There was a new task force every week. We got racial justice here. We got DEI over there. We got DEIB now, which is belonging. We got everything. And so, you get asked to join that task force and this task force. And it was just like too much.

Historically, Black faculty face challenges with balancing the amount of service obligations with their scholarship requirements (Krupnick, 2018). The demands put on Black faculty during one of the most critical points in history were not only taxing but costly. Participants in the study were very concerned with how their level of additional service would impact their scholarship. Janez explained that the amount of service obligations for Black women faculty can have a negative impact on their scholarship. She shared that her teaching and service responsibilities had a lot to do with her denial for promotion. Janez was concerned that the efforts that she had put into building the program had gone unnoticed.

> I have been doing a lot of work to build a program into a department. So, I've done a tremendous amount of service. I am now poised to hand off a good portion of that service to my colleagues. And part of my strategy has been to offload some of that service so that I can focus on my scholarship. Hindsight is 2020.

Janez realized a little too late that she had not been doing a good job of balancing the big three expectations of faculty members: teaching, service, and scholarship. She also realized that she misconstrued the amount of support that she thought she would be receiving from

administration for her service to the department. This was a lesson learned she now shares advice with her Black colleagues about protecting their time.

Similar to Janez, Mary shared her experiences related to the level of service she was expected to perform at her institution. She felt she was not being protected by her department. She recalls having a candid conversation with her department chair, in which she relayed that it was his responsibility to protect her from excessive service to the university. After telling him about the amount of service she had been doing, Mary remembers him saying,

> Ooh, I didn't know. You are a junior faculty member; you should not be sitting on university level positions. I think at one point I was telling him all of the positions or things that I was doing. And then his response was, okay, well you don't need to do lower division advising for a year, which is a pain. It's a lot of time, but it was just the one thing. I was at a crossroads because, at this point, I'm on the tenure track and I need to be seen. I wanted to be visible, and this was one way to be more visible. It was a plus, but then it was also a drain on other things that I should be doing. So, I had to continue with the university level service. I'll do it, and then just be overwhelmed.

One encouraging thing for Mary is that her university was starting to have conversations and form committees around minority faculty being overburdened with service requirements. The disappointing and ironic part was that they were "asking minority faculty to be on the committee to look at the overburdening of the activities that they're doing."

The requests for service work in addition to what is generally expected of all faculty members was especially intense for Christine during 2020. She shared that her university was going through the same racial reckoning (as were many other universities), and as a result the service requirements changed dramatically. Throughout the university, new programs, initiatives,

and new groups formed to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, there was a new subgroup committee formed to specifically tackle issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion for Black faculty, several small student groups, reading groups, and an initiative to restructure first-year foundations curriculum to address diversity, equity and inclusive practice. The problem with these new programs, initiatives, and groups is people of color were expected to lead them. Although the new programming was necessary, the burden put on Black faculty to head these initiatives was a turn off for Christine. She explained that she was often asked to participate in or have conversations with her colleagues about what was going on socially and her experiences as a person of color, but she admits being frustrated with receiving invitations to serve in leadership positions that she had no qualifications or experience. She says she has also been asked to apply for DEI jobs at her university. Christine explained:

> I had zero qualifications for these positions other than being Black. And that's not a qualification. And to top it all off, I was on leave during that semester. And I would say that the fact that I feel that way further illustrates how the people who are experts at my school are feeling and they are feeling it like don't call me again for anything else.

In the summer of 2020, there were a number of student and alumni groups who were extremely vocal about the university not doing enough to create change around diversity, equity and inclusion on Katherine's campus. As a result, the president of the university took steps towards addressing those issues by forming a Division of Inclusive Excellence, but it came with additional work for Black faculty. Katherine shared that she was also exhausted by the amount of extra service work she was asked to perform around race reconciliation at her institution. She explained "we were already maxed out with having to go in and work on various committees for people to get the diversity piece." That was already in place. Now there were more groups and

committees that Black faculty were expected to serve on or participate in, such as the committee on the history and memory of the university which explores the ways in which systemic racism exists or has been in existence on the campus. The added trauma for Katherine came with having to witness and participate in discussions about former leaders of her institution being a part of racist acts such as lynchings of Black people. Katherine offered that although teaching and learning about those events are "mind blowing and tragic, it is great that they are connecting with it as a community and not passing over the history." However, she felt it was much more work for Black faculty, and more people of color who desired to do that work should be hired to take that burden off of those who do not.

> To what degree are we hiring more people who are interested in doing that work? And so that's the piece that we're finally starting to get a little bit closer toward, which maybe can then take some of that pressure off of the usual suspects that are called upon to think about these issues.

Retaining Black faculty at PWIs is a major concern, and the overburden of service and consequently, burnout, are often contributing factors for attrition. Retaining Black faculty is important not only for the health of the university, but for minority students who rely on those faculty members for support. Minority students want to see people who look like them in positions of power and authority. However, cultural taxation and overburden of service became commonplace for Black women faculty during the pandemic and social unrest of 2020 and the year that followed. The extra pull-on Black faculty to serve as resources for the university only added to existing inequalities and had the potential to increase issues with attrition for Black women faculty. While university leaders were making efforts to positively address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion on their campus, they were exhausting the resources of a group

that was already disenfranchised. It was and still is a double-edged sword. The impact of service overload on Black bodies often came at the expense of their health.

Managing Health and Self-Care

Repeated exposure to adversity in the academy, including navigating racism, discrimination, microaggressions, and cultural taxation can cause stress-induced illness in already marginalized groups. Health disparities among marginalized groups in academe as compared to their dominant cultural counterparts became very apparent in 2020. Black people, in particular, were more at risk for getting Covid-19 than any other group, and they were dying at higher rates (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The knowledge of these risks had the potential to create even more stress for Black people throughout the country. This was true for Black women faculty, as they struggled with stress-related illnesses, navigating the pandemic, experiencing vicarious and real trauma during social unrest, and transitioning to online learning, all of which increased the chances of health-related issues. Not surprisingly, Black women faculty in this study became highly concerned with these issues and increasingly had to focus on self-care and self-preservation during this time. Dorothy, who has been in the academy for more than a decade, shared that she has an underlying condition that concerned her greatly during the pandemic. The rate at which she has had to work at her institution, which included staying up late, working overtime, and pushing herself to exhaustion, compromised her health. She discussed, while choking back tears, the importance of paying attention to your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, because those are the silent killers of Black women. Dorothy shared "the weight that goes with this work, the untold weight is heavy. We go so hard because we have to." Dorothy believed that once Black women get to PWIs, they have to "perform at such levels because of the white supremacist structures, and we end up shedding

years off her life." However, Dorothy was able to find solace during the pandemic. Her underlying conditions allowed her to stay at home with her family when other faculty were required to return to face-to-face teaching.

Other women that I interviewed shared that it became increasingly difficult to balance all of the demands of their jobs and the stress that was induced due to the racist climate and healthcare crisis. Annie explained that there was no balance for her. She was not well during this time, because she was stressed in every part of her life. She shared that not only was she stressed about what was happening socially, but

> I was also stressed because of work. There was no balance. The list doesn't stop getting added to, and I don't have extra hands. During the pandemic, that was really hard. I didn't have a lot of time to take care of myself during the height of the pandemic. But as we were coming towards the ending stage of the pandemic, I tried to institute more things, for example, getting my nails done or scheduling massages. You know, you go and do those things and then immediately go back to work. Those are the kinds of things that I was able to institute to take care of myself.

Annie also shared that she worked hard to set boundaries for herself when it came to work. She took note of when she worked and how long she worked during the day and set limits. The limits were necessary to avoid working over 50 hours per week and to make time for family and friends. However, staying within those limits was not always possible, as one participant shared. Miriam said that she did not do a good job with self-care. She recalls staying busy on purpose to avoid thinking about everything that was going on around her. Miriam explained "There was order for me in the chaos. The weight of it all was so heavy. It was exhausting. I probably could have done more to take some time to just breathe and reflect on all that during the

pandemic." However, in the wake of the pandemic, Miriam shared that she has been more mindful about carving out time for fitness, rest, and eating properly.

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive or prolonged stress (Leiter, et al., p. 1). Burnout was also a major concern for participants in this study. Jeanette mentioned that she had to create boundaries for herself to avoid the proverbial burnout. She explained that setting boundaries during the pandemic was extremely difficult, because she was working at home and her desk was next to her bed. The separation of home from work was nonexistent, which was mentally draining. Jeanette described that she was not able to fully set boundaries and take care of herself until the summer. She made it a priority to develop a commitment to working out to preserve her health. These issues were also stressful for Lessie, who said that she had been warned by her mentor, who is a Black woman, about the increase in health challenges for Black women once they enter the academy. She talked about her reservations about putting so much into her work that it could cost her health. Lessie offered, "I'm trying to figure out how not to burn myself out, giving so much in a place that might not even really have any kind of care for you."

Having a good mentor with experience working in the academy can prove vital to the survival of Black women faculty, especially as they struggle to establish a healthy work life balance. bell hooks (2000) said "Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion" (p. 215). Having mentors who share critical knowledge about surviving the academy has the potential to help Black women faculty employ preventative measures that positively impact their life expectancy.

Finding My People: Support Systems and Critical Mentorship

Due to the history of structural racism and discrimination at PWIs, it is vitally important for Black women faculty to have support systems and mentors in place as part of their survival arsenal. During the pandemic and social unrest of 2020, participants in the study learned how critical it was to have good mentors to help guide them through turbulent times. Although the combination of racial unrest and a global pandemic in 2020-2021 were unprecedented times and many of their mentors had not experienced anything like them previously, they took on the roles of counselors and confidants to help mitigate the impact of those events on their mentees. At the same time, the Black women faculty that I interviewed showed a great deal of resilience as they in turn deemed it necessary to serve as mentors and act as a resource for minority students who were also struggling during this time.

Professional Mentorship

Miriam discussed how the coaching and mentoring (she uses these terms interchangeably) that she received during the pandemic and social unrest was especially valuable. She explained that one-on-one coaching has been useful in terms of creating a safe space for her to talk through professional concerns. Miriam said that "In many ways, my coach feels like a therapist." Having a safe space to vent and freely discuss her concerns was critical to her progress during that time. With the climate as hostile as it was, it was important to have someone whom she closely identified with. Similarly, Jeanette, who was new to her university in 2020, described how the first thing that she thought about in terms of being able to exist in a predominantly white space was that she needed to find her people. By this she meant finding other Black people who she could lean on and go to for support. She explained that her people might be other Black people who are also existing in that same space, not necessarily just faculty

members, who she could be in community with, talk to, and develop bonds with. These were people that she felt like she could be more herself with and be in community with. Finding other Black faculty to connect with can prove difficult at PWIs. There are often few Black faculty represented on these campuses, which makes it difficult for them to find mentors (Flaherty, 2020; Whitford, 2020) and ultimately this can impact their retention. The majority of the participants in this study were the only Black women in their departments. One problem with lack of representation is that the Black women were assigned mentors in their departments who were white. Katherine explained that her experience with a mentor in her department was not ideal. She felt that there was no real thought put into the matching process or consideration for her identity. She shared that the mentoring scheme was a fixed structure that had been in place since the inception of the university. Katherine said the mentor who was assigned to her was a young white woman.

> She was in her second year herself, and I had to kinda seek out my own, like nonwhite female, ways of getting other mentorship. So, I had to, on my own, seek out other women who'd been in the trenches there already and develop those particular kinds of relationships.

What became evident from participant interviews is that there was little thoughtful consideration for race, ethnicity, gender, and/or overall compatibility in selecting mentors for the Black faculty in this study. They were all assigned mentors by their departments when they were hired. However, many of those mentor/mentee relationships did not prove valuable in terms of navigating the university as a Black scholar. Lessie shared that “the intersectionality piece of being a Black person, a Black woman and doing this, they don't recognize it as a thing, and they don't know how to speak to it.” What she meant by this was her white mentor didn’t realize that

the experiences she had were not the same as what a Black faculty member would go through. Likewise, Janez also did not agree with how she was matched with a mentor at her university. She said “I should have selected my own mentor. There was one assigned to me, but she was in a completely different department. We never saw each other because we weren't in the same building.” Janez recalls eating lunch with her mentor, who was a white woman, once and that was about it. Therefore, she made it her business to seek out mentors and build relationships outside of her department. Lessie mentioned that one good thing that her university did during the pandemic to help with this problem was to offer outside resources. Her university paid for her membership to National Faculty Development and Diversity programs and allowed Black staff and faculty to go to a women of color conference. Lessie shared that “a lot of paradigm shifts that have happened around mentoring and support have changed because they haven't been able to retain people” at her university. However, she does believe that they recognize that they have some issues that need to be resolved around mentorship, and thus they have started to invest more resources into this.

When Christine first arrived at her institution, she did not understand that she needed a mentor. It was not something that was often discussed. Since that time, her “understanding of what it means to have a network of mentors has changed.” She explained that when she first arrived at the university, no one told her what it meant as an adult professional to have a mentor, and she did not know what it meant or what she was supposed to be getting from people. I found this interesting yet disheartening. I found it interesting because typically in my experience, new faculty are assigned a mentor within their department. However, this was a missed opportunity in her department. I found it disheartening because Black women faculty are already at a disadvantage due to systemic issues that negatively impact their success at PWIs. Not being

assigned a mentor further compounded those issues. However, Christine was able to counter this problem once she realized she needed a mentor. She explained,

> Once I kind of learned that I realized, oh, I need more than one (laughter) like, I need a few, I need several because I have several different needs, and so once someone told me that I became very intentional about building relationships within my department. So, I've got mentors that are like 18 years post-tenure who can tell me about what life is like on the other side. And then of course, I've got some that are more near peer people that are just right ahead of me that have supported me specifically when it comes to tenure. I even have mentors that I look up to because of the quality of their teaching. I've got people that I can say, I really wanna try this new thing. What would you do? Or how would you do it? Or can I come watch you teach, and then I've got mentors that are in higher up positions that I don't necessarily aspire to. I don't aspire to be in administration, but I do aspire to have access to various spaces on campus, so I can diversify my research options and my teaching options. So, I have developed good relationships with people like in other departments, people that I can go to for help.

Unlike Christine, Mary was fortunate enough to have a mentor that supported her since she came to her institution. She recalls,

> I think my biggest mentor was the professor who recruited me to the university. However, he is no longer at her university. He left after some craziness around tenure and promotion for someone in their faculty. It was not a good space. And so, he and his spouse left the university. Both of them have been my biggest mentors and then through this whole process and going through and understanding, you know, who is who? You know, who do I affiliate with, who don't I feel affiliate with. They were just really rocks

> and still to this day are rocks for me. I always have kept my circle really small because, you know, trust has been an issue with me because I'm just like, I didn't know, nor do I have the head space to figure out who I should trust. I would always tell incoming faculty; you need to find those mentors. You need to find people.

Christine believed that mentorship was vital to her success at the institution. Without good mentors, it would have been more difficult for her to navigate the institution. Good mentorship was so impactful for Christine that she felt it was necessary to empower others by sharing her insight on mentorship. In many cases, she acted as an unofficial mentor to new faculty entering her department.

Finding Resources and Being a Resource

Many of the women in my study actively sought out resources during the disruption caused by the challenges of 2020-2021. For example, Jeanette said that she also looked for resources outside of her department to help navigate these challenges. She also participated in the faculty success program with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. The program helped her understand how to balance research with teaching and understand more about self-care and how to exist in academe with all of the changes that were occurring. Another resource that Jeanette leaned heavily on during this time was her all-Black writing group. She mentioned that the writing group that she joined really helped her. For here, the engagement was more than mentorship, it provided her with a supportive community who understood the challenges she faced in academia. She said, “I think of it more as just like survival and like a community.” Jeanette offered that the good part about this community was that none of the white faculty in her department were in the group. Her comfort was in:

> Simply being in a space of other Black scholars and talking about research and writing and, whether it's someone venting about a racist interaction that they feel like they had, or somebody asking questions about how the university operates or what the university thinks about different things, is reassuring. One of the members of the group works on faculty development and diversity. And so, talking to her when we have issues and challenges and things like that is really helpful.

Lessie reflected on how the goal for mentorship for people of color and women at her institution seemed to have changed at the beginning of 2020. Especially after the violence against Black people and the social unrest in its wake, the university became more focused on finding support for minorities at the school. She says, “I think people are having a wakeup call of feeling like, okay, how do we better support?” Lessie explained that there are a few resources available on campus, but they are not well publicized. About these resources, she said “It's sometimes unfortunate cause you kind of gotta seek it out, find out what's out there. It is not well advertised, or people aren't talking about it.” Therefore, she found it necessary to spread the word about the faculty diversity program to her “little crew of Black women, who hadn’t heard about it,” but joined the program immediately after she told them about it.

In addition to seeking mentors for themselves, many of the Black women I interviewed were serving as mentors to others. Miriam explained that she made a habit of checking on graduate students that she was not directly responsible for advising during 2020, because it was important to her to make sure they were okay. She recalled “a lot of them were lost because some advisors stopped communicating and providing support.” Miriam felt it necessary to step in and fill in the gaps. She recalls it being an exhausting time for them all. Dorothy also said she spent a great deal of time mentoring Black students during this time. For Dorothy, it was

therapeutic for her to mentor Black students, particularly young Black females. She said a safe space for her is in mentoring other young Black women and educating them on how to navigate and survive at a PWI. Some survival tips that she shared with her mentees during this time included “don't you ever tell folk your business. Don't you ever let them see you cry. If you need something, you go to your sister-friend, or your brother-friend, people that you trust.” She also shared that it was important to have an accountability partner and create a community as a Black faculty member, whether it's an actual community that gets together in person or a virtual community.

The development of community was critical and vital to the survival of all of my participants during 2020. Annie recalled how critical mentorship was for Black students on her campus during this time. She remembers Black students really having a hard time.

> It was almost like it was the breaking point for them. There were a lot of things happening on this campus. A lot of things were uncovered that have happened to students, at the hands of faculty members. There were a lot of, those conversations, diversity talks, where students would come and just, I mean, rail on the administration of the school about how unsupportive they've been and all of the sort of traumatic events that they have experienced as a result of being a student at this institution, it was sad.

Annie said that she and other Black faculty members would hold counseling sessions with students after those meetings to try and calm the students down. This would go on for hours, and it was in addition to their regular jobs. Annie says that she became a part of their support system, providing them a place to go to feel safe. This type of support for Black students, although necessary, can be very taxing for Black faculty members. Predominantly white

institutions need to pay more attention to the work that Black women faculty do in addition to their regular jobs and provide resources to support them.

Shifting the Climate: Addressing Barriers to Success at PWIs

As I have been discussing throughout this dissertation, the year 2020 was a year of significant disruption. The social crisis was difficult for many across the world, and no one was really spared from the hardships of the pandemic and the social unrest of that time. During this time, leaders, staff, faculty, and students at universities were forced to make a hard shift into unknown territories that called for a tremendous amount for patience, care, and support. Out of these turbulent times came some of the most significant shifts around diversity, equity and inclusion and policies and procedures that had been cemented in the structure of PWIs for centuries. Many administrators at PWIs made commitments to take action to change the culture and climate of their campuses. In the wake of all of the events around the world and the progressive changes promised on campuses, Black students and faculty were finding the courage to speak out and let their voices be heard. Historically, Black women faculty have been silenced or ignored at predominantly white institutions, which has affected their capacity to engage in scholarship and achieve tenure and promotion in those spaces. The systemic inequalities that had existed in these spaces prior to and during 2020 were being brought to the surface for public scrutiny. Colleges and universities were working to address systemic issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, but how effective they were with those approaches is up for interpretation.

Support for Black Women Faculty

The Black women that I interviewed shed some light on how well their particular universities addressed their needs and provided support to Black faculty during this time. Christine recalls that her university put out solidarity statements that suggested their desire and

intent to create change. However, she along with her Black colleagues wanted them to "put their money where their mouth is and do something." She recalled that her school actually did do something, which was a start.

> They elevated two or three Back faculty to positions of power. People whose expertise is in this area [diversity, equity, and inclusion], which I appreciated. They created all these workshops and committees and like conversations and they did what, what they're supposed to do. I think at the end of the day, there's always this question of, are you doing it because it matters or are you doing it because you have to. But at the end of the day, if what they're doing is gonna improve the life and experience of us as Black faculty and our Black students, who cares if it's genuine or not.

Conversations around race relations became more frequent and led to a moment of reckoning and very real period awakening at Miriam's university as well. George Floyd's murder and the incident with Black bird watcher, Christian Cooper, in Central Park occurring on the same day (where he was followed and harassed by a white woman), combined with the pandemic left people with a range of emotions. Miriam recalls that it "yielded a level of conversation and an acknowledgement of racial problems across society that really, I felt in my institution, led to a real sort of moment of pause and reckoning." She shared that, historically, there had only been lip service to the commitment to Black faculty and students, and they wanted to see action. Black faculty and students were hearing institutions and corporations talk about what they were going to do and how much they care about diversity. However, their landscape and leadership teams did not reflect diversity. Black faculty at Miriam's school wanted their administration to show them what they were doing to give people the authority to be a part of the change, those who actually have those experiences and reflect those identities. As a result, a lot of new initiatives

were implemented at her institution. Miriam explained that the president of the university made bold statements about the school's commitment to anti-racism, which was risky due to the political dynamics in terms of what a university leader was allowed to say, how people would respond to that kind of language, and the new programs that were being initiated as a result. The action behind those words came when top leaders at her institutions "created a new program to fill the pipeline of Black and other traditionally minoritized or marginalized faculty who could move into positions of leadership. They were intentionally thinking through how to create institutional changes in a systematic way." However, those changes can take years to come to fruition, which can add to existing frustrations.

In addition to haphazard changes, there is sometimes a lack of coordination among efforts, which can lead to inefficiency and frustration. Katherine said of her university that there were so many different people and programs saying different things about how they were going to become more racial sensitive, aware, and supportive; however, things needed to be more streamlined in regard to support for Black faculty. She felt that there should have been more focus on pay disparities and teaching and advising loads, for example. However, she explained that one good thing that came of 2020 was the recognition of the ways in which race works in the academy.

> They have sessions for the promotion and tenure committee to teach them about the ways in which racial bias works its way into student evaluations and how it is deeply influencing people's ability to get published and those types of things. So, the university has invested in that particular type of support.

Black women faculty in this study desired to see real change to go along with statements that were made by their university officials. At some universities, this seemed to be happening.

Mary was impressed with how well her school was able to commit to the process of creating change around Black faculty representation on their campus. However, she mentioned that although greater gender equality was achieved through changes in some administrative positions on her campus, it did not include Black women. Nonetheless, there were significant changes in regard to diversity hiring in her department. Three tenure track positions were created in her department, and all of the new hires were faculty of color.

Creating Real Change for Black Women Faculty

In response to the statements made at her university, Janez described some systemic changes that occurred, like bias reporting, but also maintained that not enough has been done to truly disrupt white supremacy on campus. She noted that more has been done to assist Black students in the wake of challenges in 2020, but less attention has been placed on campus programming and policies that support Black faculty. Lessie offered that the rise of the Say Her Name movement to call attention to Black female victims of police violence and the murder of George Floyd caused people to wake up on her campus. Those events brought attention to the unresolved social inequalities that existed for Black people in this country. Whereas students were protesting and receiving a platform to voice their concerns about racism and structural changes on her campus, support for faculty to do the same was virtually nonexistent. Lessie said that there was not an abundance of support for faculty at her school during this time. Her university pumped resources into hiring more Black staff in the counseling department to assist students who were struggling to adjust to the changes that were happening in 2020. However, she says she doesn't remember anything specific for faculty. She recalls that the message was always to keep the students happy and ensure that they have a "normal" college experience. It

was never, “Hey, are you guys good, or do you need anything during this time? What can we do to help make this transition better for you as a faculty member?”

Some participants in the study seemed to mistrust the sincerity of the statements that were coming from their universities about their commitments to diversity. For example, Jeanette was concerned with how engaged the university was with Black faculty after solidarity statements were made. She felt that the administration should have had conversations with Black faculty members about all the ways in which they had been and were being harmed at work. Jeanette was also concerned with how genuine the statements were, not just acknowledging that racism existed, but detailing the actions connected to those statements. She wanted to see action such as providing money and grants for faculty who were studying racism or providing support for Black faculty and students, and money provided to Black organizations, such as the Black Lives Matter Movement. Lessie admits that she had very little confidence in seeing action behind the statements that were disseminated in the letters, emails, and posts on websites at her university.

> I always wondered who was really writing those things. We were getting statements, but it's also like (laughing) to me, it’s just like, okay, mm-hmm, it's a statement. But then what are your hiring practices? Are you retaining people? Or are people getting paid fairly? And then, why are people leaving? It's just some work that needs to be done. I feel like I have to preserve myself.

Similar to Lessie’s experiences, Dorothy discussed the newfound awareness around diversity, equity and inclusion at her university. She said her university did a great job with awareness. However, she expected to see more corrective action in support of Black faculty and students after statements were made. She explained that administrators talked about making changes and providing resources for progressive changes, but most of these occurred only at a

surface level. Dorothy felt that more work needed to be done, because “dismantling racism means people have to give up power and that has not happened. Period. People talk a good game,” but there needs to be action behind their words. Dorothy acknowledged that there were policies, and people to connect with to talk about race, “but anti-racism is about corrective action.” She expressed that she is still waiting for corrective action for people of color and not just to talk. For example, she was hoping to see an increase in the number of Blacks in the student population and in the number of Black tenured faculty, but that has yet to happen. Her frustration is exacerbated by the fact that she is the sole representative of the Black community in her department. She says true corrective action would be:

> The recruitment of Black faculty in the institution too, students and faculty. Those are the two things that I'm waiting for corrective action. I'm still waiting for more scholarships for Black bodies. And then we'll talk about what happened. Not just words, sweet tea and a cookie. We need to see action. So, the institution did a great job in awareness, but awareness is the first phase. I need action.

Reflecting back on 2020 and thinking about the present, Annie was concerned that efforts to create changes during 2020 have dried up on her campus. The lasting change that she had expected to see at her university dwindled as quickly as it arrived. She mentioned that in the early stages of political and social unrest in 2020, administrators were gung-ho about creating change and attacking racial problems that existed at their institutions. They were creating task forces and initiating programs and making plans to provide resources for Black faculty and students. However, after publicity around the Black Lives Matter Movement and protests slowed down, so did the enthusiasm and actions surrounding changes at her university.

> Now most of those task forces are gone. The one that I'm participating in, I don't know what we're gonna do. I'm afraid, and I told people, this is what everybody was worried about. This is exactly what everybody was worried about. That everybody's gonna get all excited about working towards change, and then give it a couple years, it's gonna disappear. And that's what's happening. That's what's happening.

Ultimately, the limited support for Black women faculty during the pandemic seemed to be an additional concern for participants in this study. Some of the women that I interviewed felt their universities were very cognizant and attentive to their needs during the pandemic, while others felt that their universities could have provided more support during the pandemic. Janez explained that her university offered a great deal of support. She said "There was just a lot of grace and flexibility, no questions asked. We had auto autonomy to do whatever we needed to." They provided workshops for them to learn the technology necessary to teach online and provided strategies to help sustain students through the transition period. However, the transition was very challenging and while it "worked" in theory, there were a lot of challenges in everyday practice. Janez discussed how it was very stressful and laborious to teach hybrid classes, and she was grateful that the university heard their voices and put a policy in place the next semester that prohibited hybrid classes.

The added labor commitment, in addition to their regular job requirements, were difficult for most of the women in this study, and their extra labor often went without recognition or appreciation. Miriam talked about how she and her colleagues were frustrated with the lack of appreciation that they received during and after the epic 2020 shifts. There was only one time in which she recalled "someone from the department sent an email to say thank you for what you are doing. Just one. We did not receive anything from anyone else. I think, no, I know our

university has the resources to do more." The lack of appreciation and recognition of additional labor by the university was even more concerning for Lessie. She recalls not even receiving a holiday card during 2020, which was a normal practice for the university. Additional frustration came from not being provided the resources necessary to teach online. Lessie said that her university didn't send critical office supplies and equipment that she needed to successfully teach online.

> So, I'm buying all that stuff out of my own pocket. I just felt like we never even got a thank you card or like a fruit basket, or a $25 gift card, or shoot a $10 gift card to Chipotle, like something just to say thank you for everything y'all did. We just never got anything.

The one thing that the University did acknowledge was that faculty with children were having issues with childcare. Supervisors were asked to be more flexible. The university also implemented an impact statement process for faculty to submit to their superiors about the impact that the pandemic was having on their lives. This statement would be included in their personal file and would be provided as context when faculty went up for tenure. Lessie offered, "I was emailing my department chair every time that there's a closure, because I want them to know that this is impacting me." This was a critical shift in policy for Lessie because it was a layer of protection that Black faculty did not have access to prior to the pandemic.

Summary

Throughout this study, it became very clear to me that the Black women faculty who shared their experiences truly loved their universities, even during some of the most difficult seasons of their tenure, specifically during 2020. Despite the challenges they faced, they remained faithful and committed to the university, their students, their families, and the academic

process. Each of these Black women believe that they are valuable and brought value to their respective universities. Although they were experiencing social and job-related stress and trauma, an overburden of service obligation, along with the traditional challenges that come with their intersectionality at PWIs, they endured. This speaks to the resilience of Black women and their ability to survive and thrive under many challenging circumstances. It is both a blessing and curse from our ancestors. We find strength in our weakness and power to move forward in adversities.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous two chapters, I introduced and described the major themes that I identified in my analysis of interviews with Black female faculty tenured or on the tenure track. In this chapter, I further discuss these findings and succinctly answer my research questions. I also discuss limitations, and offer some suggestions and recommendations for Black women faculty, leaders at PWIs, and colleagues who work with Black women faculty. I end this chapter with some personal reflections on the study overall.

Research Questions Answered and Discussion

In this chapter, I put my findings into conversation with the literature and answer my two research questions: What are the experiences of Black female faculty at predominately white institutions? and What impact did the pandemic and social and racial unrest of 2020 have on the lived experiences of Black women faculty at PWIs? I provide further detail on these questions by reflecting on six key issues: navigating trauma at PWIs, sense of belonging, the weight of service, navigating 2020, coping and jugging it all, and taking up space.

In this research, I drew on the theory of Black Feminist Thought to bring into focus the lived experiences of Black women faculty. I further drew from Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Feminism to examine existing power structures which are based on white privilege and white supremacy, and the effects of race and racism on educational structures, practices, and discourses. Throughout this study, I have shown that Black women faculty who worked at PWIs during the pandemic and the racial tension and social unrest in the US experienced significant challenges navigating their universities in 2020 and the subsequent years, as I discussed in chapter V. However, these experiences were only an extension of the challenges that they already faced as Black women at PWIs, which I discussed in chapter IV. For many of the

participants, the trauma related to pandemic and social unrest only added to existing systemic issues, and in some ways the fact that social challenges impacted them more intensely than many of their colleagues was business as usual. Although the heightened awareness of the racial climate made their daily interactions with colleagues and students a little more intense, participants in the study found some peace in knowing that they could finally speak freely about their experiences, who they were as people, and the injustice that Black people had been experiencing for years. They now had a seat at the table to address systemic racism and discrimination that sorely impacted the lives of Black scholars and students at PWIs. However, those seats sometimes came with a hefty price. During 2020 and the years since, there has been significant pressure put on Black faculty to do service work in regard to race relations on campus, which added to the high level of service commitments that each of the participants already carried.

In my review of the data collected, I noticed that Black women faculty are still dealing with some of the same historic issues such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice that many before them have experienced in the academy, and that many scholars have written about. It sometimes seems that time has stood still in regard to racial inequality and representation of Black women at PWIs. The National Center for Education Statistics, (2020) reported that only about 4% of faculty at degree-granting institutions are Black women. This is a difficult reality, because it suggests that not much has changed in the academy by way of efforts to promote, support, and secure Black women faculty. It speaks to the invisible nature of Black women faculty and the lack of value for their knowledge, expertise, and well-being at PWIs. It also speaks to the plantation politics that many PWIs employ to exploit Black bodies. Squire et al. (2008) describe how Black faculty are often exploited for political and economic gain of PWIs.

Such was the case in 2020 and the subsequent years, in which the very individuals who were negatively impacted by racial and social injustices were asked to take on the service work to educate their white peers and others to create change in those areas. Although more exposure was being given to the diversity, equity, and inclusion during this time, the women in this study were still burdened with the trauma surrounding racial inequality, police brutality, and the murders of Black people around the country, as well as the existing inequalities that they faced at their institutions.

Navigating Trauma at PWIs

Historically, Black women faculty experience daily microaggression as predominantly white institutions. According to Green and Mabokela (2011), Black women who have terminal degrees and hold tenure track positions experienced discrimination and marginalization in these positions. This is true for many of the women in this study. Over half of the participants experienced some form of discrimination, whether it was overt or covert. Although the vast majority of the women in this study received their elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education at predominantly white schools, having that capital did not exclude them from the daily microaggressions or racialized trauma that came with being Black in the academy.

Participants in this study shared that they had experienced negative interactions with white students, white colleagues, and white administrators during their tenure at predominantly white universities. Some participants felt that their experiences were directly related to their race and gender. According to Coleman and Stevenson (2013), faculty who have repeated experiences with discrimination have high racial stress and are more likely to suppress aspects of their professional identity in order to fit in with the dominant norms. As a result, their racialized experiences influence their perceptions of the university and how they respond in that

environment. I found that participants who had experienced racial trauma were still optimistic about their professional progress. Unfortunately, they still carried a great deal of stress related to how equitable their experiences might be as compared to their white counterparts.

The Black women in this study were very careful in their dealings with students, sometimes taking on the role of "mother" figure in some cases. They explain that taking this approach often helped to mitigate false narrative on student evaluations, which could negatively impact their tenure and promotion. I saw this mothering as a way to gain favor with students, as well as a protective measure to prevent negative action in the tenure process. The women in the study were carrying tremendous burdens. In addition to trauma related to social injustices across the country, they were carrying the weight of racial stressors and barriers to success in the workplace. The experiences of Black faculty are one of many factors that can contribute to poor campus climate and a sense of imposter syndrome. One thing that often needs improvements on campuses is an increased sense of belonging among historically marginalized faculty and staff.

Sense of Belonging

The lack of Black female faculty presence at predominantly white institutions is a historic problem with systemic roots steeped in racism, discrimination, and exclusion. The limited number of Black women faculty in these spaces compared to the number of white faculty, both male and female, is staggering. Being in a space in which you are othered or that is significantly and fundamentally different from what you would identify with in terms of race, gender, or sex can be extremely isolating. As a means to navigate the rough terrain of their PWIs, many of these women adapted to their environment by conforming to white standards of being. This was evident in how the participants presented themselves at their universities. Some participants use code switching as a means to navigate and fit in with their colleges and students, while others

battled feelings of being an imposter. Those battles with imposter syndrome can be very costly when it comes to accessing information and resources, especially in the tenure and promotion process. For example, Christine's discussion about her initial problem with imposter syndrome might be indicative of why some Black women fail to thrive at PWIs and end up leaving them altogether. Christine recalls:

> I had terrible imposter syndrome, like all throughout life. I was the only one [Black] in the magnet school. [It's the idea of] Oh, you guys here goes affirmative action student, right? No, I deserve to be here. I don't need help. I didn't ask for your help. I didn't go to the office hours in college, right? No, I'll just get the C, because I can't let you know that I'm struggling. It was so bad. But now I can mentor my students on what not to do.

Like Christine, many of the women in this study often felt like outsiders within. Some never truly developed a sense of belonging, because "there is no personal or cultural fit between the experiences of African American women and the dominant group" (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 21). It is for this reason that the participants in this study struggled to find their place at their universities and within their departments.

Seven out of the ten participants in this study were the only Black faculty members in their departments. What I gathered from the interviews was that being the "only" one can create a complex which often presents itself in the form of imposter syndrome. In addition to participants experiencing imposter syndrome, they also utilized code switching to help them navigate the university in order to mask their own insecurities about being their full selves at work. They certainly did not want to be perceived as the stereotypical incompetent Black faculty. The fear of being perceived in this way could have been the reason why some of the women in this study risked going it alone rather than asking for help or seeking out beneficial information.

This is both problematic and unfortunate because no one should be made to feel like such an outsider that they have to conform to the standards of others to be accepted. Black faculty and students should have the right to be unapologetically Black. However, being unapologetically Black is not often acceptable in the academy, especially if you do not have a terminal degree or tenure. Masking one's true identity is often where isolation begins. If an individual cannot show up to work as their authentic self, they face an internal struggle to preserve self and the external struggle to preserve their career. The battle between the two selves can affect the mental and emotional wellbeing of an individual.

As a Black female adjunct professor who desires to obtain a tenure track position upon graduation, uncovering these experiences and learning how other Black women navigate predominantly white universities was important to me. I am certain that other Black women who aspire for the professoriate will find these experiences validating, and ideally useful in understanding how to navigate private, predominantly white universities, and avoid succumbing to white supremacy culture and ways of being. They may also be able to draw on the experiences of these women to develop strategies to avoid being overburdened with service.

The Weight of Service

Historically, Black women in the academy have experienced significant challenges with the overburden of service-related obligations. However, in 2020, those service obligations increased and became more cumbersome for many Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions. According to participants in this study, instead of being recognized for their knowledge, scholarship, and excellence in teaching, they were being asked to take on the weight of the racial tension and serve their universities by implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or teaching those concepts to white colleagues and students. Kelly et al. (2017)

suggest that this type of exploitation makes Black faculty the service workers of higher education. It is ironic that the very people who were the most marginalized in those spaces were asked to take up this work.

The Black women in this study were challenged with educating students, faculty, and staff on the problems of race and social injustices in higher education. However, their experiences were not all negative. They were also finding new leadership opportunities and heading programs to foster conversation, greater sensitivity, and action around diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, sometimes these service commitments came at a price. As the women in this study shared, the demands put on Black faculty negatively impact their own scholarship and progress towards tenure and promotion. Although the work they were doing was necessary and valuable to the institution, it interfered with other important work. In particular, the excess amount of (and lack of coordination among) diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts impacted research and writing schedules, which could ultimately impact their tenure and promotion. This type of service to the university should be valued and hold weight in the tenure process. For example, in discussing her service commitment to her institution, Mary said, "I was doing all of this sort of committee work that was beyond, you know 20% [the amount of her time dedicated to service] and not being protected." She noted that she struggled with saying no out of fear. She stated "the president emails me and asks me to be on a committee. Do I say no to the president? How is this going to affect my tenure decisions? And so, there was a couple of Dean level asks also." Since these requests were outside of her normal service work, they added more work with little possibility of reward or recognition.

Alternatively, Katherine explained that she was able to include the additional service work that she did in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion in her tenure package. Katherine

said she was often asked by students and others at her institution to put together presentations on diversity, equity, and inclusion. She reported “I had like two pages of events that I had done. But my chair was like, you do know that that's like 30 events. Nobody does that many. Nobody has done this. You need to highlight that in your tenure packet.” Although Katherine’s chairperson supported including the additional service work in her tenure package, it is unclear how the larger tenure and promotion committee at her university would assess all this service. Moreover, other participants were not confident that work like this would be seriously considered in their process.

One problem with universities not considering inequitable service loads in the tenure and promotion process is the possibility of faculty turnover. White universities lose more than Black personnel when Black faculty chose to leave. They also lose the diverse perspectives, knowledge, and cultural resources that Black faculty bring to the university. The overburden of service along with historical issues of structural racism and daily racial battles with microaggression contribute to high levels of turnover and lack of retention of Black women faculty at PWIs (Martin et al., 2019). In order to counter this problem and retain Black women faculty, universities need to better acknowledge, reward, and provide incentives for service-related activities, especially when they are performed by some of the most marginalized faculty on campus.

Navigating 2020

Navigating the tenure and promotion process became a major topic of discussion for participants and seemed to be an additional heavy burden that came with its own challenges during 2020. As participants in this study struggled to balance the abundance of service and teaching obligations, they also struggled over scholarship, progression towards tenure, and the

level of threat regarding denied promotion as well. Due to the global pandemic that was taking place during 2020, the vast majority of universities provided concessions or made amendments to the tenure and process guidelines. Although these actions provide some breathing room for Black women faculty during this time, some of the women in this study were still apprehensive about taking advantage of extended timelines and other changes to the traditional tenure and promotion processes. Some expressed that they struggled with the idea of stopping their tenure clock, which added to an already high level of stress that they were experiencing during this time. One issue with pausing the tenure clock is that it has the potential to negatively affect those who it is designed to privilege. Stopping the tenure process also stops the promotion process, which often comes with raises. Since Black women faculty are more likely to be underpaid, pausing their tenure process could have a negative effect on their salaries.

In addition to the stress of navigating the tenure process in 2020, the women in this study wrestled with the taking leave during this time. Although this option was made available to some of them, and many of them needed leave for various reasons, most of the women in this study feared how not being productive would impact their tenure. Because of this fear, only one of the participants took leave during that time. Another participant was so nervous about pausing her tenure that she continued to teach and conduct research right after having a baby. A downfall to this decision was that she developed a serious health condition that could have been deadly. Her decision to keep working was out of fear of not earning tenure and losing her job altogether. It is important for universities to consider how these life altering events might affect Black women faculty and find solutions that do not further complicate their efforts to be successful.

Finally, participants in this study found it difficult to take care of family and children while trying to teach, do service, and conduct research. Two of participants delivered babies

during the height of the pandemic and during the transition to online learning. The amount of effort required to shift all of their classes online, learn new ways of teaching with technology, along with the added stress of the social unrest and caring for a new baby was overwhelming. One of the participants, Lessie shared that she held a healthy level of fear during this time. In particular, after having a baby boy, she had a newfound fear of what it meant to be a Black male in the current racial climate. In addition, she was dealing with significant health issues, while still trying to fulfill the obligations of her job. I found it concerning that Lessie felt that she had to continue working in spite of the fact that she was going through turmoil in her personal life. She explained during the interview:

> We were a month into [the pandemic] and I'm writing from the bed. I'm getting on Blackboard, writing them notes. I have [the baby]. Everything's fine. Two days later, I'm having pre-eclampsia and a bad infection. And so, I go into the hospital in my mind. I'm like, oh Lord, I can't [do this]. I am still writing to [students] and I'm in the hospital. So, mind you, this is when, in the news, everyone's talking about Black women's maternity rates and mortality rates. And so, I'm dealing with that on top of like, I have a tenure track job. I don't wanna lose my job.

The fact that Lessie felt that she had to continue teaching during this time is an example of the level of stress that Black women are under to overproduce at predominantly white universities. It is quite possible that her level of stress surrounding her job performance and the perceived higher expectation of Black faculty precluded her ability to see the legal options that were available to her in this situation. At a time when she should have been free to enjoy the birth of her child and take care of her personal health, Lessie's fear of losing her job took precedence in her life. Legally, she has a right to take maternity leave. However, fear of what

may happen if she did took precedence in her situation. Although she felt she had to keep working after she had the baby, this does not mean there were no leave options available to her on campus. All faculty should be made aware of available resources, the process for utilizing those resources, and the legal protections that come with them. This is something that should be explored further. It is possible that the stereotype of the incompetent Black faculty plays a role in why Black women faculty do not seek out information or ask questions about processes and policies that directly impact them at PWIs. Black women faculty have access to the same resources as their white colleagues in these spaces. However, the sigma around utilizing those resources could be a problem, which creates unnecessary stressors. Black women faculty should be able to take leave without feeling like it could compromise their efforts to earn tenure.

Coping and Juggling it All

Black women faculty experienced a great deal of internal and external struggles during 2020. They were not only dealing with the realities of the social upheaval and the global pandemic and all that came with it, but they were also desperately trying to manage their own lives while balancing all the new added demands at work. The women in this study shared that they were very concerned about the health and safety of their loved one's during this time and many of them were having difficulties managing their own health. The social unrest of 2020 brought more attention to racism in America and revealed new contours to the discrimination that exists towards Black people in this country. The murder of George Floyd highlighted the injustices that already existed in the Black community and caused racial tension to flare. The Black women in this study expressed the trauma that they experienced during this time with coping with the realities of being Black and constantly worrying about their safety and the safety of their loved ones. Miriam shared that she was overwhelmed with the stress of the social unrest

and constantly worried about her family in other states. The combined stress of the social unrest, pandemic, and Zoom fatigue was exhausting, and there were days when the weight of that exhaustion was heavier than others. Other participants worried about the health and wellbeing of elderly parents and young children, as well as for their spouses who still worked outside the home.

For many of the Black women in this study, although being in quarantine brought about additional issues with isolation, some of these women were appreciative of the constraints, because it allowed them to be in a safe space. In the safety of their homes, they were free of the threat of bodily harm, free from campus related racial biases, and free from the white gaze. The time at home was a necessary benefit for other participants who were dealing with pre-existing health challenges. In June 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that African Americans made up 21.8% of COVID-19 cases in the United States, and they accounted for 39% of Covid-related deaths (Tai et al., 2021). Teaching face-to-face or having to be in close proximity with anyone could potentially put those with health issues at risk. The quarantine measures, as well as the accommodations that some schools put in place for at-risk populations, offered Black women faculty with pre-existing health conditions some peace of mind regarding their health.

While their home served as a natural safe haven for Black women faculty, work related stressors impacted their ability to employ self-care strategies. Black women faculty were so busy supporting the university, students, and their families that there was rarely time left for them to focus on themselves. At this point in time, the universities were pouring resources into students, pressing on faculty to ensure that students had a good experience amid the upheaval of the pandemic. Students were provided with a variety of accommodations such as mental health days,

support groups, social platforms to express their concerns to university leadership, and counseling services. However, campus leaders did not seem to put forth the same effort for faculty, at least as my participants experienced this time. Faculty were often left to find support resources on their own. When asked how well they did with managing self-care during 2020, all of the participants admitted that they did not do well. In fact, in the scope of things, most of them put themselves last. In addition to work responsibilities, seven out of the ten participants were dealing with childcare issues and homeschooling their own children. Participants reported that there were no resources provided by the universities to assist with these challenges. Self-care, although necessary and vitally important, was not something Black women had time or space to commit to. It is important for Black women to understand their limits, take cues from their bodies, and take as much time to care for themselves as they do for others. In addition, universities could do a better job of providing resources for Black women's physical, mental, and emotional health. One option they could consider is to build permanent mental health days into the academic schedule, which would benefit students and faculty alike.

Taking Up Space: I'm Here for the Next Black Female Professor

Fight or flight is a psychological response to perceivably stressful or frightening situations (McCarty, 2016). In an effort to protect oneself from immediate or continual harm, an individual may choose the flight response and leave the situation. However, there are instances in which an individual may choose otherwise and remain in a situation that may cause them harm. This usually happens when an individual feels passionate about an issue or feels they can change the situation.

One of the things that I found most intriguing was that the Black women in this study chose to stay in spaces that they say "were not built" for them and in situations that were

mentally, emotionally, and professionally harmful. This revelation alone would normally cause an individual to go into protective mode and flee a harmful situation. However, these women chose to stay and fight. I think the statistics on the percentage of full-time, Black women faculty at predominantly white universities are indicative of the marginalization that they experience in the academy. Still, out of these small representative small, Black women stay and persevere through adversities in the academy.

During the interview sessions, participants discussed some of the reasons why they have remained at their respective institutions. When speaking with Janez about why she has remained at here university, she stated:

> Oddly enough, I always felt welcomed and, you know, part of the community on campus because it really is a great place to work. My colleagues are some of the nicest people, you know, that I've ever met and definitely worked with. So, I've always felt like I belonged, you know, when I walk across campus [when I first started], and even now people would greet me by name, and that means a lot when people know you and these are people who are not even in your circle. So it was, it's always been a small welcoming community. And so, I guess that gave me strength to keep moving forward despite the challenges. And now of course, I can't even go two steps without getting into a conversation with somebody. So again, I'm always apologizing. I'm like, I'm so sorry. I was late but you know, I saw these five people along the way and I had to talk to them. So, I've always felt like I was part of the community and felt welcomed. But it wasn't perfect. It still isn't perfect. There's a lot of work to be done. We are still, you know, grossly underrepresented but I do find the fact that they [the university] are committed to

> working on the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion inspiring and comforting. So, I think I might feel differently if those kinds of conversations were not happening.

Another reason participants said that they stayed at universities was because they believed that they deserved to be there. Even though they may have experienced racial battle fatigue, this was a somewhat inevitable byproduct of their pursuit of their success, stability, and longevity in their careers. Another reason participants gave for remaining at predominantly white universities was to pave the way for other Black women faculty. Many of the Black women in this study served as mentors for Black graduate students, colleagues, and other Black women in the academy. One of the participants, Dorothy even admitted that she stays to "take up space." However, she cautions other Black women about the cost of staying.

> Our story is a story of survival in these predominantly white spaces, where we are often the only ones. It's not a pretty story, but many of us persist because we try to make a difference in the world. We try to create a space for the other Black sisters who may come after us. That's what I have tried to do everyday. But there's a cost to it. So, my recommendation to young Black scholars is, you wanna get to tenure and promotion, but you want to be able to hold onto your health. Because if we are sick, we can't help our community. And I don't do this work because I want to, there are no riches in this work, period. But I do this to take up space for other Black bodies who cannot take up space. That's why I do this.

In other words, she is keeping the seat warm for other Black female faculty members who wish to work at her institution. Remaining in these spaces could potentially contribute to closing the gap between the number of white and Black faculty at these institutions.

Recommendations for Practice and Research

Black women faculty play an important role at predominantly white universities. Their contributions to teaching, scholarship, and service are invaluable. According to Turner (2003), "Contributions of a diverse faculty enhance teaching and learning as well as contribute to the development of future scholarship. [Faculty of color] bring perspectives to higher education that expand and enrich scholarship" (p. 117). Black women faculty bring a variety of experiences from myriad cultural backgrounds and offer distinct perspectives that students and faculty can learn and grow from. The lack of diverse perspectives and ways of knowing limit the scope of what is possible with inclusion. In this section, I offer some recommendations for PWI leaders and white faculty, and resources for Black women faculty. I then offer suggestions for Black women faculty and for future research.

Recommendations for PWI Leaders and White Faculty

According to Pittman (2012) and Walkington (2017), Black women faculty experience isolation, invisibility, microaggressions, and other forms of racial and gender discrimination in academic spaces. In 2020, universities were forced to face these issues head on, and university leaders made solidarity statements to show their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty and students of color at their universities. They also enacted initiatives to create more conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion. However, there were still systemic and structural inequities that needed to be addressed to support Black faculty. Based on the experience of women in my study, the first recommendation I have for practice is to provide deliberate resources to Black women faculty, including thoughtfully paired mentors. All of the Black women in this study shared that the mentor that was assigned to them via the university was not ideal. The pairing process was inadequate and did not consider the identities of the

mentees. Most often, the selected mentor had very little in common with the Black women in this study, and therefore the relationship was not nurtured. The lack of meaningful mentor relationships put Black women faculty at a disadvantage, because it closed the door to opportunities such as scholarly collaborations, research activities, and guidance regarding the tenure and promotion process. Addressing these concerns will provide more opportunities for Black women faculty to thrive and be successful at predominantly white universities.

In addition to changes to the mentorship matching process, there should also be changes to hiring policies and practices that privilege white candidates, and more effort should be put on retaining Black faculty. As previously noted, Black women faculty only make up 4% of the population of full-time faculty at degree granting institutions. Predominantly white institutions should be more intentional about hiring Black faculty for full time, tenure track positions. There are often more Black faculty in adjunct, part time or non-tenure track positions at these universities than in tenure-track roles. Predominantly white universities must work to change these statistics and foster a climate that is welcoming and supportive of Black faculty.

Furthermore, predominantly white universities should work to honor service work, including work on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, in the tenure and promotion process. Historically, universities have not viewed diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the same ways as research in the tenure and promotion process (Flaherty, 2020). However, the work that Black women faculty perform in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion should not be ignored or discounted as meaningful service work in this process. The work that Black women do in these areas provide opportunities for universities to close knowledge gaps and provide students with diverse perspectives (Bollinger, 2007). The knowledge and experience these women bring to the field of higher education should be valued, supported, and acknowledged in

the tenure and promotion process. To do this, universities need to draft policies that are more inclusive of the work that Black faculty take on in the academy.

Finally, predominantly white universities should put more focus on reevaluating the weight and merit of student evaluations in the tenure process. Student evaluations of Black women faculty often do not accurately reflect their pedagogical best practices nor teaching effectiveness (Flaherty, 2020). Too often student evaluations reflect students' biases and are not reliable evidence for consideration in the tenure and promotion process. With this in mind, it is important for universities to reevaluate the criteria and create policies with consideration for the historic inequalities that might negatively impact the tenure and promotion for marginalized faculty.

Ultimately, it is important for private, predominantly white universities to acknowledge the ways in which university policies and practices are raced, gendered, and classed (Martin et al, 2019), have roots in racism and white supremacy, and thus can lead often to hidden challenges that Black women faculty must face. It is vitally important for these universities to continue to work on these issues, establish more policies and practices to protect Black women faculty, and provide them with equal access to information and opportunities to succeed in the academy.

Resources and Support for Black Women Faculty

What became evident in conducting this research is that Black women faculty need additional resources and support at predominantly white institutions. During the pandemic and social unrest of 2020, there seemed to be many resources and support provided to students. In fact, in many cases Black women faculty were directly responsible for providing those resources and support. However, universities missed the opportunity to bridge the gap in providing that same support to Black faculty. As a result, many of the Black women in this study dealt with the

trauma of the events of 2020 in silence and isolation. The majority of them were on the brink of burnout and others were mentally and emotionally drained from all of the diversity, equity and inclusion work they were asked to do at their universities. In order to create change in these areas, universities must be more intentional about providing resources and support for Black women faculty. This could include providing counseling services or support groups to address work related and environmental trauma, putting strategic guidelines in place to protect scholarly work and prevent overburden of service work, and incentivizing and recognize diversity, equity, and inclusion work as viable service work in tenure and promotion. It is also important to provide more avenues and spaces in which Black women faculty can voice their concern about how they are experiencing the universities, and strategic steps need to be taken to address those concerns.

In addition, Black women faculty need more spaces in which they can connect with other faculty members and share their research. Black faculty are often so severely isolated at predominantly white institutions, that their colleagues not only know very little about them, but they also know very little about their research. This was a major concern for some participants in this study, because building those relationships was important in the tenure process. In order for that process to be more equitable, universities need to be more intentional about creating opportunities for mentorship and relationship building departmentally and in other contexts around campus.

Suggestions for My Sisters in the Struggle

I would like to offer some words of encouragement to all of the Black women who participated in this study and to all of those who aspire to work in higher education, and especially those who wind up at private, predominantly white universities. I encourage you to

keep fighting the good fight, knowing that your work is not in vain. Your presence, knowledge, experiences, culture, and tutelage are needed to break through the barriers that contribute to white supremacy and structural inequality in predominantly white universities. Our sister bell hooks (1994) reminds us that

> The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (p. 207)

Therefore, we have an opportunity to teach in ways that are liberating, which cause us and others to reevaluate archaic ways of thinking, challenging our beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. You are making a difference. Without your presence, other Black women faculty and students are deprived of the role models of strong Black women in the academy, and they miss the opportunities to create meaningful connections and relationships with the women they may closely identify with and glean information on how to navigate the university.

Second, I would encourage you, my sisters, to continue to carve out and create your own spaces, Black spaces that serve as safe havens for Black thought and Black creativity. Take advantage of Black spaces that already exist on your campuses, such as Black writing groups and diversity spaces. Situate yourselves in spaces where you can be "free from the mainstream stereotypes and marginalization that permeate every other societal space we occupy…spaces where we can be our authentic selves without white people's judgement and insecurity muzzling that expression…spaces where we can simply be free" (Blackwell, 2018, par. 3).

Finally, I encourage you to continue to speak about your experiences. Continue to have the boldness to speak up for what you believe. Out of the trauma of the social upheaval of 2020, you found the courage to voice your concerns about the injustices that have permeated the academy since its inception. Breaking your silence opened the doors for new programming, new policies, and new procedures to address historic issues with diversity, equity and inclusion. Continue to use your voices to impact change at your universities and move from the margins to the center.

As much as I have praised you for your resiliency at PWIs, I must also offer a few words of caution. Private, predominantly white institutions are often spaces that are ripe with structural inequality and drenched in a past infused with racial and discriminatory practices. As a result, Black faculty who choose to work at these institutions often face racial stressors that negatively impact their social and emotional well-being and their overall health. Smith (2010) suggests that consistent stress related to racism and macro and microaggressions can lead to racial battle fatigue and in turn impact one's psychological health. Therefore, I encourage you to privilege your own health and well-being over everything. Take heed of the warning signs and listen to your body. Show up for yourself. You are only as good as your health.

In addition, I would ask that you take a critical look within and assess the personal, existential, and psychological costs of staying at PWIs. Contemporary scholars such as Dancy et al. (2018) and Domingo et al. (2022), who write about anti-blackness and plantation politics, suggest that Blacks divest from white institutions. They encourage Black faculty to go to places where Blackness is celebrated and Black people are supported and nurtured. Dancy et al. (2018) further submit that "the only way to establish Black human agency is to exit the system that insists upon Black dehumanization" (p. 299).

However, if you are like me, which many of you are, you have found your why of working at PWIs. For some of us it is the relationships we have with the students who need us the most, Black students. As Christine shared

> I will say that I have developed some very sweet relationships with the Black students that have come through my classes. A lot of them have, you know kind of stuck with me even after leaving class. They come and talk to me. They come for advice. I really, really value that kind of mentorship, that very informal mentorship that I have developed with some students in class.

In addition, many Black women have committed to staying at PWIs, because they truly believe in the power of change and have seen their universities make significant strides towards positively impacting diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, Katherine was encouraged by the specific changes that her university was making. One of those was establishing a "multi-year committee dedicated to examining the racial history of the institution itself, and that was developed specifically out of all of the social unrest in 2020". She also noted

> There's also been a Black woman project that's been created. That is huge in terms of actually attempting to get more Black students on campus to improve their quality of life while here to, to increase the number of research opportunities for them and opportunities to work with [Black] faculty, to work toward, hopefully connecting more faculty that are interested in dealing with issues around race and specifically to African Americans. And so, the university has been putting its money where its mouth So, I mean, it's still up in the air, but at the very least I've seen substantively speaking, some sort of push in that direction.

It is important that PWIs are moving in the right direction to improve their campus climates and make their campuses more welcoming to Black faculty and students. Enforcing a strong commitment to similar initiatives across PWIs would significantly impact Black employee satisfaction and subsequently assist in retention of Black faculty.

Recommendation for Future Research

In this research study, I highlighted the lived experiences of Black women faculty at private, predominantly white institutions in the South, particularly during a period of social and racial unrest. Although there is a growing body of research on the experiences of Black faculty at PWIs, there is less research on how Black women faculty experienced private PWIs during social and racial turmoil. This study aimed to fill that gap in current research. Although each woman's experience in this study is unique, collectively their stories painted a picture of what private PWIs look like from the margins. It was my desire to center those experiences and allow this research to serve as a megaphone that privileges the voices of Black women faculty whose standpoints are not often illuminated at these institutions.

One area of research that might be of particular interest to researchers is examining what, if any, long-term measures private PWIs have put in place to address the concerns of Black faculty and students since the pandemic and social unrest of 2020. The findings in this study suggested that although the university leaders at their institutions made solidarity statements in support of racial equality on their campuses, there was little evidence of long-term corrective action established at these institutions, at least according to my participants. Further research is necessary to examine these institutions' commitments to dismantling racism and racist ideologies on their campuses, particularly examining the impact of new policies, practices, and programs on recruitment and retention of faculty members from non-dominant groups.

Another important focus for future research is to investigate what adjustments to university policies and procedures have been implemented to better support Black faculty and foster better relations among faculty members in general. One area of particular interest to participants in this study was equity and bias in student evaluations and the impact they have on tenure and promotion decisions. Researchers should examine how race and gender influence student evaluations, as well as how to assess the quality and impact of teaching without such subjective voice. Many of the study participants indicated that their teaching evaluation overall were good, though they did experience students who treated them poorly and were evidently biased against them as teachers, not affording them the same respect as their white and male peers. More research on this topic might lead to greater understanding about the problematic ways in which students sometimes perceive Black women faculty at private PWIs. It is also important to think about the ways in which private PWIs might be resisting or facilitating changes to how student evaluations are used in the tenure and promotion process. Additional research in this area could inform leaders of private PWIs on how to increase efforts to retain Black faculty and how to move forward in creating real change at these institutions.

It also important for those who conduct research at private, PWIs to look closely at how ambiguity in the tenure process might negatively impact Black women faculty. The findings from this study indicated that the guidelines for tenure track faculty to follow in their pursuit of tenure and promotion are interpreted broadly and inconsistently, and Black women and their research agendas are scrutinized more carefully than their white peers. Researchers should consider exploring the resources made available Black women faculty at private PWIs to ensure their success in their pursuit of tenure and promotion and their retention. Research suggests that there are few Black women who hold full professorships at predominantly white institutions.

Therefore, very few Black women are involved in promotion and tenure decisions. However, the research did not specifically detail if the tenure process was a contributing factor in their lack of representation. This leaves me to wonder how much of an impact the tenure process has on the retention of Black women faculty. This is an area of research that should be explored further.

Finally, it is important to consider the impact that social issues have on Black women faculty and the ways in which they experience private, PWIs. Additional research in this area might help institutions better serve Black women faculty through the development of programs and services to meet their needs. The myriad of social issues brought to the surface in 2020 brought awareness to the unresolved problems that exist not only in North Carolina, where this study took place, but within predominantly white institutions across the country. Conducting additional study on the efforts that predominantly white institutions have made to improve campus climate and provide more equitable environments for Black faculty and students might offer insights on the successful structural reforms that these institutions have implemented and provide a roadmap for others to follow.

Limitations

In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white universities in general, as well as the more specific challenges they faced during a time of social upheaval and a global pandemic. My goal was to gain insight as to the challenges Black women faculty at these schools face and to understand how to better support and retain Black women faculty in those positions. It was a challenge to find participants during this time, and thus I am grateful for the 10 who agreed to multiple interviews. I realize this is a very small sample, though I think their insights and reflections were powerful and informative. This study is also limited by the fact that I did not have a pre-existing relationship with the participants (which

may have enabled them to open up even more) and by the time constraints of the participants and the lack of representation of full-time, tenured or tenure track Black women faculty at PWIs.

As a graduate student seeking to move into a full-time position after graduation, I wanted to better understand the experiences of Black women faculty who already held those positions. Unfortunately, I had very limited connections with other Black women who served in those positions at private, predominantly white universities who would also serve as good participants for this study. I began by using my networks to solicit potential participants. The women who responded to my open call were excited about the research topic, but the vast majority of them were apprehensive about participating due to lack of familiarity, relationship, or connection to me as the researcher, and thus they were hesitant about trusting me. They were also very concerned about their anonymity due to the historic lack of representation of Black women faculty in the academy and the possibility of their identities being revealed. The women seemed more open to engaging with me and participating in the study after meeting with me and realizing I shared some of their identity categories.

In addition to the lack of connection with potential participants, there was also a limited number of participants who were full-time, tenured or tenure track professors at the four similar private PWIs from where I recruited. In the initial pool of participants, I received emails from several women who stated that they were employed full time at the university, but they were not on tenure track. This was the response from quite a few of the women, which was concerning due to the fact that there is already a limited number of Black women at private, predominantly white universities. The responses from those emails were often some version of the following: “I would love to participate in this timely study. Unfortunately, I am not on the tenure track.” This was the most common response. However, the women who replied felt that the study was so

important that they offered to share the study information with other Black women, within their universities and outside of them, who matched the criteria of the study. This led me to two additional connections with full time, tenure track, Black women faculty.

Implications of the Study

I designed this study to privilege the lived experience of Black women faculty who serve at private, predominantly white universities. The knowledge gained from what was shared in this study will hopefully bring more attention to the way in which Black women faculty experience these spaces and adapt in order to succeed. While there is a growing body of research on the experiences of Black women at PWIs, this research sought to look more closely at private, PWIs and how Black women faculty experienced those institutions during a particular period in time. Although there are surely some commonalities among the experiences of the Black women in my study and other Black women faculty at similar institutions, my participants experiences are uniquely their own and should not be reduced to Black women faculty as a whole. Researchers who center Black Feminist Thought have brought attention to the ways in which the stories told about Black women often have been stereotypical and erroneous (Collins, 2002). My research allowed Black women faculty to tell their own stories from their own perspectives, giving voice to those who actually exist on the margins of private PWIs. Collins (2002) suggests that Black women typically occupy the margins in the academy and hold the status of the "outsider within." Although Black women faculty exist within private PWIs, they often lack a sense of belonging and contend with negative experiences, stereotypes and inequalities related to their race and gender. It is my hope that this research will bring Black women faculty and their experiences from the margins to the center. As private, PWIs continue to recruit Black women faculty, I hope

that this research serves as a guide to implement change in the areas of Black faculty support services, retention, tenure and promotion, and overall campus climate.

This research left me pondering how private, PWIs might better serve Black women faculty. It is my hope that this research will prompt university leaders to explore the interworking of their institutions and find solutions to create change around diversity, equity, and inclusion that will provide support and resources for Black women faculty. This work can benefit from drawing on Critical Race Theory, which "emphasizes the importance of viewing policies and policy making in the proper historical and cultural context to deconstruct their racialized content" (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002, pp. 244–245). Drawing on the tenets of CRT, I question the level of commitment and effort private, PWIs have made to deconstruct their policies and procedures in ways that account for their sometimes racist and sexist legacies. Critical race scholars have maintained that policies and procedures at these institutions are infused with white ideology that result in those in power being blind to the ways in which those policies and practices have historically and systematically disenfranchised Blacks and privileged whites (Delgado & Stephancic, 2001). The events of 2020 forced many institutions to reckon with their histories and the inequalities that existed within their institutions. As a result, many of these institutions began to work towards creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments. It is my hope that this research will offer additional insight into lived experiences of the Black women faculty and provide a foundation on which institutions can build more equitable and inclusive campuses. It is further my hope this research reveals the need for Black women faculty to be included in the deconstruction, reconstruction, and implementation of new policies and procedures that directly impact them. Doing this work will move private, PWIs a step forward in creating a healthy and inclusive campus climate.

Scott (2007) suggests that having a healthy multicultural environment on college campuses will assist in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty. Some areas that need more attention are hiring more Black women faculty for tenure track positions, ensuring equitable considerations in the tenure process (especially when faculty members engage in excessive service), protecting research time, and overall improving the treatment of Black women faculty. Although many of the participants in this study were commissioned to serve on committees and lead diversity, equity, and inclusion work during 2020, their voices need to be heard in other areas of the university. Black women deserve a seat at the table concerning whatever impacts them in the workplace.

Final Thoughts

I decided to conduct this study after speaking with two of my fellow graduate student sisters. The three of us had previously worked at historically Black universities, and over the years had moved to predominantly white universities. One of my sisters had recently earned her PhD and was seeking tenure, while the other two of us were still in hot pursuit of our PhDs. What we found during our brief conversations, as we hardly ever chatted long due to our overly busy schedules, was that our experiences at predominantly white universities were vastly different from our experiences at historically Black universities. Each one of us had experienced some level of identity threat and repeated instances of microaggressions at predominantly white universities. However, our experiences at historically Black universities were, for the most part, "normal," meaning there were no situations that caused us harm or alarm. We felt valued for our contributions and did not have to navigate the challenges we faced on private, white campuses. Because it is my desire to pursue a full-time professorship upon graduation, and because I was teaching at a private PWI, I became very interested in how Black women faculty, who are on the

tenure track, experience private, predominantly white universities. Unfortunately, I knew very few Black women faculty who worked at predominantly white universities, and even fewer who worked at private ones. I wasn't sure if this was due to my lack of connection and relationship with Black women who fit this criterion, or if it was due to the fact that very few Black women faculty inhabit those spaces. Yet, I was intrigued. This led me to the research. I wanted to know more about those experiences and how those experiences might impact these women's paths to tenure and promotion and satisfaction on their campuses.

The research on Black women faculty at predominantly white universities was equally intriguing. I knew there were some issues with representation at these institutions, partly because of my own experiences and those of my peers. When I was hired to teach at a predominantly white university, I was the only Black person in the department. The research indicated that only a small portion of Black women faculty are represented at degree granting universities, and even less at predominantly white institutions. In addition, the research revealed that Black women who did work at these schools were often subjected to racist and discriminatory practices. This revelation pushed me further into the exploration of this problem. Unfortunately, in the midst of my research endeavor, everything changed. Covid-19 swept the country and took the world by storm. As I thought about the existing issues that Black women face at predominantly white institutions, I wanted to know if the current social climate and pandemic had any bearing on how they experienced their schools during that time. As my thinking and the world shifted simultaneously, so did my research. I knew that the task that I was embarking upon was going to be difficult, but I felt strongly about bringing the voices of Black women faculty to the surface. My own experiences of being othered in that space and feeling isolated and silenced led me to want to know if these experiences were common among all Black women faculty. My desire to

understand the experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white universities and how those experiences might have been further exacerbated by the social unrest and pandemic of 2020 was the foundation of this research.

What inspired me during this study was the courage that the participants had to continue in the face of adversity. The strength of these women, who I call the Queens of PWIs, was something to be admired. Often, as they talked with me, I could hear the frustrations, hurt, and trauma that came with reliving difficult situations and experiences in the academy. There were moments where tears were shed, laughs were shared, and knowledge was spread. There were also many moments of joy as these women expressed their love for their teaching and passion for their research. What I was not aware of and what surprised me the most in talking with these women was how ambiguous the tenure process can feel for some, especially for the women in this study. I was convinced, listening to some of my white colleagues and prior to this research, that the process was very streamlined with very few, if any, areas of obscurity. However, the Black women in this study shared a different perspective on the process, drawing specifically from their own experience with it.

Although Black women face significant challenges at private, predominantly white universities and are represented in few numbers, often being the "only" one in their departments, those who remain have made and continue to make powerful impacts and contributions to their schools, particularly in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion and mentoring students and faculty of color. However, the additional labor that comes with their commitment to these areas may also contribute to their exodus from white institutions. Patricia Hill Collins (1989) suggests that "the unpaid and paid work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African American

women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female" (p. 747). The women in this study had somehow managed to inhabit and traverse both worlds simultaneously and with a great deal of success. This is evident in their abilities to continue working in spaces that were not built for them; impart knowledge infused with their own cultures and identities; change mindsets through their work with diversity, equity, and inclusion; and gain tenure, promotion, and leadership positions. This leaves me hopeful. I am hopeful because of the resilience that I observed in these women to preserve through adversities. I am hopeful because, although their journeys have not been as smooth as they would have liked them to be, they were determined to sink in their heels and persevere. While there are certainly systemic issues that adversely impact Black faculty at PWIs, I believe we deserve to be in those spaces. We deserve the same opportunities as our white colleagues; these opportunities are often more prevalent at PWIs, which typically receive more funding and support than minority serving institutions. We cannot sit idly and hope that others fix what is broken or run with our tails between our legs to places where we are most comfortable. Separation is not the answer. We have to be willing to do what is necessary to change and disrupt the system. These women were doing just that. They are the true warriors and queens of their universities. Their stories hold valuable insights that can contribute to work to subvert systemic oppression and create lasting change at predominantly white universities. These women gave me hope and inspired me to continue my journey toward the professorship. It is my hope that this research will inspire leaders at private, predominantly white institutions to explore how they can better support Black women faculty, positively impact campus climate, reduce the turnover rate, and retain one of their most valuable human resources.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Letter soliciting research study participation IRB #

Dear Professor _____,

My name is Lakecia Gunthrop and I am a graduate student in the School of Education (Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations Department) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting dissertation research on the experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). I am particularly interested in learning what impact a period of historic social and racial unrest in the United States might have had on Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions, as wells as the role campus climate and institutional policies and procedures played in those experiences. Toward this end, I began this project specifically to highlight the voices and investigate the unique experiences of Black women faculty at these colleges and universities during a period of social and racial unrest. To capture these experiences, I would like to conduct two open-ended interviews with each prospective participant. I anticipate these interviews will be one hour in length and audio recorded with your permission. I hope you will consider sharing your teaching and learning obstacles, navigational tools, expected and unexpected challenges, rewarding experiences, praise, and suggestions for change.

I am interested in speaking with full-time faculty tenured and non-tenured Black women faculty. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you agree to participate in this study, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and school will not appear in the study. I will use a pseudonym to share your experiences and insights. All transcripts will be kept in a secured location. If your schedule does not afford you the opportunity to participate at this time but you could recommend a colleague who may be interested in participating, please let me know. I am more than happy to contact them, and you are free to share my contact information as well.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me via email at lmgunthr@uncg.edu. You may also contact me by phone at (336) 988-7190. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Lakecia M. Gunthrop, MS, MA
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations
UNC-Greensboro School of Education
lmgunthr@unc.edu

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your background. Include education and experiences relevant to your career path and discuss how long you have been employed at this institution?
2. Is this your first experience teaching at a PWI? What was it like coming to a predominantly white institution and being a Black women scholar? What were your expectations? Have those expectations been met?
3. Talk a little bit about your department and your colleagues. To what extent do you feel welcomed and supported in your department? What support were you provided for during the transition to campus?
4. To what extent do you feel a sense of belonging on this campus? When do you most feel a sense of belonging and when do you struggle with this?
5. Talk about the experiences as a faculty member with your core job responsibilities such as teaching, service, and research if applicable.
6. How would you compare your experiences at other universities with your experiences here?
7. Discuss your experiences with students at this institution. In general, are your experiences different with white and non-white students?
8. What experiences or challenges have you had in the classroom? Do you suspect that any of those experiences were influenced by your race and thus may be different from your white colleagues?
9. In what ways, if any, have you experienced resistance from students in the classroom?
10. Have you experienced other forms of resistance on campus outside of the classroom, for example, from colleagues or as part of service work?

11. What has been your experience with student evaluations at this institution?
12. Some researchers suggest that the classroom a contested space for Black women faculty, especially at PWIs? Do you have any experiences with this or with other spaces on campus that feel contested or unwelcoming?
13. How would you describe your level of agency at this institution?
14. What types of mentorships have you been provided or accessed? How has that support developed over time?
15. What policies or procedures do you feel best support you as a faculty member? What policies or procedures do you feel negatively impact you as a faculty member?
16. How might the racial conflicts/social protests in 2020 impacted you as a faculty member at a PWI if at all? Describe how you experienced campus life during that time. Did anything change for you on your campus?
17. What is your perception of university support for Black faculty and students pre/post 2020 racial conflict?
18. How has the pandemic impacted your responsibilities as a faculty member and/or your personal life?
19. Did your campus leaders make any statements in response to the racial reckonings last year? If so, can you share those with me? What was your reaction to those statements?
20. I am interested in exploring any policies, procedures, support services, and opportunities that influence campus life for Black female faculty. Can you think of anything in particular that I should look at?

APPENDIX C: UNCG IRB CONSENT

Project Title: Addressing Structural Racism, White Supremacy and Reform: Counterstories of Black Women Faculty at PWIs During the Pandemic and in the Wake of Social and Racial Unrest

Principal Investigator: Lakecia Gunthrop

Faculty Advisor: Kathy Hytten

What is this all about?

I am asking you to participate in this research study because I am conducting dissertation research on the experiences of Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). I am particularly interested in learning what impact, if any, a period of historic social and racial unrest in the United States might have had on Black women faculty at predominantly white institutions, as well as the impact the pandemic, occurring simultaneously, might have had in their experiences. I began this project specifically to highlight the voices and investigate the unique experiences of Black women faculty at these universities during these significant times.

This research project will only take about two hours. I will conduct two open-ended interviews with each prospective participant. I anticipate each interview will be one hour in length. All interviews will be audio recorded. Participants will receive a transcript of the interviews. Your participation in this research project is voluntary.

How will this negatively affect me?

No, other than the time you spend on this project there are no known or foreseeable risks involved with this study.

What do I get out of this research project?

Sharing your experiences might provide an understanding how the social injustice, racial tensions and the pandemic might have impacted Black female faculty at PWIs during 2020. These experiences will add to existing literature on the experiences of Black female faculty at PWIs and potentially assist in providing resources for Black women faculty.

Will I get paid for participating?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

What about my confidentiality?

We will do everything possible to make sure that your information is kept confidential. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. We will keep your identity confidential. Your name and school will not appear in the study. Pseudonyms will be used to share your experiences and insights. All transcripts will be kept in a secured location.

Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described in this section.

What if I do not want to be in this research study?

You do not have to be part of this project. This project is voluntary and it is up to you to decide to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate at any time in this project, you may stop participating without penalty.

What if I have questions?

You can ask Lakecia Gunthrop, (336) 988-7190 or Kathy Hytten, (336) 334-5000 anything about the study. If you have concerns about how you have been treated in this study call the Office of Research Integrity Director at 1-855- 251-2351.

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