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Conditionally Accepted: Black Faculty and the Institutional Culture of Community Colleges

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INTRODUCTION

"Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for the dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of the dominant group" - Patricia Hill Collins

What does it mean to be Black in an educational system that reproduces and perpetuates anti-Blackness and gendered racism? In the United States, college campuses are overwhelmed with racially charged incidents, hate crimes, white supremacist activity and recruiting, and are still circulating curriculum that pathologizes and dehumanizes Blackness. Black students are being physically attacked, swastikas are drawn on college campuses, racial epithets are resurfacing as a form of catcalling, campus police are harassing and questioning Black faculty, young Black children are being taken from Kindergarten class to police cars with their hands zip tied… What does it mean to be Black in this system we call education? All of the incidents I mentioned are reports from what we classify as prestigious universities and typically the ones that make the news. Additionally, most of the incidents reported are attacks towards Black students, but white supremacy does not exclude Blackness of any status or ranking. Black faculty are also expected to work and thrive in such environments and are often on the receiving end of gendered racism[1] and racially charged attacks on college campuses nationwide; This is what it means to be Black and navigate an educational institution. In this study, I will explore how Black faculty in community colleges are situated in the margins of

[1] Intersecting forms of gendered and racial discrimination

academe and highlight ways they are able to navigate white hegemonic ideologies[2] and gendered racism in educational spaces.

Education has been studied across disciplines for decades by a variety of scholars who are interested in understanding its functions and the intended and unintended outcomes those functions have for marginalized groups (Milem 2001;Hattery and Smith 2007;Heitzeg 2009;Hughes and Giles 2010;Winn and Behizadeh 2011;Wood and Palmer 2014; Freeman and Lawson 2014; Wood and Harris 2015;Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017;Lara 2019). Such scholarship has advanced the use of intersectional analytical frameworks that address multiple identities such as race, class, gender, and sexuality as well as the impact of those socially constructed systems of inequality and how they award people in the dominant group (white, elite, heterosexual men) with various privileges that shape their social world. Additionally, marginalized groups are also shaped by the experiences they have in the world that are compounded by their positionality in various intersecting systems of oppression. As such, one's unique position within this *matrix of domination*[3] creates varying viewpoints of reality, grounded in experiences with others and resulting in knowledge production that reflects their unique social location (Collins 1990,2000;Walkington 2017). My own social location as a Black woman has impacted my experiences in the education system and driven my goals for social justice and educational equity for my own community.

Relationships with education are established very early on, but often times are not recognized until later on in life. Looking back on my own experiences, I am able to reflect on my

[2] The notion that white is the standard or norm in our society, based on white supremacist ideologies
[3] Patricia Hill Collins coined this phrase to explain the interconnectedness of different systems of oppression such as race, class, and gender.

relationship with education and how it was formed through the lack of representation of Black educators and the extensive marginalization I experienced in the classroom that was reinforced by wider social acceptance of gendered racism. My middle and high schools were composed mostly of Black and brown students from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds, yet our teachers were mostly white women, and there was very much a Black and brown divide. Although I come from a family that never talked about race, the experiences I had in the K-12 system align with existing research on Black students across the United States (Hattery and Smith 2007;Heitzeg 2007;Winn and Behizadeh 2011;Freeman and Lawson 2014; Wood and Harris 2015). I navigated my entire K-12 education never seeing someone who looked like me in front of the classroom, and having teachers assume that I was the bad student before they even got to know me. I was forced to learn in a system that awarded no value to Black skin, and the realization of how that impacted me did not resonate until later on in my educational journey. I rarely heard any positivity about the Black community coming from my teachers except for the typical Martin Luther King lecture that depicted African Americans as wanting to be closer to whiteness and rid our community of bad apples. My community was never uplifted, constructed positively, nor did we discuss the many contributions Black people have made to our society. This anti-Black rhetoric impacted my ability to see myself as someone who can contribute to the production of knowledge and have a positive impact on my community.

Up until college, I navigated my world unaware of how my identity as a Black woman played a role in my everyday life and shaped how I navigated the world. This all changed when I was stopped on my high school campus by a Black counselor from a community college who was looking for students to participate in a program called Summer Bridge. The Summer Bridge

Program is designed for Black students in their junior or senior year of high school and introduces them to community college where they have opportunities to network and build community with Black faculty and community members. Community colleges facilitate transfer to four-year universities, and allow for the completion of associate degrees and/or certificates at an affordable rate, giving those who are not set on a college-bound path in high school a chance to pursue higher education (Wood and Palmer 2014). As open access institutions, community colleges pride themselves on their accessibility, particularly for groups that have been historically excluded (Iloh and Toldson 2013). However, most research about inequality and anti-Blackness in education focuses specifically on four-year institutions, silencing the experiences of being Black in community college (both student and faculty).

I signed up for community college through the Summer Bridge Program and was given many opportunities to become involved on campus and grow academically and personally. I was given the tools to think about how to address the inequities in education that contributed to my experiences of marginalization and continue to impact the lives of Black students all over the nation. Every day I stepped on campus, I was surrounded by successful Black faculty and administrators who made it their mission to help Black students and up until this point, no one had ever invested in me in such a way. For the first time I saw myself, a Black student, centered in what I was learning with someone who looked like me giving me real world advice and the language to explain my experiences in the education system. I felt empowered to channel my experiences into a discipline that would one day allow me to share and use them to educate others as I hope to do as I continue along my own academic journey. Though education has been a site of marginalization and dehumanization for Black bodies, it can be used for our

liberation with acknowledgement and active dismantling of the many ways it is still shaped by white supremacy today.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"The margin is more than a site of deprivation, it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance… A site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" - bell hooks

In this research, I will explore how Black faculty in community colleges are situated in the margins of academe and highlight ways they are able to navigate white hegemonic ideologies and gendered racism in educational spaces. The following are research questions that drive this study:

1. How are the experiences of Black faculty in community colleges shaped by societal forces such as anti-Blackness and gendered racism?
2. What is the significance of community colleges for Black faculty and where do they see themselves situated in the institution?
3. What strategies do Black faculty employ to navigate educational spaces driven by socio-historical legacies of slavery and conquest?

According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), Black women and men in the United States make up only 3 percent of full-time faculty in colleges and universities, in comparison to 41 percent white male and 35 percent white female faculty. This statistic includes all ranks of professorship, lecturers and adjuncts; not taking into account which faculty members have gained tenure within their positions. Most research on faculty is conducted at the four-year level, leaving community college research largely in the shadows and silencing the experiences of Black faculty within the community college system. Community

colleges are important educational institutions to explore, not only because they are vastly understudied, but because there are a larger percentage of Black students from age 18-64 (7% compared to 2% at a UC and 4% at a CSU) (NCES 2017). This statistic is relevant when talking about education and educational equity because Black students are the most underserved in the classroom beginning in Kindergarten and my findings highlight the importance of Black faculty representation in community colleges for students to counteract these negative educational experiences in hopes they will continue their educational journey (Wood 2014;Hattery and Smith 2007;Freeman and Lawson 2014).

In more recent years, colleges claim to have a more focused goal on diversifying their student populations and appealing to students of color as a welcoming place to attend, but the diversity they are claiming to have is not reflected within faculty positions and more importantly, that diversity is not Black (VanDeventer Iverson 2007;Dumas 2016). Faculty in community colleges provide students with the tools they need to be successful in their lives both academically and personally and the impact faculty have on students can make or break their college experiences (Milem 2001; Wood and Harris 2015). However, community colleges show minimal institutional effort to recruit, hire, and retain Black faculty and as a consequence, students often go their entire academic career without ever having a Black professor which further reinforces the dominant ideology that producers of knowledge are white men (Niemann 2016). Research indicates that all students benefit from having exposure to a diverse faculty pool because faculty of color often rely on their own racialized experiences in education and

are mindful of the ways that race plays out in our everyday lives (Lara 2019). This sort of teaching framework challenges anti-Black discourse that holds whiteness as the standard by which all other communities are measured.

The institutional focus of diversity on college campuses as it is currently practiced is problematic. Not only are institutions unsuccessful in hiring Black and retaining faculty, but they lack a critical understanding of how their diversity rhetoric and practices often perpetuate an anti-Black ideology. Most colleges and universities profess to value diversity[4], and some have even pledged to specialized programs[5] and intentional hiring practices, yet they have overwhelmingly fallen short in combating the deeply rooted anti-Blackness in educational spaces that may show preference for *others,* but not *Black others* (VanDeventer Iverson 2007;Hughes and Giles 2010; Dumas 2016;Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). This is one of the many demonstrations of anti-Blackness, and also shows the dangers of a unifying diversity discourse that lumps "people of color" into one category where Blackness is inevitably erased, such as much of the diversity rhetoric used by colleges and universities. Consequently, a type of "people-of-color blindness" forms within this rhetoric that fundamentally misunderstands "the specificity of anti-Blackness and presumes or insists upon a monolithic characterization of victimization under white supremacy" (Sexton 2010:43). Additionally, Sexton argues that the ways we talk about multiculturalism[6] as a concept thrives largely at the expense of Blacks and

[4] By using students of color in advertisements and crafting diversity statements to include in the mission of the college
[5] Such as Umoja and Puente
[6] Or "diversity", that represents an inclusion of many cultures into society

creates a "race buffer" between the Black and white dichotomy where one's proximity to whiteness and simultaneous distance from Blackness awards them with privileges and acknowledgement of humanity that is not extended to the Black or the female body. None of this is to say there is no benefit or purpose in uniting with other marginalized groups under a common struggle, but to demonstrate the deep commitment this country has to anti-Blackness and to shine light on people of color who also enact white supremacy within educational spaces.

In order to understand how institutions such as education reflect the racialized and gendered constructions in society as a whole, we must acknowledge the history behind these very systems and the way they reinforce white male supremacy and use a critical lens to provide tangible solutions. In this study, I present literature on the pervasiveness of anti-Blackness and gendered racism in the United States that is demonstrated through the enslavement of African captives and other subsequent laws and policies designed to keep Blackness in its place. I then build upon that foundation by incorporating literature that lays out the experiences of Black faculty within educational spaces (mostly within the university level due to a lack of literature on community colleges). Throughout the literature review, I emphasize clear distinctions between Black women's experiences and Black men's experiences, keeping in mind the importance of intersectionality[7]. In both the experiences of Black men and Black women, there is continuity of an anti-Black framework within educational spaces that I

[7] The combination of our unique identities (race, class, gender, sexuality) that all interact in our experiences of our social world

analyze through Black Feminist Theory and Critical Race Theory. After a discussion of the methodological approach I took to this research study, I will present my findings, a brief discussion, and a conclusion that includes room for future research and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anti-Blackness and Constructions of Humanness

Before we can deconstruct the experiences of Black faculty within any specific institution or place, we must understand how Blackness[8] is constructed in society as a whole. Classifications of human and non-human, white and Black, man and woman exist in a dichotomy where human equals white and wealthy and non-human is the antithesis, Black and poor (Wynter 1994). One cannot exist without the other, power and privilege cannot be awarded to whiteness without someone to have power over through the classification as non-human that justifies mistreatment and systematic oppression. Similarly, gender is socially constructed as a dichotomy where men are the holders of power and women are powerless, leaving Black women in a unique position, experiencing gendered racism within an anti-Black space. In addition, Blackness has been excluded from full access to legal personhood and our humanity (or lack thereof) is recognized only through our own suffering and relationship to slavery in the United States (Weheylie 2014). Black women's suffering is often highlighted through the experience of rape, while Black men's suffering is underlined through lynching and assumptions of criminality. This deeply rooted anti-Black construction of humanity shows itself in educational spaces, in fact, Wynter argues "there would be no lynching if it did not start in the classroom" (1994:59). Education socializes white men and women to be oppressors by teaching and perpetuating white supremacist ideologies deeply connected to curriculum.

[8] The state of being Black (African American and others who are classified as Black in the United States)

Science and eugenics movements[9] served a particular purpose of classifying people and creating a hierarchical order to human existence that gave meaning to race and gendered categories and was used by universities and reproduced in textbooks (Wynter 1994). Acknowledging this as the historical foundation of what it means to be Black in society allows us to create spaces within education to not only have dialogue but pose solutions to how we can make educational spaces more palatable for Black faculty across both racial and gendered lines.

Multiracial Politics

Since much of the research in this study was collected at Hispanic serving institutions within Southern California where there is less of this Black and white dichotomy, there is a need for a critical discussion of the multicultural context and how anti-Blackness still prevails within it. White supremacy runs so deep in our society, that anti-Blackness is spread across all groups. This is demonstrated through a more common concept called colorism[10], which represents a desire to have lighter skin, and it is adopted by many cultures. Colorism operates off of an anti-Black ideology, where the closer your skin tone is to being Black the less desirable you are, the more criminal you are, the less *human* you are. One of the underlying concepts in Cedric Robinson's (1983) *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* is how the "Negro" was created in west in order to justify the enslavement of Africans, and even more so to create and establish whiteness as a source of power that polices racial boundaries. Consequently, a Black and white dichotomy was established that generated a hierarchy of racial order, white being at the very top, Black being at the very bottom, and all other races (and skin

[9] The practice of using science to select desirable (white) traits and the forced sterilization of undesirable (Black) traits

[10] Discrimination based on skin color

tones) falling in between. Colorism is global, where societies all over the world place higher value on lighter skin even to the point that skin lightening cream is still bought and sold across the world (Harris 2008).

Experiences of colorism occur in varying degrees for Black men and Black women. Women in general are expected to maintain societal beauty standards which are designed with white women as the norm. It is not only skin color that is an indication of beauty, but also hair texture, eye color, and facial features that resemble whiteness. As a result, it is Black women who are most impacted by colorism both within the Black community and in society as a whole (Mathews and Johnson 2015). This dates back to slavery, where it was assumed that the "house niggers" were the lighter skinned women, often products of rape and the "field niggers" were the darker skinned slaves who were worth less money and treated as such *(ibid).* Although many people would like to believe there is more to a person than their looks, we live in a world constructed off of our physicality, where attractiveness and one's physical features matter and have an impact on the ways in which we navigate the world. Dark skinned Black women in particular are often constructed as beastly, masculine, and undesirable in the media whereas light skinned Black women are often constructed as exotic and sexually desirable (Collins 1990, 2000). In both instances, Black women are constructed into what Collins (1990, 2000) refers to as controlling images and these images have a direct impact on their navigation through various social structures. As a result of these controlling images and their perpetuation through various media sources, darker skinned Black women are deemed less physically attractive than lighter skinned Black women and this lack of attractiveness (constructed in the eyes of whiteness) can have an impact on job prospects (Woodward and Mastin 2005). Women, but more specifically

Black women, have the added pressure of being physically attractive and "looking the part" when navigating professional spaces.

Understanding that all cultures adopt white supremacy that is expressed, in part, by varying forms of colorism and anti-Blackness does not mean there is no value in unifying with other marginalized groups under a common oppressor. What this does mean is there must be an acknowledgement of the deep social, political, and economic impacts of slavery in the United States that no other group has been forced to endure and how it is still a barrier in the lives of Black people today. Therefore, there can be no comparison of struggles, only an alignment of them that carefully adds to, not takes away from the liberation of Black men and women (Wilderson 2014). Frank Wilderson III (2014), an Afro-pessimist[11] scholar, argues that there is no language that articulates Black suffering because we, unlike other cultures, cannot discursively link the violence against us to any *specific* reason. Native Americans experience violence because of their land ownership and the colonial powers that deemed themselves the owners of everything, Latino/a or Hispanic identifying people can link the violence against them to Xenophobia and the southern strategy[12] used by politicians to generate fear of immigrants. What did Africans have? What is our captivity and violence linked to? Why were we stolen from our motherland? These questions, led by the structures (such as the courts and prisons) that are still currently operating in ways that directly hurt the Black community, allows us to examine the specificity of anti-Blackness in our society. Furthermore, "embracing non-Black bodies of color thus facilitates, and is facilitated by, anti-blackness, and can be justified as

[11] A field of study that takes seriously the historical reality that Blackness is tied to slaveness and the two cannot be separated

[12] A political strategy used to gain support of white voters by appealing to their racial fears

antiracist precisely because it is inclusive of more than white" (Dumas 2016). Thus, it becomes even more imperative that we address issues that impact the Black community so that it does not get lost in the diversity rhetoric that is aimed at people of color broadly, losing the specificity that is necessary to address anti-Blackness.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017) there are more Black and Hispanic faculty working in community colleges than at four-year universities, regardless of whether or not it is Hispanic serving. For example, all but one of the institutions discussed in the latter half of this research are classified as Hispanic Serving Institutions because they have a large population of Latino/a or Hispanic identifying students. As such, they have what is considered a more "diverse" faculty population, yet within these institutions there are still very small numbers of Black faculty represented. However, what statements like this do is create the impression that the diversity is spread among both Black and Hispanic faculty when the actual numbers between the two are not even close. According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's office, within all of the California Community Colleges, 15% of tenured faculty are Latino/a identifying and 6% are Black. In some of the institutions included in this research, the numbers are even wider reaching upwards of 34% of Latino/a faculty and 4% Black faculty on one campus (CCCCO 2017). So, while faculty positions seem to be "diversifying", Black faculty representation has remained in the low 3-4% for as far back as the data will go, excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Towards Proximity to Whiteness

Julian Go highlights the importance of acknowledging the imperialistic roots[13] of the United States that have impacted our policies and ways of knowing. Knowledge is not neutral or impartial, but rather connected to imperialism, and therefore the institutions we rely on to provide us with knowledge are also not neutral or impartial but represent a desire for proximity to whiteness (Go 2016). Whiteness refers to "a set of relations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and intrinsically linked to dynamic relations of white racial domination" (Frankenberg 1997). In order to truly understand the impact of whiteness as a logic, we must first be able to acknowledge that it exists outside of a white body and is so entrenched in our culture that it often goes unchallenged and unnamed (Bonilla-Silva 2019). Consequently, the system of education privileges Eurocentric knowledge over all else by infusing whiteness throughout curriculum and leadership while offering very few seats to be temporarily occupied by Black faculty or any group classified as "other"- committing acts of epistemic violence[14] and erasure of marginalized voices (Iverson 2007;Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013;Johnson and Thomas 2012;Go 2016;Dancy et al 2018).

The history of whiteness in education requires a specific focus and an intent to disrupt the system as a whole, specifically the ways in which it is perpetuated and maintained. Eduardo-Bonilla Silva asserts that "white-oriented and -led institutions reproduce whiteness through their curriculum, culture, demography, symbols and traditions" (Bonilla-Silva 2019). This is troublesome in institutions that use diversity language to appeal to faculty of color as a

[13] Extending United States' rule over other nations by means of force
[14] The use of knowledge and data to problematize entire communities of people

commodity to be valued and assert their commitment to diversity but show no results in actually addressing the underlying manifestation and reproduction of whiteness as an ideology, rendering it invisible and therefore more difficult to solve on an institutional and interpersonal level (Delgado and Stefancic 2006;Iverson 2007;Bonilla Silva 2012;Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). Most importantly, what is classified as diversity is not *Black* diversity, rather an extension of "people of color" rhetoric that erases Blackness and inserts Latina/o folk, Asian folk, and women.

A discussion about anti-Blackness and gendered racism is not complete without a connection to the institution of slavery and its impact on the current state of Blackness in the United States. Orlando Patterson (1982) reminds us that slavery is the most extreme form of social, psychological and cultural domination where violence is used to maintain the master-slave dialect and award power to the master. In this relationship, the slave has no socially recognized existence outside of their master, as they are merely an extension and symbol of their master's power. African captives (slaves) had every aspect of their lives controlled, managed, and surveilled from the moment they landed in the United States. They were "natally alienated[15]" from connections to their ancestors: names changed, clothes removed, language stripped, and they had no legitimate rights as a person (Patterson 1982). An analysis of slavery must be inserted into any discussion of Blackness, as it set the foundation for the treatment and positionality of Black people in the United States. We are captives on foreign land, assigned to the category of slave where our very existence is a reminder of white power and white supremacy. What Patterson (1982) does not do in his analysis of slavery and social death, is provide an intersectional lens as to the experiences of Black women and how they differed

from Black men's experiences in slavery. Black women had a very different experience, as they were not only externally controlled but also internally controlled. They were raped and forced to bear the children of their rapists, creating more slaves for their masters, a "interiorized violation of the mind and body" (Spillers 1987). In addition, Black women were not treated as "women", they were whipped and beaten just like the men who were enslaved.

United States education has served as a site of dehumanization for Black bodies. Legally, enslaved Black people were not allowed to read or write because literacy was a threat to slavery (Gundaker 2007). Their lives depended on their adherence to this process of dehumanization and consequences for basic literary advancement were beatings, castration and lynching. Though many slaves resisted such laws and found ways through "hidden education", they did so under fear of death (Gundaker 2007). As policies and laws were introduced to alleviate some of the harms caused during slavery, Blacks were given "access" to education, without resources or a safe space to educate their own communities without fear of attacks from white supremacist groups. Our voices have never been centered or even heard within these spaces. Consequently, there is a need to re-assess what constitutes scholarship. The way it is constructed purposefully dismisses experiential knowledge that validates the experiences of Black faculty within educational spaces and journals. According to Luke J Lara, faculty of color are more likely to bring race into conversations due to their own racialized experiences, which in turn highlights the need for institutional commitment to partake in the recruitment, hiring and retention of Black faculty (Lara 2019). The devaluation of knowledge produced by Black faculty is studied broadly across academe and highlights the importance of reconstructing scholarship to include marginalized voices (Collins 2000;Hughes and Giles 2010;

Cho et al 2013;Allen and Lewis 2016;Walkington 2017;Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017;Han and Leonard 2017). Furthermore, we are still living and fighting against the dehumanizing legacies of slavery within education.

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence, developed by Derrick Bell, contends that racial diversity is tolerated by white elites only if it benefits individual or group interests (Bell 1992;Delgado 1995; VanDeventer Iverson 2007;Hughes and Giles 2010). As long as something can be traced back to the benefit of the dominant group, whites will partake in the advancement of it for their own self-interests. It can be argued that the desegregation of schools in the *Brown v. Board of Education*[15] case was based on interest convergence because the outcomes did not radically change the culture of education, and it did not *actually* desegregate schools (Bell 1980;Dixson and Rousseau 2005). Diversity as practiced reflects converging interests between whites and marginalized communities and allows institutions to escape accusations of racism by permitting a few Blacks to have a seat at the table, but only giving them limited access and restricting them to the status of classified others. Additionally, diversity within the Southern California region does not mean a large percentage of Black faculty, but more Latina/o faculty of color. Diversity rhetoric used by institutions must articulate language that shows a direct benefit for all due to policies that forbid us from talking about race. Without specificity of what group is being targeted, policies and practices end up benefiting whites and increasingly, communities that are in closer proximity to whiteness (such as Asians and lighter skinned

[15] 1954 court case that ruled racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional, over-turning Plessy v. Ferguson's "separate but equal"

Latino/as) (Delgado 1988;Iverson 2007;Hughes and Giles 2010). Language is carefully selected so as to not impact the ability of the institution to gain widespread (white) support, public approval, and institutional funding. In doing so, there is no specific call to focus on recruiting, hiring, and retaining Black faculty specifically (Hughes and Giles 2010;Lara 2019). Instead, the concept of diversity is used to relegate Black faculty to specific locations within the institution that restrict their access to privilege and power.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employment as Barriers

Policy has been an important aspect of the push for diversity in education. For example, the *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California*[16] court case upheld the use of affirmative action and race-conscious admissions policies to address the impact historical exclusion of people of color (and women) has on one's ability to get into college (Yosso, Parker, Solorzano and Lynn 2004). While affirmative action has been beneficial in some capacity to diversity in the workplace, it has also been used against Black faculty when their white counterparts assume that they only got the job because of affirmative action and equal opportunity employment laws (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). This becomes dangerous because despite affirmative action, there has been little change in the hiring of Black faculty (Lara 2019). Additionally, both affirmative action and equal opportunity employment have assisted in the development of colorblind ideologies regarding the hiring of Black faculty because of the refusal to talk about race. Lara asserts that the successful hiring of faculty of color should start at the search phase so that the institution can specifically look for Black faculty in the job search when they know

[16] 1978 court case that determined the use of "racial quotas" was unconstitutional, but affirmative action programs to accept more minorities could be used in the college admissions process

they are underrepresented on college campuses (Lara 2019). However, given laws such as Prop 207, affirmative action and equal opportunity employment, laws take on a colorblind form where race is never mentioned and the status quo is maintained.

In the discourse surrounding affirmative action, which sought to take into account the historical impact of racism in education by adopting race-conscious admissions policies, the very policy itself became a tool for whites to claim reverse discrimination and reassert the myth of meritocracy[17] (Gallant and Krone 2014). Although the main beneficiaries of affirmative action are white women, opponents of affirmative action have used the policy to claim that they were not admitted into prestigious schools because the spot was reserved for a person of color, as argued in the *Bakke v Regents of the University of California* court case (Yosso et al 2004). Affirmative action has also been used as a way to remind Black faculty of "their place" within the institution, with colleagues making comments about them only being hired because of affirmative action requirements, under the assumption that they would not have gotten the job otherwise (Fraizer 2011; Dade et al 2015; Wheeler and Freeman 2018). Without counternarratives challenging dominant discourse, the stories and experiences of Black faculty would go un-told and we would be living under the assumption that race-based policies have solved racism and discrimination in the United States. Yet currently, they have created a platform to criticize groups who have not reached the "American dream" and blame the group themselves for their lack of progress. The assumption that if you work hard in society you will gain upward mobility results from color-blind rhetoric, an assumption of the U.S as an open, meritocratic society, and a lack of critical engagement with racial inequality in the US, both past and present.

Critical race theory challenges claims of race-neutrality and the silencing of racial phenomena by bringing issues of racial inequality to the forefront of conversations (Bell 1992; Delgado and Stefancic 2006; Lara 2019). Equal opportunity employment laws[17] complicate the ability to bring up race because they are written in race-neutral language and therefore become problematic because it is necessary to mention race in hiring practices for intentional recruitment of marginalized populations. For example, if we know that there are very few Black faculty at an institution, we should be intentful in the recruitment and search process by specifically looking for Black faculty; yet these policies do not allow for such a search due to fears of discrimination claims by the dominant group (Lara 2019). Additionally, race is not specifically mentioned in diversity rhetoric used by institutions, rather it is vaguely applied in such a way that it can be used to describe almost any group.

Impact of Historical Exclusion and Anti-Blackness in Education

According to Dancy, Edwards and Davis "the history of the US higher education reflects a deep commitment to Black degradation as fundamental to the maintenance of colonial order" (2018:177). At the same time colleges and universities were being established in the United States, Black people were being lynched and beaten for the color of their skin, a process of dehumanization that no other group has experienced in this way. This is our history: these colleges and universities were not built with us in mind, they were built to educate the offspring of colonizers and act as a preserver of social inequality by only serving white, elite males (Dancy et al 2018). The antagonistic relationship between the education system and the

[17] A title within the Civil Rights Act of 1964,

Black community has been at the forefront of a continuous battle against a system that is designed to maintain whiteness and white supremacy both through the curriculum and in the racial makeup of faculty and administrators at all levels. Without acknowledgement of this as the history of our education system and the purposeful intent of the dominant group to dismantle it, the racist history will continue to pervade our institutions.

Within this anti-black space that demands conformity into white and male hegemonic constructions of power, lies a small percentage of Black faculty who challenge the historical intentions of higher education. This population of academics, by their very presence in higher education, challenge the power structure formed and maintained for the preservation of white supremacy (Collins 1990, 2000; Thomas and Hollenshead 2001; Dancy et al 2018). Black faculty, though beleaguered in white institutions, are resilient and powerful and represent a move towards revolutionizing education to be inclusive and positive for all students. The civil rights struggles in the 1960's provide clear evidence that education was reserved for white men. Every group outside of that identity had to fight for their right to education. Not only were we fighting for basic rights and acknowledgement as human beings, there was also the fight for Ethnic Studies by students beginning in 1968. Students were not satisfied with the white-male dominated curriculum and overrepresentation of white men in faculty roles (Hu-DeHart 1993). They militantly pushed institutions to provide access to higher education for students of color, hire more faculty of color, develop a more diverse curriculum, and create an Ethnic Studies program (*ibid*). The very premise of Ethnic Studies challenges the academic power structure and gives voice to marginalized groups, yet is still being debated and fought for today. Mandating Ethnic Studies as a part of a graduation requirement would be a step towards

revolutionizing education towards acknowledgement of "otherness". Black voices have been ignored, disregarded, and marginalized since the moment they fought for equal access. This, according to Julian Go emphasizes the importance of "finding ways of knowing that escape imperialist structure by relying on the voices of the colonized" (2016:20). Their story has always been told by those in power, it is time we give voice to the groups who have been silenced through disciplines such as Ethnic Studies. We must also acknowledge the impact such work has on Black faculty and the pressure put on them by the institution to be the champions of change.

Compositional Diversity

Faculty of color are underrepresented in community colleges and reflect a smaller percentage of the campus than that of students of color collectively (Lara 2019). Compositional diversity refers to the numerical representation of faculty of color on any given campus, and is often the focus of college campuses in response to the growing pressures to diversify both student and faculty populations (Friess-Brit et al 2011). Such efforts by the institution include establishing hiring committees that are responsible for diversity and equity training, recruiting Black faculty graduated from prestigious institutions, and having more Black faculty represented on hiring committees, yet, research has highlighted this as problematic due to tokenization[18] and work overload (Mirza 2009; Niemann 2016; Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017).

In each of these efforts put forth by the institution, there is very little focus on the institutional climate in which Black faculty are expected to thrive. The focus on compositional diversity has fallen short in many ways: institutions are still falling behind on retaining Black

[18] Recruiting a small number of minoritized groups in order to give the appearance of inclusion

faculty which is an important step in the hiring process that is often not addressed by the institution (Lara 2019). Accordingly, institutions must adhere to the need to move beyond compositional diversity to explore the forces that create a poor climate for Black faculty on campus and contribute to the inability to retain Black faculty (Fries-Britt et al 2011).

Much of the literature produced on Black faculty and their experiences in higher education paints a monolithic picture, assuming that Black women and Black men have the same experiences navigating the institution. In understanding the importance of acknowledging intersectional identities and the impact each system of oppression has on one's experiences and navigation in the social world, I want to highlight the importance of looking at Black women faculty experiences separately from the experiences of Black men because of the tendency for Black women's voices to be overshadowed and left in the margins historically when talking about the Black experience as a whole (Collins 1990, 2000). Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, emphasizes the need to account for multiple aspects of one's identity when considering how the social world is constructed and will provide a more detailed account of the experiences of both Black women and Black men faculty in community college (Crenshaw 1991). This important distinction is not meant to create a hierarchy of oppression that divides the experiences of Black women and men, but rather articulate the importance of acknowledging that the experiences of being a Black woman in academe are very different from being a Black man in academe. An intersectional framework provides a platform for understanding how experiences differ based on the identities that one occupies, such as race, gender and sexuality (to name a few) and is useful to ensure that no voice is marginalized or privileged.

Black Women in Higher Education

In working in a space that carries a preference for whiteness, Black women are oftentimes isolated from their communities and colleagues while simultaneously being excluded from mainstream academic discourse (Mirza 2009). Mirza attests that Black women faculty can be separated from their cultural communities into the heart of whiteness when entering a predominantly white institution because they are usually one of few Black women in the entire space (2009). Not only does this demonstrate the need for more Black women faculty on campus, it highlights the difficulty in finding supportive mentors with other Black women on campus who have a similar experience within the institution and can relate to the institutional barriers that impact upward mobility and support (Harley 2008; Frazier 2011).

The exclusion of Black women in the production of academic discourse allows for the reuse and recycling of historical imagery designed to keep Black women in their place and contributes to an isolating work environment (Collins 1990, 2000). Black women are continually fighting against the images that have been created about them that oftentimes serve as a hindrance to their ability to gain respect and authority in a work environment (*ibid*). A common stereotype that follows Black women in their careers is the angry Black woman/matriarch. Black women who assert themselves in positions of authority (such as a faculty position) are under heightened scrutiny by students and colleagues for their "leadership styles" that are oftentimes undermined both in the classroom and within the institution as a whole (Cobb-Roberts 2012). For example, a Black woman faculty member was reported in a situation with a white male student in which the student was claiming reverse racism in the classroom and was unwilling to participate in conversations that painted his race as the oppressor. This student repeatedly

disrespected the faculty member in front of the class and reported to the department chair who ultimately showed the student support rather than the faculty. In doing so, her credibility and authority in the classroom was diminished, and she was on edge every day in fear of coming off as defensive and perpetuating the angry Black woman stereotype (Cobb-Roberts 2012). Rather than show support to a Black woman being undermined in her own classroom, the institution supported the student and furthered the development of white male privilege.

To connect this back to the preservation of whiteness in higher education, we ought to acknowledge that white men faculty and administrators, who assert themselves as the controllers of knowledge production, are continually perpetuating and participating in the subordination of Black women in academia. Thus, when faced with Black women who serve as an opposition to their previously constructed notions of power, they are threatened and focus on protecting their authority. Black women who are chosen to represent diversity on hiring committees often report having their voices ignored by white men, who invite them there to showcase diversity yet do not actually want to hear what they have to contribute (Thomas and Hollenshead 2001; Fries-Britt et al 2011; Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). Additionally, the impact white male students have in the classroom is telling of the institutional climate that supports and maintains whiteness over showing support for Black faculty (Cobb-Roberts 2012).

In contrast to Black men, Black women faculty feel more pressure to mentor Black students on campus (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). Black women have been characterized in history as the “mammy”: the one who takes care of everyone else before herself and does so with no complaints or resistance. Mammies in the slave era were forced to take care of their slave owner’s children before taking care of themselves or their own children if they had any

(Collins 1990, 2000). This controlling image of Black women has formed into an expectation, and Black women faculty find themselves offering up their time more than most faculty on campus (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). Not only is this emotionally taxing for Black women faculty, but it also impacts them professionally in the race for tenure because the time they spend mentoring students takes away from time spent doing research (Griffin and Reddick 2011). The process to gaining tenure is structured in such a way that it does not leave room for the hidden work done by Black women faculty, such as providing Black students with mentorship, and is therefore built to privilege the dominant group.

This further emphasizes the importance of Black women in academe who are resisting the continual preference for whiteness in education, curriculum, and in the culture of higher education (Han and Leonard 2017). Using their unique position in the margins many Black women academics fight to have their voices heard by producing research and exposing the oppressive environment of academia (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1990, 2000; Allen and Lewis 2016; Han and Leonard 2017). Allen and Lewis tell of their experiences being a Black faculty member in higher education and how their very existence served as a challenge to their white colleague's power (2016). They were in a constant battle against existing stereotypes around Black women (the submissive mammy, the aggressive matriarch, or the hypersexual jezebel) and found it important to use their positions as academics to produce research that serve as counternarratives to such images, as do many Black feminist scholars (King 1988;hooks 1981, 1984, 2000;Crenshaw 1991;Collins 1990,2000)

Black Men in Higher Education

There is limited research on the specific experiences of Black men in faculty positions in postsecondary institutions. This gap in the literature creates space for future research that focuses specifically on Black men, however, first there would need to be enough Black men in these positions for there to be a breadth of literature available. Black men are less likely to engage in mentorship relationships with students than Black women due to assumptions of Black male criminality (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). They often distance themselves from having too close of relationships on campus and do not feel a dire need to mentor students, instead, they tend to focus more on research and departmental issues of diversity (*ibid).* Patricia Hill Collins presents the idea of controlling images and the impact they have on Black men, and how the creation of images of Black men as brutes has left a historical legacy on the way they are constructed today (Collins 1990, 2000). The construction of Black men as a brute came about in the Jim Crow era where Black men were portrayed as savages on the hunt for white women to rape and destroy *(ibid)*. This continues to have life and death consequences for Black men today, any time accusations of rape come about, their ability to be believed is diminished. Controlling images are dangerous because they have no truth to them, they are created for the sole purpose of controlling and limiting Black men to the areas in life where whites are comfortable with them occupying.

Having Black men in faculty positions challenges the dominant narrative created by white men in power to subjugate them to nothingness. From early on in their educational journey, Black men are viewed as unintelligent and problematic to school administrators and classroom teachers (Freeman and Rawson 2014). This relationship with the education system

often pushes them out by shaping their view of education as dehumanizing and unimportant (Wood and Palmer 2014). We often lose Black men within the education system from a very young age, they are criminalized, but not necessarily criminal, yet that shapes others' perceptions of their abilities. This makes Black men in faculty positions an important game-changer for Black men as a whole; they represent a counter-narrative to the assumption that Black men do not care about education and/or are not intelligent enough to make it that far (Wood 2010). Ensuring proper representation of Black men in faculty positions is one effort community colleges can advance through specific and intentional recruitment, but is complicated by colorblind rhetoric in policies that make it impossible to look at race as a determining factor when hiring (Lara 2019).

Black Faculty in Higher Education

I have made a few very important distinctions between Black women faculty and Black men faculty that I find necessary to explicate. However, there are experiences documented in the literature that apply to both Black women and Black men in higher education. It is still imperative that we do not paint a monolithic or dialectic experience as it can be harmful to Black women specifically. As history has shown us, Black women are marginalized in anti-racist work and in feminist discourse, as neither of them address the specific experiences of being Black and woman simultaneously (bell hooks 1981; Audre Lorde 1984; Deborah King 1988; Collins 1990, 2000). With that in mind, the next sections of this paper are common themes found in the experiences of Black faculty as a whole.

Tokenism

In not having a proper representation of Black faculty, colleges are relying on "tokenism" to propel their commitment to diversity (Niemann 2016). Tokenism has been used by dominant groups to assert a commitment to diversity by allowing a small percentage of minority groups in a space, but ensuring their numbers do not outgrow the dominant group and disrupt the power structure. As Martin Luther King (1966) famously stated, "tokenism has sufficed to appease the masses and prevent national revolt from people of color…[but] a truly integrated society will not develop through tokenism." True diversity both in curriculum and in the presence of Black faculty cannot (and should not) be accomplished through tokenism. According to Niemann "the greatest damage of tokenism… [seems to be] the careers of faculty of color" because the emotional toll it takes on them being so small in numbers and yet being expected tackle problems in institutions that affect the Black community at large (2016:454). Tokenization of minority groups is a band-aid to the history of exclusion in education, and it becomes the way in which people in power claim to have a commitment to people of color while at the same time burdening them with the responsibility of representing their entire group.

One specific instance where tokenism becomes dangerous is when it is used on diversity and hiring committees (Cobb-Roberts 2012; Dade et al 2015; Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017; Wheeler and Freeman 2018). Black faculty are often invited (and expected) to serve on committees that are designed to address diversity and equity within the institution, yet when they sit on these committees they often have very little power (Dade et al 2015). Additionally, they are viewed as the race expert and only called upon or heard when race is the central topic

of discussion. This becomes problematic because Black faculty are often on more committees than their white counterparts, which creates an additional burden in their professional career and takes away from time spent doing their own research (Mirza 2009; Wheeler and Freeman 2018). It is important to know and understand that this time is not accounted for in most institutions when going up for tenure which has an impact on the academic careers of Black faculty and can also be attributed to the institution's inability to retain Black faculty. Similar to social patterns of racism outside of the education system, Black people often work twice as hard as their white counterparts to be considered half as good. Black faculty take on more responsibilities that benefit the institution as a whole, and yet are less likely than their white counterparts to gain tenure (Hughes and Giles 2010; Fraizer 2011).

Identity Negotiation & Double-Consciousness

W.E.B DuBois coined the term double-consciousness to describe what it is like for Black people to be in a state of "two-ness" where they must balance being both Black and American in a world where the two are not accepted in tandem (DuBois 1903). Being American is constructed through the eyes of white European settler-colonists, who established themselves as the ultimate representation of humanity and thus everything that is not white and male is un-American. DuBois is writing of double-consciousness as the experience of looking at one's self through another person's eyes; always having to keep in mind the ways in which you are representing yourself but maintaining your Blackness and humanity at the same time (DuBois 1903). This, according to DuBois, gives Black people the gift of second sight, where we have to know the ins and outs of the dominant culture in order to survive it. Similarly, Black faculty in institutions that are modeled after a preference for whiteness, find themselves in a state of

double-consciousness. They must always be aware of how their Blackness may impact their interactions with students and colleagues, and in doing so some may shy away from tapping into their true selves.

Due to the culture of college campuses that values whiteness over groups that have been historically marginalized, Black faculty often find themselves altering or negotiating their identity to fit that of the institutional culture (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). As classified others, Black faculty are pressured to adapt and mold themselves to ensure the comfortability of administrators, colleagues and students with their cultural identity. This becomes especially problematic when the Black faculty member is also a race scholar and situates their research around issues of inequality because that work specifically is undervalued (Milem 2001; Fraizer 2011; Cobb-Roberts 2012). Wheeler and Freeman discuss their experiences being Black male and Black female faculty on a predominantly white campus and the constant negotiation of their Black identity and how that same identity presents barriers to their academic journey (2018). They discuss feeling the need to tone-down their presence in order to avoid making white colleagues uncomfortable, working harder while in the classroom in order to prove their credibility to students, and the feeling of isolation on campus due to the invisibility or lack of other Black faculty within their own department.

Isolation and Role Overload

The lack of representation of Black faculty on college campuses causes many to report being the only Black person in their departments, and without other Black faculty to serve as a

support system they have feelings of isolation within the institution (Vereen and Hill 2008). In addition, Black faculty do not have others who can relate culturally to their experiences in having to alter their identity and conform to the institution or cope with racism, discrimination and micro-aggressions on campus. This alone causes emotional strain on Black faculty and in conjunction with the expectation of the department to be the expert on diversity related topics, it can become overwhelming and impact the experiences they have on campus (Thomas and Hollenshead 2001; Fries-Britt et al 2011; Griffin and Reddick 2011; Cho et al 2013; Dade et al 2015; Wheeler and Freeman 2018; Lara 2019)

Black faculty, in comparison to white faculty, are disproportionately expected to recruit and mentor students, generate discourse on diversity and be responsible for cultivating inclusivity and diversity-consciousness on campus (Vereen and Hill 2008; Griffin and Reddick 2011). They are expected to be race and diversity experts even when their area of research is not race-related. This additional work of recruitment and mentoring students becomes taxing when they are the only Black faculty in the department and become overloaded with Black students looking for mentors without many to choose from. Research shows that Black students in community colleges require more one-on-one mentorship than their white counterparts, mostly attributed to the fact that they are often first-generation and have not been awarded the social and cultural capital to navigate the institution without such support (Wood and Harris 2015). It is imperative to note that mentorship is not something that is evaluated for tenure, yet it takes away from research and other work that is considered when being evaluated for tenure. Additionally, they spend more time working on projects that do not contribute directly to their own success for the sake of supporting Black students and their

goals of creating an inclusive campus (Allen and Lewis 2016; Dancy et al 2018). While this demonstrates the dedication they have to Black student success, it also can be detrimental to their job as they spend less time than their colleagues working on research and more time on the grounds with students organizing and participating in activist work that serves to benefit the institutions claims for diversity.

Being the go-to diversity expert can be exhausting, especially when your day is filled with microaggressions and discrimination from both students and colleagues. The spaces Black faculty are expected to occupy for the sake of the institution further highlights their oppression and isolation from others as they oftentimes end up sharing their own experiences on campus in a room full of white colleagues who are convinced they are making progress (Allen and Lewis 2016). Black faculty express being asked to come to the table and participate on committees, yet when they enter the room they are silenced and their experiences are pushed to the side *(ibid).* Similar to Collins' concept of the outsider-within, Black faculty are managing their identity in an institution that they are a part of but never fully accepted into as they engage in these spaces to disrupt the status quo (Collins 1990, 2000).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The theoretical frameworks that drive this study are Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) demands that we acknowledge the continuing significance of race and racism in the United States by schematizing the impacts of the policies and laws that are designed to mediate race-relations, but end up creating a society that centers whiteness and establishes colorblind rhetoric (Yosso, Parker, Solorzano and Lynn 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Hughes and Giles 2010; Lara 2019). Additionally, CRT in the realm of education challenges the traditional claims of the educational system's commitment to objectivity, meritocracy, and colorblindness that contributes to the subordination of Black faculty (Solórzano 1998; Hughes and Giles 2010). CRT has five central tenants that ground the theory into action: use of counter-narratives to give voice to marginalized groups, acknowledging the permanence of racism in institutional structures, understanding whiteness as property, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism that relies on laws and structures of systems to provide equal opportunity for all (Ladson-Billings 1998; Yosso et al 2004; DeCuir & Dixson 2004; Dixon and Rousseau 2005; McCoy 2006; Hughes and Giles 2010; Delgado & Stefancic 2017; Lara 2019).

CRT and the Commodification of Diversity

Each aspect of CRT recognizes the role race and racism play in the structuring of institutions and in the everydayness of our lives as individuals. Another application of critical race studies looks at how racial inequality is reproduced in educational policies and diversity action plans that value students and faculty of color as a commodity that benefits the

reputation of the institution (Iverson 2007). Research suggests that all students benefit from having a diverse student, faculty and administrative body (Iverson 2007; Greene et al 2008; Lara 2019) and institutions strategically use diversity action plans to "sell" their institution as a competitive place to be where one can compete on a global scale. However, diversity action plans deploy dominant discourses that perpetuate racial inequality and establish white males as the standard by which to compare all students and faculty (Iverson 2007). As a consequence, students and faculty of color are framed as at-risk and vulnerable within the diversity discourse put together by the institution, further stratifying the population across racial lines. Hence, students and faculty of color are framed as a hot commodity: something that benefits the reputation of the institution, both monetarily and socially, but allows the institution to ignore the racism embedded in the very representations of people of color on their campuses (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995).

Not acknowledging the salience of race on campus presents a challenge to institutions claiming to have a culture of care for students and faculty from all backgrounds. Policies drafted as a response to the increase in hate crimes and harassment on campus posit a limited view of the impact of such actions within the institution (Iverson 2007). For example, institutional responses to hate crimes are often reiterating protection of freedom of speech and put the burden on the marginalized group to seek out support services *(ibid)*. Rather, an institutional commitment to the culture of care claims embedded within diversity action plans should address the source of the problem: historical impact of white supremacy and how to dismantle whiteness as a logic within the institution as a whole by giving voice to marginalized groups as a counter to the epistemic violence and refusal to acknowledge experiential knowledge as valid.

Black Feminism

Black Feminism was created by Black women as a way of showing that Black women have value and are uniquely situated in a way that offers a perspective unique to Black womanhood. It acknowledges the importance of addressing all aspects of one's identity and the influence the intersections of those identities have on our experiences in the social world (hooks 1981; Lorde 1984; Collins 1990, 2000). Additionally, Black Feminism establishes an understanding that people's intersecting identities cannot be relegated to one singular experience but that they are represented by the totality of who they are across racial, gendered, and class lines (Combahee River Collective 1979; Crenshaw 1988, 1991; Collins 1990, 2000). This concept of Intersectionality as an analytical tool allows us to look closely at both the experiences of Black women faculty and those of Black men faculty as they have similarities and differences, all of which are necessary to distinguish and examine critically. In understanding gender differences, Black Feminism works with DuBois' concept of double-consciousness as a way to insert the importance of gender in one's experiences of the state of "two-ness" and address how Black men are also uniquely situated based on their race and gender. While Black feminism was created to address Black women and their experiences, it serves as a theoretical tool to understanding Black men and their positionality in the margins of academe as well. In working with double-consciousness, Black Feminism allows us to examine Black men's experiences through racialized and gendered politics in academe.

Black feminism highlights the use of counternarratives that illuminate the experiences of historically marginalized groups as a way to challenge the status quo. Black feminism is used to challenge the standard protocols of the knowledge validation process which demands that

all new knowledge supports previous knowledge that operates through positivist thinking and is used to perpetuate white supremacy (Collins 1990, 2000). As a response, Black feminism works in tandem with critical race theory to create space in academia for the narratives and experiences of subaltern groups as a way to challenge previous knowledge formed to maintain whiteness and white supremacy in the US. Additionally, Black feminism understands that the personal is political, and scholars such as The Combahee River Collective (1979), Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 2000), Audre Lorde (1984), Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988, 1992) and Barbara Smith (1974) lay the ground work for Black feminist thought as a theoretical framework to knock down the doors of hegemonic discourse in academe. In their positions as Black and lesbian women, they formulate an aspect of reality that respects the differences among us and uses those differences for the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

Racial Formations

Race is a socially constructed category that establishes racial etiquette and attaches meaning to the way in which we classify people racially (Omi and Winant 2014). Racial categories are established, created, transformed and destroyed in ways that benefit the social, political, and economic advancement of the dominant group. The consequences of being boxed into a specific racial category are determined by the social forces that are charged with interrogating the meanings of what it means to be Black in the United States. Omi and Winant (2014) explain how African people were stolen from their land and when they arrived on US territory the category of “negro” or “Black” was created and along with that category came a set of social consequences: slave, second-class citizen, inferior… Similarly, the category of white

was expanded as time passed to include groups previously excluded from privilege in the US, such as the Irish. This is important to note because the Irish were once a marginalized group without rights in the US, but to serve the political, economic, and social needs of the dominant group they were included to expand the category of "white" (Omi and Winant 2014).

Any time we are talking about race and the impact it has within our various systems, it is critical that we understand the very basics of the argument: racial categories and the meanings we attach to them are socially constructed. However, because they are constructed to maintain inequality and stratification, they are deeply embedded in our society and play an important role in the way systems function today to keep whiteness centralized and all else in the margins. Racial formation is a central concept in critical race theory and establishes a basic understanding of the salience of race in US society. Once the foundation has been set to understand the continuing significance of race within our institutions, one can address the experiences of Black faculty within these institutions as they relate to race and gender oppression.

METHODS

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How are the experiences of Black faculty in community colleges shaped by societal forces such as anti-Blackness and white supremacy?
2. What is the significance of community colleges for Black faculty and where do they see themselves situated in the institution?
3. What strategies do Black faculty employ to navigate educational spaces driven by socio-historical legacies of slavery and conquest?

To carry out this research, I conducted 11 semi-structured, qualitative interviews with Black faculty members who work in community colleges in Southern California. I used snowball sampling and recruited faculty members via email (Appendix B) requesting 60-90 minutes of their time to talk with me about their experiences. Most of the interviews were conducted in person, a few of them were conducted via video and all interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed for accuracy. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes, to 2 hours and 20 minutes.

Setting

This study includes faculty that work at different community colleges within the Southern California region, which includes Los Angeles, Imperial, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura counties. According to the United States Census Bureau, whites (not Hispanic or Latino) makeup 37% of the population, Hispanic or Latinos make up 40%, Blacks 6%, Asians 15%, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians each make up around 1% or less. Accordingly, all but one of the institutions the faculty worked at in this study were classified as Hispanic Serving Institutions and have a larger Hispanic or Latino student and faculty population than most colleges and universities nationwide (NCES 2017).

This brings us back to a previous discussion about multicultural spaces and how they can be challenging when attempting to deal with issues that directly and specifically impact the Black population (Wilderson 2014). Similarly, it is important to note that although the demographic makeup of this region does not reflect whites as the numerical majority, white supremacist ideologies are still deeply embedded within our institutions and can be enacted and perpetuated by non-Black people of color as well. This reiterates the significance of understanding how white supremacy works and that it does not have to come out of a white body to be structured within our everyday interactions with people and institutions (Bonilla-Silva 2018).

Though many of the institutions represented in this study have designed and implemented some form of diversity and inclusion statements, the overall experiences of Black faculty in this study demonstrate a paradox. How is it that institutions that claim to value diversity and inclusion of cultures still have their own faculty situated (yet resisting) in the margins? This presents a need for the ongoing investigation into the institutional culture of community colleges that looks specifically at the experiences of Black faculty, rather than only looking at students. In doing so, studies such as this one are able to examine the culture from the perspective of both faculty who have worked at the institution for a long time, and newer faculty and compare the two.

Participants

For this study, I used snowball sampling to recruit my participants and conducted my interviews over a period of 3 weeks. Participants were recruited via email, and interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to over 2 hours. Of the 11 Black faculty who participated there were

6 men- 5 of them have tenure status, 1 is an adjunct. Of the 5 women 1 of them is on tenure-track and the others are adjuncts. They teach in a variety of different disciplines: counseling, sociology, mathematics, history, and English and their amount of time teaching ranges from just starting out to decades of experience.

Ethical Considerations

I was approved to conduct this study by the Institutional Review Board and provided each participant with an informed consent form that listed all of the information about the study which included the safeguards I used in order to protect their confidentiality. Black faculty are small in number at their institutions, so I used pseudonyms instead of their real names to ensure they are not connected back to their institution or department. In addition, no names of community colleges are listed in this study, only the region in which they are located.

Limitations

The main limitation to this study is the sample size. Due to Black faculty being small in number, I was only able to get one or two from each institution so being able to build a pattern that is specific to one institution is difficult. Rather, the participants work within 7 different community colleges within Southern California, so the data is not reflective of any one institution specifically, but rather a pattern across multiple institutions. Additionally, because Southern California has a lot of community colleges, replication of this exact study may be challenging due to there being no community college names listed for confidentiality purposes.

Reflexivity

Positivist views of science often warn against being too close to your work and believe that you have to remove yourself from the data and any feelings you may have that can impact

your results (Lundberg 1939). This view of science is what so often marginalizes Black and non-Black people of color in academe, as we are often driven by our own experiential knowledge and continually fight for it to be validated in educational spaces. Additionally, positivist views of science were established at a time where Black and non-Black people of color were producing knowledge but not being viewed as academics due to legacies of anti-Blackness and gendered racism. As a Black woman and a student who has spent my entire life navigating educational systems, this study hits close to home. Sociology led me to the realization that my K-12 experience was a part of a larger social pattern in education that often pushes students through a school-to-prison pipeline. I insert my experiences as the foundation of this study because the mentors and support system I have had along my academic journey have gotten me to where I am today. This system was not designed for a young, Black woman like myself to make it this far, and the first person to open my eyes to that reality has stood by my side this entire process while they endured their own form of trauma as a Black faculty member fighting for Black students in community college. I am close to my work, breaking all supposed “rules” of science, but this closeness allows me to examine my positionality within my research and ensure I am representing my participants in a way that recognizes and validates their experiences.

FINDINGS

K-12 Experiences as a Teaching/Counseling Framework

"It just overwhelms me to think at times that really the most impactful teachers that I've had are literally just the teachers who treated me like I was a human being" -David, Tenure, 17 Yrs.

As racialized and sexualized beings, we navigate our social worlds with our experiences as a guide to the ways we should interact with institutions and the people who operate them. As a community of people who have been historically excluded from educational spaces, we learn where our place is in the system very early on through both subtle and unsubtle indications of our lack of humanity. In conducting this study, it was important that I opened up space for Black faculty to talk about their own experiences in the K-12 system to emphasize how they fit into larger social patterns of anti-Blackness within society. Education has been a space of dehumanization for Black people since before they could even step foot in a school, and the simple fact of not legally being allowed on school grounds is an indication of disregard for Black as human and the notion that we are incapable of learning (Hattery and Smith 2007;Heitzeg 2009;Hughes and Giles 2010;Winn and Behizadeh 2011;Wood and Palmer 2014; Freeman and Lawson 2014).

In the very first quote of this section, David is describing to me how his K-12 teachers never regarded him as someone who was smart or worthy of additional attention in the classroom. When asked about his relationship to education prior to entering college, he shared a few narratives about the treatment he received from white teachers specifically, and the impact those interactions have on his current teaching framework. One in particular stood out:

"The school system wasn't trying to get me to think or it didn't want, it wasn't interested in what I was thinking, which, that's what I kept on expressing. I kept on telling them what I was thinking and they were like, uh, we don't want what you think, we want you to just repeat back what it is that I just got finished telling you. And I always thought that was just like the worst use of an educational space and whatnot. But um, and that's why I've designed my class completely away from yo, just repeat back what it is that I'm saying to you"

David talked a lot about the importance of student-teacher dynamics in the classroom, and how he is intentional in creating an environment where learning is reciprocal. He had many teachers in his life who elevated themselves from him and disconnected personally, which had an impact on him asserting and developing his voice in these spaces. He was smart and capable, his teachers just did not recognize or acknowledge his intellect. Because of this, his teaching framework relies heavily on building relationships and creating a classroom environment where students can have agency and feel that the knowledge they come to the classroom already equipped with is valuable. Additionally, David finds it imperative to connect with "diamonds in the rough":

"The student who I'm trying to go to, like I said, is that diamond in the rough, to get them excited about learning and, um, honestly to get them to unlearn all the trauma, you know, and to remap all the trauma that they experienced in the K-12 system. Um, and to really try to get them you know, try to get them educated or try to get them really fired up about just learning. If I can get that done regardless of whether someone completes their degree or not, if I can just get someone excited about learning again, um, I feel like I've done my job"

Eight out of the eleven participants described a "dysfunctional" or "difficult" relationship to education prior to entering college. Two counseling faculty (one male, one female) told narratives about why they chose to become counselors, and each of them led back to an experience (or lack of) with a high school counselor. When asked why he chose counseling as a profession, Calvin responded with the following:

"In short, I was in my senior year in high school and I was accepted to college and let my counselor know, you know as it related to my classes for I think it was the Spring semester and instead of my counselor putting me back just for my 12th grade English, she took me out of my 12th grade English and put me in a class that was designed for Pennsylvania grads to prepare them for the world of work as opposed to going to college. And I was kind of taken back by that because I was like what, nah I want to go to college. So she took me out of this class, this English class, I go into the other class and I want to say for the first time in my school career I was actually in class with people from my neighborhood"

Calvin's high school was composed mostly of poor, Black and brown students and he described to me the physical separation of students within the school based on their perceived intellectual abilities and life outcomes. The school he attended outside of California was separated into levels, the top level was the AP and honors students who were being prepared to go to college, which was where he spent most of his high school years, and the basement was students who were perceived to be on more of a career track and/or were not presumed to graduate high school. Calvin was raised by a single mother who was a teacher in a more affluent school nearby, and she always pushed the importance of education, so when this situation with his counselor arose, she was there to sit down and talk to the counselor about this decision that was made. When asked why her son was moved to a career-track class, the counselor responded by saying that him coming from a low income, single parent home was a barrier and they want to ensure he is prepared for the world of work. Hortense Spillers (1987) discusses this phenomenon, where the Black family structure is pathologized such as what was published in the Moynihan Report in 1965, blaming the "underachievement" of poor Black men on Black women and their "failures" rather than the societal explanations such as racism, poverty, mass incarceration that removes Black men from the home, and legacies of slavery that impacted Black men's prospects for employment.

It was in these moments that Calvin knew he wanted to be a counselor, wondering if they are willing to treat him that way (a Black honors student with a teacher as a parent), how are they treating other Black students that do not have the hand's on home support due to social factors caused by racism and poverty. Calvin relates his counseling framework to the empathy he has from his own "school of hard knocks" upbringing. In addition to Calvin's experience with high school counselors, Destiny never once had a counselor or anyone for that matter, talk to her about college:

"No one ever introduced me to college, no one ever said, my counselors in the high school never said, hey, do you wanna go to college? Not even community college… I just I felt like there wasn't that communication, unless you are a very good student as far as getting like A's then I felt like they addressed you more. Which to me is wrong because you could always go to community college, right, and if you're not getting that support from your high school counselor that's sad"

James' experience with the K-12 system was quite different, as he was a part of the early busing program when schools were first integrated in California. He was bused from his neighborhood to a prestigious, magnet school where many of the students were children of doctors and lawyers. He describes his experience as enjoyable because he was exposed to a variety of culturally relevant curriculum and was challenged in classes designed to prepare him to go straight into a four-year university.

"It [the magnet school] was an eye-opening experience like, whoa, there's a whole world where people are living and having experiences that I didn't think was possible. So going there actually, in many ways, I would have to say, because a lot of stuff that we learned in that school I end up doing in college and now most of my research and teaching focuses on those issues"

Going from his middle and elementary school being mostly Black students, James' unique experience in the early busing program allowed him access to a school and resources that are typically not seen in poor Black communities (Hattery 2007). In this school, they were learning

about race and inequality within various different disciplines and because of that, he was able to compare his upbringing and educational exposure in this space to his experience prior to high school and recognize various sites of inequality within education. Now, although he is in a discipline that does not require talking about inequality within the curriculum, he incorporates race, class, and gender inequality in his teaching to ensure students who are not within disciplines that are typically known for discussing these topics are still getting exposure to them. To reiterate previous points made in this study, Black faculty, due to their own racialized experiences are more likely to bring race and inequality into the conversation even in disciplines that are not designed to do so (Lara 2019). This teaching framework is beneficial for all students, but specifically, it is validating and liberating for Black students to have Black faculty representation along their journey in community college.

Another important aspect of K-12 educational experiences that influence the teaching framework of Black faculty in community colleges is mentorship. Many of the participants expressed the importance of having mentors in their lives to serve as a model for what they can achieve. However, very few of them had Black teachers or mentors during their time in K-12 and reflected back on the impact that had on their ability to see college in their future. It is important to note however, that all but one participant had immediate family members in their lives who pushed the importance of getting an education, combating the pathological assumption that Black families do not value education. James reflected on his upbringing and the influence his parents had on his desire to go to college:

"[They taught me] the idea that you can accomplish more as a Black person with education as opposed to without. And if you really want to help your community, that's one of the ways you would have to do it"

As a community of people who have been placed in a category of nonhuman, assumed to be inferior and incapable, seeing our Black skin represented in educational spaces is vital to our growth and success in a world that does not find any value in our existence (Wynter 1994). Many of the participants in this study also make a point to serve as mentors to students, particularly Black students, in community colleges because they recognize that they are serving a population of students who are oftentimes the first in their families to go to college. More importantly, many of them acknowledge that they are likely the first Black faculty member students come across. This impacts Black students differently as they are accustomed to not seeing themselves represented in people in positions of power or status in society. Destiny explains:

"You know, you have tons and tons of, you know, I hate to say it but you have tons of white Caucasians coming in and they can see someone like them and say, oh, that's me right. But you get someone else coming in that's Black and it's' like where's me? I want to see others like me so I know I could do it"

She, along with many of the other participants, recognize they play an important role in students' lives and make a point to serve as a mentor and/or positive influence in Black students' lives in particular. Their approaches to mentorship and what that means may vary, but at the end of the day they have the desire to ensure the success of all of their students, and pay close attention to the role they play in the lives of the Black students.

Intersectional Analysis of Race and Gender

"You have to be able to negotiate how do you deal with the fact that in many instances, whether in a meeting or in the classroom, being probably the only Black person there" -James

As discussed in length in this study, Black faculty are overwhelmingly underrepresented

in the data in comparison to white faculty in community colleges across the nation (NCES 2017). This fact remained true for the seven community colleges represented in this study in Southern California. When asked about their relationship with other Black faculty on campus, each of the participants alluded to the fact that there are none or very few and how that impacts their ability to build community among one another, some even responded by laughing and saying "what Black faculty". Though they are small in number, the Black faculty all seem to know one another by name and are aware of what department they work in. This shows that there is a seeking-out that happens when faculty step into a new place, just as Black students often seek one another out their first day of class. Having people that look like you and share similar experiences allows for a race-conscious understanding of how Black faculty navigate educational spaces. Many of the participants discussed going to other Black faculty on campus when they experience a racially charged incident, whether it be by students or another colleague. Simply put, they support one another through a mutual understanding of the experience and salience of both anti-Blackness and gendered racism in higher education. Patricia tells of her and another Black woman's experiencing a racial microaggression in a meeting:

"I haven't known her that long and it was like instant connection that we've had very similar experiences...And it was one of those things like we were at a meeting and we noticed a lot of the same things, but we never even talked. So we were noticing these things that I was thinking to myself like okay I'm probably noticing this because I'm sensitive but when I talked to her and she was like, she confirmed how I felt and it was like yea this is happening, you know. But it's like you're used to just being the only person"

Getting used to being the only was a phrase many of the participants who have been teaching longer used. James, who has been teaching at the same institution for 17 years, noted how he

is only the second Black tenure professor in the history of the college. During our conversation, he expressed the challenges in being the only Black person in a space which reflects how many Black people feel in spaces where they are expected to be the spokesperson. Black women in this study were more willing to talk about their experiences with microaggressions and racially charged incidents, but the Black men in this study either responded by saying they do not get them as bad as the Black women, or downplayed incidents and interactions with students as if they were not impactful on their ability to teach. This highlights the social construction of masculinity and the performance of gender, where Black men are socialized into this idea that they cannot show any signs of weakness. Black women shared instances of students questioning their authority in the classroom and making comments on the first day of class such as “oh, you’re the professor”. When asked about the racial makeup of these students who commit these microaggressions towards Black women, all but two said it comes primarily from white and Black men. This, yet again, highlights the significance of an intersectional analysis that allows us to focus specifically on the gendered racism Black women experience.

All of the Black faculty in this study acknowledged at some point in our conversation that them being Black meant they have to navigate the institution differently and carefully in comparison to their white and Latino/a counterparts. This DuBoisian double-consciousness provides an additional layer to the already complex identity negotiations that Black faculty have to do in being in educational spaces that were not designed for them (DuBois 1906). Each of the faculty shared a moment where they realized they had to alter (or in some cases were being expected to alter) part of themselves in order to “fit in” and navigate institutional politics. Jarrel explains in a form of advice:

"You have to have that very DuBoisian double consciousness. Uh, yeah I would love to come in and be like, look, I come from a radical program, I would love to come in, you know, with my fist up and my Black Lives Matter shit just on full display, you know what I'm saying. But at the same time, I need an extra $50,000 for my program, and I can't piss off the people who are going to fund that. So I'm going to wear my Black Lives Matter T-shirt with a really nice sports coat"

In contrast, David's refusal to alter or tone down his passionate approach to things puts him in a position where colleagues, specifically colleagues of color, view him as angry. This has had an impact on his experiences in committee meetings, meetings with high level administrators, and engagements with faculty in different disciplines. In a discussion about his interactions with non-Black faculty of color in committee meetings, David shares:

"My voice is significantly less than theirs because I'm always portrayed as angry, I'm always portrayed as unprofessional, or I have a chip on my shoulder or you know that's like the, it's like you're always so angry and it's like you know what you're right. I am angry because our inadequacies, our incompetence and our lack of focus on student equity hurts real students in real time. You're right, I'm angry because justice is not being served versus I'm angry just to be angry"

In many instances with David, it's not that he does not know how to "play nice" in committee spaces, it is that he feels like he should not have to tone down the passion he has for students to make his colleagues feel comfortable about putting in the work. He speaks on behalf of the students and always has student equity and success in the back of his mind, which he feels is oftentimes forgotten or ignored in spaces where decisions are being made. In another narrative, David shares about how he is reminded what it means to be a Black man on campus everyday when a non-Black faculty of color shares a story with him about how angry he was in a meeting and how he was able to confront a white faculty member about some things and left the meeting with an apology from the white faculty member. This situation highlights one of the many tenants of anti-Black racism where Black people specifically are expected to stay in

our place, where others who are less threatening and closer to whiteness get more leeway to "act out".

Keeping on the concept of DuBoisian double-consciousness, there are consequences, as we see with David, to not altering or toning down Blackness in order to fit in. A part of "fitting in" with the institution is the way in which you present yourself through the clothes and shoes you wear. More than half of the participants in this study made a comment about feeling like they are looked at differently by both students and colleagues based on how they dress. It is important to note that the way that Black faculty experience this form of double-consciousness varies across gendered lines. Black women are constrained by controlling images that serve as tropes for what Black womanhood is supposed to look like (Collins 1990, 2000). These controlling images are so salient in society that Black women have a difficult time getting away from them, regardless of how much they "elevate" themselves in society, such as obtaining faculty positions. Of the 5 Black women who were interviewed, 4 of them talked about the role their hair plays in their racialized and gendered experiences. Relationships between Black women and hair are often representations of how far gendered racism stretches into our own perceptions of ourselves, we are not taught to love our hair because it is not the standard of beauty. Destiny shared an internal battle she had while preparing for an interview:

"I think it was when I first moved here I had an interview and my hair was still, um, relaxed, but I was wearing it still kind of curly, and I remember going because I have an interview, do I wear it curly or do I push it back and make it straighten into a ponytail, or wear it down? And I was like, you know what I'm wearing it how I want, you know, it shouldn't matter in the interview if my hair is straight or not"

This kind of second thought about how to wear hair for an interview is evidence of the gendered racism that is deeply rooted in our society. Black women's hair is not considered

professional according to white hegemonic standards and the pressures to alter our hair to resemble more attractive (white) features plays an important role in our identity, self-esteem, and feelings of physical attractiveness (Thompson 2013). In addition, Thompson (2013) asserts that hair plays a deep, cultural and spiritual role in the lives of Black women in the United States, as it is one of the few connections we have to our ancestor's African traditions. From the time Africans landed on US soil, our textured hair has been yet another signal to white colonizers that we are different, and that difference has been equated with inferiority. Today, this same view of our hair as bad or in need of taming sticks with us in a variety of ways. We now have anti-discrimination laws that protect natural (Black) hairstyles in the workplace and in schools, a clear indication that prior to this law our hair was a determining factor in people's assumption of our hirability. Though historically, Black women are typically the ones whose hair is policed and scrutinized as it is connected to our beauty, it is Black men and young boys who get the attention from the media, such as DeAndre Arnold and Andrew Johnson[19].Additionally, Black women in the study talked about students making comments about their hair in evaluations and on ratemyprofessor.com, a website that students use to make comments about and rate their professors on a variety of categories. Although Black women's hair is continually criticized and deemed unprofessional, the four out of five Black women in this study who made comments about their hair feel that it is important to embrace who you are. Angela said the following as a word of advice to future Black women faculty who are bound to one day come across this very dilemma:

"Just be your authentic self, wear your hair natural if you want to, wear your wig if you want to. You be whoever you want to be, don't feel as though, because I mean, I feel like in some ways Black women in particular could get it from multiple sides. It could be, Oh, you're not Black enough because you wear weaves and wigs or you too Afrocentric press that shit out"

There are a few things in particular regarding Black men and the idea of double-consciousness that stood out in this study. Rather than Black men being criticized by their hair, more than half of them expressed being mistaken for a student based on how they dress or others' assumptions of what a faculty member looks like. Marcus, who very often wears traditional African American dashikis, Black power accessories, Jordan shoes and hats, has been teaching for 15 years. Not only has he taught at community colleges, he has also taught at the university level, and in each educational space he has had a situation with colleagues, students or administrators where he was questioned about whether or not he was truly a faculty member. In one instance, campus police even came into his classroom and he had to show his faculty badge as proof that he was the professor of the class. Along the same lines, Calvin had a similar situation with campus police where he had to prove himself as a faculty member in order to answer the question "what are you doing here" while sitting in his car on campus. One of the many tenants of anti-Blackness is the assumption or disbelief that Black cannot equate to authority, and that assumption carries over to Black faculty who are made to prove themselves in situations such as Marcus' and Calvin's. Black faculty's second thought or double consciousness in these scenarios then becomes a question of whether or not to be yourself, dress how you want and wear your hair how you want, or do what you can to fit in with hegemonic notions of "professionalism" that are designed with whiteness as the norm.

Every single tenured faculty member (and a few adjuncts) discussed the hidden cost of labor that is expected from Black faculty that is not similarly expected for white faculty. This is a unique concept, because Black faculty are part of a community of people who are not succeeding in or attending college at the same rate as white students so the sense of

responsibility and demand placed on them is higher (Griffin and Reddick 2011;Wheeler and Freeman 2018). When Black faculty are hired on a tenure track, there is an unstated expectation that they will work with cultural programs and clubs that support Black students (Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). Oftentimes, that is exactly the case, Black faculty make the informed decision to become a part of Black History month planning committees, Umoja programs, and other institution-based programs and services that support Black student's success in college. However, sometimes that decision does come with some cultural pressures and a burden of responsibility to Black students that white faculty do not experience (Wheeler and Freeman 2018). A few of the participants mentioned white faculty on campus who have turned down being a part of things and are not bothered by it, they stick to teaching and keep their focus on meeting or maintaining their requirements for tenure. All but two of the participants in this study are a part of either a Umoja program or are advisors to the Black Student Union on their campus. The two who are not currently involved expressed the desire to be but are unable to due to working at multiple colleges and not having enough time, but they have been invited to those spaces and frequently attend events when schedules permit. In addition, Black women experience forms of cultural taxation[19] at a higher rate than Black men, because Black women have the controlling images that pervade our lives and place the assumption that we are to take care of everyone in our paths (Collins 1990,2000).

In this study, all but two participants expressed how they are involved in way too much on campus, including adjunct faculty who do not have a tenure status and teach at multiple colleges. This cultural taxation poses an additional layer of complexity to the experiences of Black faculty in community colleges, and as previously stated, applies to Black women

differently. Black faculty in this study are keenly aware that their own population of Black students experience the largest equity gap in community colleges on many of the measures than any other group (Wood 2015). There are programs, like Umoja, and community support, like the Black Student Union that are put in place to provide Black students with additional support and resources in an attempt to close such equity gaps. As racialized others who have navigated anti-Black terrain their entire life, Black faculty can relate to this kind of inequity in education and many of them want to do their part in impacting change. Any time we are talking about labor, or anything for that matter, we must stop and do an analysis on the intersection of race and gender. Marcus, with 15 years of teaching experience, stated the following on behalf of Black women:

"The sistas will talk about being over and inundated with work, right, because they'll bring a sista to do a Black studies job and then they'll be like, it's like they figured they just brought in a counselor, right, because women are expected to do the sort of reproductive labor of the campus, and the productive labor, right"

In this conversation, Marcus is talking about how almost every tenure job he applied for has gone to a Black woman. He explicitly clarifies that he is does not say this to claim some sort of reverse oppression, but he states that Black women are, in the eyes of white power, easier to exploit for their labor. This relates to many of the stereotypes and controlling images of Black women established during slavery (Collins 1990, 2000). Specifically, they want a mammy in these positions, a Black woman who is willing to put everyone else's needs in front of her own and be the caretaker. Additionally, being a large Black man with dark skin within his field of study can be threatening to many people because of the assumptions of criminality associated with Black men. The ways that Black bodies are interpreted across gendered lines often contributes to additional forms of marginalization and outsider status.

An additional form of labor placed on Black faculty stems directly from anti-Blackness and gendered racism, and that is having to manage white supremacy (and white men in particular) in the classroom. I do want to note, when we are talking about white supremacy, keep in mind that it does not always have to come out of a white body. Many groups have adopted white supremacy and anti-Blackness, as the two go hand-in-hand. Non-Black people of color can also enact white supremacy in these spaces, and as briefly mentioned above, Black men in the classroom can also pose a challenge to Black women faculty. Patterson (1982) reminds us that the Black and white dichotomy was constructed specifically in such a way that the suppression and dehumanization of Black bodies is necessary to maintain racial order. Education has been a site of dehumanization for Black bodies since the moment colleges and universities were created. Black faculty who fight their way into the classroom and represent a form of authority are going against the foundation of our educational model as it was created, and they are often reminded of this by students in their class and on the campus as a whole. James, who is one of two tenured Black faculty in his institution, shared the experience of having a Klansman in his class:

> "He was actually a good kid, grew up in Georgia and he grew up in a Klan, so from the time he remembers going to klan meetings since he was 5. So he was, I remember him, and I remember him saying, he used to say when we were in a klan meeting they used to always say that nigga's you should be scared of are not the gangbangers, but the ones with a PhD"

Although James describes the student as a good kid, this student in the classroom served as a reminder to James where his position in society is and even his comment about Black people who have Phd's is a reminder to James of his position in relation to white supremacy. This is a student who actually shared his beliefs and upbringing with James but think about how many other students sit in the classroom with Black faculty and harbor these same ideologies and

never explicitly own them in this way, rather display them through microaggressions and other forms of intimidation. In addition, Angela shared a narrative about working at an institution where hate crimes are being committed almost every semester:

> "With everything that's been happening lately with the different hate crimes and just the reaction of, you know, people of certain positions to these events and or lack of reaction, you know, I just, it's made it really hard to be excited to come to campus when you don't know if your safety is in jeopardy...Like your own colleagues are like, share some of these sinister ideologies...or some of the students share these ideologies, and that's scary because what if I say something they don't like?"

Concerns for safety vary across gendered lines for Black faculty as well. As we see, the contrast between James' handling of the Klansman in his class and Angela's concern for her own safety shows how white supremacy impacts Black men and Black women differently. James, having the privilege of gender on his side, does not express any fear or concern for safety when talking about the white male in his class who was in a Klan his entire life. Angela on the other hand, sees hate crimes not even targeted in her classroom and is immediately concerned for her safety. Black women's relationship and experiences with white supremacy have always included concerns for safety, as our bodies have been violated and used as breeding grounds for lighter, less threatening slaves.

I do not want to create the assumption that anti-Blackness only comes from students. The participants in this study shared racially charged incidents with colleagues and administrators as well. Calvin, for example, was asked the following question during his second-round interview for his tenure track position: "How do you feel that the reason why you will be hired is because of the color of your skin". His response: "That's kind of very difficult to answer that question, because the lens that I come from I've been Black all my life". The assumption being made by the person asking this question is a common assumption about Black people

after the establishment of affirmative action policies (though they are now deemed unconstitutional in California) and the underlying rhetoric behind it is that they are not qualified to begin with. Calvin was not the only participant in this study who was assumed to be an affirmative action hire, nor was he the only person who had an uncomfortable or flat out racist experience during his interview.

All but two participants in this interview have made it to an interview for a tenure track position and shared their experiences about the process. The one thing that stood out that each of them made sure to comment on was the fact that the people charged with making decisions on the hiring committee were not Black. One might argue that this is not problematic seeing how Black faculty are small in number in the institution as a whole. However, what becomes problematic is when a Black person is tokenized and placed on the committee but not a decision maker in the process, which was the case for all but two of the participants who had tenure track interviews. It is also important to note that the Black faculty members who may have been tokenized on some of these committees often came from a different discipline, so they were serving as the equal opportunity representative, who oftentimes does not have a say on who actually gets the position. For some, not having a Black person on the hiring committee may not seem like a big deal, but this is where we have to interrogate anti-Blackness within educational spaces. Marcus, who has ample amount of teaching experience and a PhD from a prestigious university, said the following about his hiring experiences:

"Well see a gift and a curse of community college hiring is to be adjunct you basically just it's up to the dean and the department coordinator, program coordinator to hire you or the department chair...it's like that sort of situation where someone says 'damn this dude got some skills' I'm good but then if it ever leads up to this committee of people, man it sucks"

When I asked him why he felt that committees were where he struggled getting tenure track positions, he responded:

"Cuz I'm a big Black man, I'm smart, and I'm qualified...And I also think that, like when it comes to, when it's non-Black people hiring Black studies, they don't always hire men. It's a complicated thing for me because I've done the research in higher education, so I understand what it's about. So it's not a reverse oppression thing but it's about the fact that they want to hire sistas so they can over work sistas. Also, white women oftentimes are doing the hiring, and I don't think white women wanna work with Black men"

Marcus' analysis on his hiring experiences shows yet again the importance of an intersectional analysis of race and gender, as we see there are complex relationships between Black women, Black men, and white women in particular that come to play in educational spaces. Interestingly enough, when white men were brought into the conversation it was from a student perspective, with the exception of one participant. White men in faculty positions seem to steer clear of engaging on a personal level with the Black faculty in this study. The one interaction with a white male faculty member that was shared in this study was with David when he first got hired and a white male faculty member came to him and told him "there are people on campus who think you are not qualified to teach here". There was no conversation or prelude to this comment, it was simply reminding David of his place in the institution and something that sticks with him to this day.

Although Black faculty are small in number, and oftentimes are the only in their departments, the participants in this study found it important to establish community among one another on campus. Establishing community was viewed differently by participants, some would describe community as attending events with one another and others felt that even simply acknowledging one another in passing was a form of community building. A few participants even mentioned the creation of Black faculty and staff associations. However,

building community among themselves is no small task and the participants in this study expressed some challenges with community building. The first challenge, of course, is that there are so few Black faculty on campus and they are isolated within their own department. The second challenge is specific to tenured faculty, which is that they are overloaded with committee and institutional advancement work that they do not have the free time to attend events or social gatherings. A third challenge is specific to the adjuncts in this study, who expressed difficulties in being connected to one institution when they are freeway flying to teach on multiple college campuses, teaching upwards of 6 classes in one semester, and because of these they are only on campus enough to teach, prep, meet students and leave. The fourth challenge is in acknowledging that Black people are not monolithic. They do not hold the same political, ideological or religious views which may cause some Black faculty to find community outside of their racial identity. Another challenge that is worthy of more investigation is that Black faculty who are not from the United States (such as African or Caribbean faculty) often do not associate their racial identity in the same way, and so they do not seek out or attend Black cultural events as often. Four of the participants mentioned this exactly, and even when it came to them noting how many Black faculty their campus had, there was either pause, questioning or flat out removal of African or Caribbean identifying faculty from the “Black faculty” label. David stated:

"Even Black faculty that look Black are not Black here, um, or they're not specifically, they're not African American. And so just because you're Black or considered Black doesn't mean you're an ally”

Similarly, Jarrel made a comment about the complexities of African identity in education:

"And there's not a lot of Black men on campus, I mean I can count on one hand the number of Black male faculty and the two of them are African, right. And so we know the complex relationship in education around African American and African immigrant educational experiences"

Not only does Jarrel's above comment touch on the identity complications between African immigrants and African Americans (Blacks), it also reiterates a point made in this study about there being a lack of Black men in faculty positions. Although this study in particular has more Black men than Black women, it is important to note that this is not representative of the true numbers nationwide nor does it represent what has been studied in existing literature.

As demonstrated in this study, Black men and women in faculty positions navigate anti-Blackness in educational spaces differently when taking into account the multiple intersecting identities. Without an intersectional analysis of race and gender, the experiences of all Black faculty would be amalgamated and inevitably some voices would be left in the margins. For example, some Black women in this study shared concerns for safety in the classroom when engaging students on different topics. Black men did not share concerns for safety rather, they shared situations with campus police but never explicitly stated safety as a concern. An analysis on what safety means and who they need to be safe from is necessary across gendered lines. In addition, discussions about mentorship varies between Black men and women. One Black woman in this study shared with me the painful conclusion she has drawn that other Black women do not want to be her mentor, and all of the mentors in her life are Black men or white women. Angela shared:

"When it came to a lack of mentorship, the demographic whom I would say has probably given me the hardest time is Black women, other Black women. And that hurts my soul because in every space I've been in in academia, when I went looking for actively looking for mentorship, the first ones I went to were Black women, and those, and maybe it was a combination of something I did and they did, I don't know, but they're non-existent in that way".

When talking about mentorship, Black men shared that they had other Black men either mentor them in a conventional manner, meaning they had a mentee-mentor relationship where their mentor gave them advice and helped them along their path. Or, they had a mentor from afar, meaning they had another Black man in their life that they modeled their life after simply because they had limited representation for what they can or should be.

Overall, Black faculty in educational spaces are expected to be just as successful, if not more, than their white counterparts while managing racialized and gendered oppression. Education was not built with the thought of educating or being educated by Black bodies. On the contrary, education has been used to reinforce anti-Blackness and is influenced by wider social factors that determine who and what is valuable through curriculum. Students come to community colleges after years of K-12 education that has socialized them into believing there is one model for what authority looks like, and that model does not come from a Black body. The challenges Black faculty face in having to manage their identity and adopt a form of DuBoisian double-consciousness, Black women having to think twice about their hair, Black men being "mistaken" for students, and overall lack of acceptance within the institution as a whole demonstrates antagonistic relationship between Black bodies and educational spaces.

Community Colleges: Teaching the Diamonds in the Rough

"I appreciate finding the diamonds in the rough versus the, you know, the gems that have been polished by the K-12 system. Because you know, if you're going to a CSU or UC straight out of high school, you're normally the polished gem… Your SAT/ACT score is pretty high, your overall GPA has been pretty good and so you know, so those are the polished gems. The diamonds in the rough that I really love to interact with here are students who may not have had the best experience in K-12". - David

Most research on Black faculty is at the university level, leaving Black faculty in community colleges silenced and their experiences unexamined. One of the many things I sought to discover in this study was why Black faculty chose to work in community colleges when most people who enter academia, especially with PhD's, are expected to teach at the four-year university level. Community colleges, as open access institutions, provide groups of people with the opportunity to pursue education who are often not on the "traditional path" for a variety of different reasons, and one of the most salient is poverty (Walpole, Chambers and Gos 2014). Additionally, more than half of Black college students attend community colleges rather than four-year universities, and in California, Black students make up more than two-thirds of the community college population (NCES 2016). This is a direct result of a lot of things, but the failure of the K-12 system to recognize Black students and see them as human as a way establish a positive relationship with education is brought to the forefront in much of the literature (Milem 2001;Hattery and Smith 2007;Heitzeg 2009;Hughes and Giles 2010;Winn and Behizadeh 2011;Wood and Palmer 2014; Freeman and Lawson 2014).

All of the participants in this study said that they chose to work in a community college over a four-year university because at the community college level they get to serve a diverse student population. Not only do community colleges get students fresh out of high school, they also get adult re-entry, formerly incarcerated, international students, and military students from all over the country. There is a place for everyone in a community college, and there is no expectation that students have it all figured out. Angela, who started college as an adult re-entry student, said the following about university expectations:

"And when you think about, at least when I think about four-years, like they want this model student, this cookie cutter student and they think that everyone has the same abilities. And

when I say abilities, I don't mean like a lack thereof, it's just like this is where we think you should, where you should be at and if you're not here then you're not worthy of being here". What Angela is touching on is the fact that not all students leave high school prepared to go to a university. Maybe they do not have the proper test scores or GPA because they are impacted by social factors like poverty, home life obligations such as taking care of siblings and other barriers caused by institutional racism and sexism. For students like this, community colleges offer them another path to success where they are able to get additional support and can benefit from smaller class sizes. Alicia, who has worked in four-year institutions as well as community colleges, prefers the community college level because "having a large class is a disservice to students more than anything". She finds that students in community colleges are more willing to ask questions about fundamentals because it is less intimidating than raising a hand in a class of 500 students. In her discipline, understanding fundamentals is vital to student success, and she feels as though they should offer fundamental classes with a reasonable number of students to ensure they are retaining the material and getting the one-on-one support they need.

Not only is what the institution expects from the students different in community colleges than four-years, what the student expects from the professor is different as well. Most participants in this study, especially those who have experience teaching at both levels, feel that the university level is more of a business exchange model. Students have the same expectations for the structure of the class, regardless of the discipline, and are more willing and ready to pursue disciplinary action against professors for things like grades and exam scores. Marcus, who has taught both in community college and four-year institutions for the last 15 years, shared the following about his students at both levels:

"In [community college], for example, I might have students all, they love my lectures. It's great, it's fun but they don't turn in any homework. Right. And then I got UC students who might never miss an assignment, never ask for extensions but it's just songs, a habit, formulaic for them you know, and for them, they see it almost as a business exchange, so you know, it's gonna be actually a lot more complaints about grades and things like that".

In addition, Patricia, who has also taught at the four-year university level feels that university students, mostly because of their k-12 preparation and training, are set in their ways and have specific expectations as to how the class should run:

"You just have so much opportunity here [in community college], like there's so much development here. You're like at the ground level for a lot of things and it's always so encouraging to see. I think it's like the first sight of growth in a person and you know, at four year institutions, people are kind of already, you know, especially because I was teaching upper division courses, people kind of set in their ways".

None of this is to say that university students have standards and expectations where community college students do not, but to demonstrate the differing expectations placed on the professor at each level. Many of the participants expressed that they feel students in community colleges are here to learn something and are really engaged in the process of learning, rather than focusing on grades and passing exams. Again, that is not to say that community college students do not care about their grades, but many of them, due to the life circumstances that led them to community college, find fulfillment being in the classroom learning something new. The few participants who taught at four-year universities stated that they did not feel they had the same impact on university students as they do with community college students, oftentimes university students have what they need, know what to do and get it done. Community college students often rely on professors for additional services and connections on campus to help them along their educational journey (Iloh and Townsend 2013).

One of the main differences when it comes to the institution's expectations of faculty, is that at the four-year university level you are required to publish and conduct research. On the other hand, community colleges expect their faculty to focus primarily on teaching rather than publishing, allowing them to spend their time developing and working with students (Linksy and Straus 1975). Alicia shared with me one of the many reasons why she prefers working in community colleges over four-years, after many years of experience in both:

> "I'm more interested in students and any research that I do, I'm more interested in research that impacts student learning than anything else. And I feel like they [four-year universities] want research for research sake, and I'm only interested in things that impacts my teaching in some way"

The pressure placed on university level faculty to produce and publish a certain amount of research as a contingency to their tenure leaves them with less time to spend with students. So in addition to having larger classes, four-year universities then place additional institutional strains on faculty which often leads them to focusing more on research and less on their students (Linsky and Straus 1975). Accordingly, the research they are producing and their ability to publish determines their tenure track status, not their teaching or student evaluations. In contrast, student evaluations are very important at the community college level because that feedback from students is supposed to serve as a reflection of their teaching ability.

There is a common misconception about community colleges that causes people to view them as a second choice to universities. The rhetoric surrounding community college education is shifting, as people focus more on the economic benefits of community colleges rather than the assumption that the classes are not designed to be challenging. Many of the participants in this study rebutted the notion that community college classes are designed to be easier, stating

that they would teach their class the same exact way if they were at a four-year university. However, a few participants expressed that not all faculty in community colleges hold the same viewpoint. James shared with me his frustration in hearing that some Black students avoid taking his class because he has been rated as "too hard", yet his goal is to prepare students to transfer to universities. This leaves him to believe that his colleagues whom the students are choosing to take class with instead are not designing their classes in a way that prepares students to transfer and take upper division courses:

"My Black students tell me like you know Black students won't take you because you're too hard. I'm like, I'm going to help you, I'm not just going to fail you, just tell you I want you to do well. But that's interesting right, so then what does this tell me about how my colleagues teach these students? That really becomes an equity issue for me, like if they're not pushing you to be great that's no good".

Many of the other participants in the study stated they would teach their classes the same way if they were at the university level. However, a few participants in the study did touch on the notion that community colleges are not viewed as the place to be when they got their PhD. Some expressed that their PhD committee was disappointed when they got a tenure position at a community college and some found that their local high schools looked down upon the community college as somewhere people go when they have no other choice, as if it were a place for failures.

Institutional Politicking: The Race for Tenure

"It's a game they play, and I don't know how to be invited to participate in this. You know, not that I even know the rules, I can figure them out, but I'm not invited to play" - Alicia

A tenure-track position is hard to come by, and is one of the most competitive jobs in colleges and universities because they represent an indefinite academic appointment,

something everyone desires in a job: stability. Some professors get tenure-track positions straight out of their PhD program, and others work as adjuncts for years, waiting for their chance for a tenure-track position. In this study, six participants have tenure or are on tenure-track, two of them directly out of their PhD program, and the other's have the experience of being an adjunct prior to their tenure-track position with varying years of teaching experience. In this study, the tenure/non-tenure track divide showed itself in many ways, with many participants expressing the desire to get a tenure-track position but the system is built to rely heavily on the labor of adjunct faculty. Tenure-track positions are few and far between, and many people are willing to uproot their entire lives and jump at the chance when one becomes available. Although adjuncts teach a bulk of the classes, an educational hierarchy exists between those who have tenure and those who do not, whether natural or designed, and in many ways it can impact relationships among faculty.

The interview process for a tenure-track position occurs in two steps, the first being an interview with the department chair, other faculty in the department, and a person outside of the department. Some participants in this study even had upwards of eight people be on a panel in their first interview. Once interviewees make it past the first interview, they have a second interview with the college president, and it is this interview that is the determining factor of whether or not they get the position. Much of the research indicates that Black faculty are applying and getting a first and often even a second interview, but are not necessarily the first choice when it comes to deciding who gets the job (Fraizer 2011;Cobb-Roberts 2012;Wheeler and Freeman 2018). Much of this can be related to not only biases that people on hiring committees hold that are not mitigated or even discussed in the interview process,

but also the desire for someone that "fits" the department often does not mean someone who is Black. Black people live in the margins of society, our culture and ways of expressing it are not considered the "norm" and they often do not fit into hegemonic constructions of professionalism. These are just a few of many barriers that show itself in the interview process, keeping in mind past conversations about professional image and the impact on Black faculty in this process.

All of the participants who are adjuncts (non-tenure track) in this study expressed that they feel as though tenure-track positions are opened to the public as a formality because the department already knows who they want. Angela, who has been teaching as an adjunct for four years, expressed her views on the process:

> "When it comes to education, I feel as though when a position opens up because nine times out of ten they already have someone in mind...so really, education is who you know *laughing*, it's making lasting relationships and networking opportunities because it's very relational in terms of getting [tenure] positions in education"

Additionally, a few participants made comments about the community college environment and how because they are smaller, people often know when a tenure-track position is coming down before it is even posted and made available to the public. As Alicia put it, "they do a nationwide search for Jill" and have people go through a rigorous application process just to not even be considered for the job. This was one of the many frustrations expressed by adjuncts in this study, even when it came down to applying to just teach a class (non-tenure). Filling out an application and for some participants going through equivalency, does not guarantee that you will be invited to teach. This process is also relational, as Angela informs us, because just to teach some classes there is oftentimes no interview involved it takes connecting to the department chair and a nice CV. Marcus refers to this as "the gift and the curse of community

college hiring" because as an adjunct they care about your ability to teach and your experience so the hiring is done based on that alone, but tenure-track positions go through an interview process with an entire committee and that opens up more to judge than just teaching and experience.

I want to spend some time honoring the adjuncts who participated in this study by designating a section to address many of their feelings and concerns about the institution. In many ways, the "workers" of any institution are often the ones with the most capital and understanding of how the institution works. Adjuncts, the way that institutions are set up, are considered the workers within the faculty realm, as Jarrel put it they often work in "multiple colleges, multiple counties, freeway flying like a mug". Adjuncts are paid per class that they teach, and many of them stack as many classes as they can into one semester to ensure they are getting the pay they need to survive in Southern California. This often means that they are working on multiple college campuses and spending a lot of time driving in between. This limits their ability to become deeply connected to any one institution because they are splitting their time among multiple. In addition, this leaves adjuncts out of the conversations that are typically held among tenured faculty alone. When asked about her relationship with the people in her department, Alicia responded: "Superficial...I think it's just because I am a part timer, I feel like it's us versus them". Many of the participants in this study who are adjuncts feel separated from tenure track faculty in a hierarchical manner and are not held to the same esteem by people within the institution. Marcus, who has 15 years of experience teaching as an adjunct, stated:

"I come on campus to prep for my class, teach my students, and leave. I'm not asked to be a part of any faculty meetings as an adjunct"

This is a disservice to not only the students but the department as a whole, adjuncts bring in differing perspectives and have experience at different institutions that could serve as a benefit rather than being viewed as a hindrance. For example, Alicia, who has been teaching for 15 years has a background in teacher preparation training that is not tapped into as her department is trying to put together a workshop for faculty that could benefit from her expertise. Rather than reach out for her help, the tenured faculty in the department keep it amongst themselves, as if asking an adjunct for help is beneath them. Marcus and Alicia have both had interviews for tenure-track positions, and Marcus has even made it to the second level interview with the president but feels as though getting hired within his discipline is hard for Black men in particular.

Being an adjunct takes a toll on the personal, emotional and sometimes even professional lives of most of the participants. Many of them expressed how having to teach at so many different colleges takes time away from their own personal lives and relationships. They spend a lot of time in the car, prepping for classes, grading, and that leaves very little time for anything else. Destiny, who has been an adjunct for two years, expressed:

"Everyday you go in as an adjunct I feel like you're on an interview. You're always being watched because they're looking to see if they want to hire you. So it's always, always, always an interview. You go in, you do your job, you know, come out, smile, whatever...So you always have to be on your best behavior because you want a full-time job"

In addition, she expressed that one of the many challenges faced by adjuncts is being accepted by not only colleagues but also students as someone who knows what they are doing. Imagine doing your job in a space where you feel as though you are always being watched, you always

have to be perfect and as Destiny put it, “on your best behavior”. This alone can put additional stress on adjuncts because for the most part, they are not guaranteed classes or counseling hours from one semester to the next, they live each day doing impression management.

In any institution or social structure, there are unspoken rules that we are expected to operate under and oftentimes we learn of these unspoken rules by breaking them. Angela expressed her discontent with some of the rules driven by hierarchy within her institution that limit people’s abilities to do their job:

“If you, let’s say if you are seen by others as being in a certain position in the hierarchy and you try to, like get out of that position without their okay, you know what I mean, like that’s an unspoken no no, and there’s ways that you will be blackballed. There’s ways that you will be ostracized, there’s ways that you’ll be left out of conversations in spaces because it’s kind of like, how dare you step out of your lane”

In addition, some institutions do not support adjunct’s professional development by not funding conferences for them in the same way they do for tenured faculty. Destiny expressed this as one of the many challenges she faces in moving towards a tenure-track position because she wants to attend conferences and workshops to assist in her development, but to do so she would have to miss work and pay for everything herself, which she, along with many others, are not in the financial position to do.

Adjuncts are in a unique position, where they are expected to know and abide by such rules, but are not given any voice when it comes to expressing how those same rules impact their ability to make moves on behalf of students. There is a very clear hierarchy within community colleges, and navigating that hierarchy is something that has to be learned and accepted or there can be consequences. With this in mind, many of the tenured or tenure-track participants in this study discuss being strategic in navigating these institutional politics. Two

tenured faculty in particular gave a very specific piece of advice for adjuncts to wait until they solidify their tenure status before going in and making big waves or challenging the system. This type of advice from senior faculty highlights the importance of mentorship and building relationships with other Black faculty who have similar racialized (and for Black women, both racialized and sexualized) experiences. Using their own experiences in navigating institutional politics, they want to ensure that other Black faculty that come after them are not put in the same position to have to learn things the hard way.

Another aspect of institutional politicking is knowing how to even penetrate the hiring process, starting with the application. Many of the adjuncts in this study talked about how lengthy the application process is, where you have to gather all of the things that show you are qualified on paper and make them appealing to a committee who oftentimes has no idea who you are. Adjuncts who have been working at the institution they are applying for express having a form of insider knowledge as to what they are looking for specifically on the application through senior faculty mentorship. A few of the participants discussed having to go through an additional step of degree equivalency, which they felt was an added barrier especially considering the name of the discipline is in the degree title. In addition, one tenured faculty member expressed complications with his specialty within his discipline and how as a new adjunct that deterred him from applying for more general positions. It was not until a senior Black faculty member told him to not count himself out of those jobs even when they do not match his exact specialty. The next job he applied for did not list his specialty, but he got it and is now a tenured faculty member.

DISCUSSION

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How are the experiences of Black faculty in community colleges shaped by societal forces such as anti-Blackness and white supremacy?
2. What is the significance of community colleges for Black faculty and where do they see themselves situated in the institution?
3. What strategies do Black faculty employ to navigate educational spaces driven by socio-historical legacies of slavery and conquest?

Much of the research produced around inequality in education focuses on the four-year university level, leaving experiences within community colleges unheard. Without looking at the community college level, where we know there are larger percentages of Black students and Black faculty, we are missing a large body of literature and leaving these experiences in the margins of academe. Community colleges play an important role in the lives of historically excluded groups, as they offer a different path after high school and for some, a new start in education as adults. What has shown itself throughout this study, is the resiliency of the Black community who continue to fight their way through an educational system that was not built for us. All but one of the participants in this study shared their dysfunctional or challenging relationship with K-12 education, and yet through all of it found within themselves the desire to become educators. Oftentimes, systems like education and the way it has marginalized and criminalized Black bodies pushes people out and away from these spaces, taking away the desire to pursue higher education. For the participants in this study, they use their own experiences as a model for the way that they teach their students, hoping to be the change and inspire other Black students to do the same.

Black faculty use their own experiences in the K-12 system as a framework to their interactions with students. As members of a group who have been mistreated and dehumanized within educational spaces, the Black faculty in this study recognize the important role they play in the lives of all of their students, but most importantly their Black students. Many of them did not have a mentor in their school, very few of them had Black teachers, and all of them felt as if they were overlooked in one way or another by their teachers and administrators. Due to these experiences, they navigate their classrooms in a way that relies on personal connection, building trust, providing students with tools to talk about inequality, and exposing them to content that is relevant and relatable to their lives. In doing so, they are actively resisting many of the structures that are in place that ultimately hinder the success of Black and non-Black students of color in the classroom. After years and years of education that socializes us into a regimented routine of what to expect in the classroom, Black faculty in community colleges provide students with a new way of navigating education. They encourage students to speak out in the classroom, many of the participants include students in the process of selecting reading material, and all of them create a classroom environment that does not elevate their status over the students.

As Black people elevate themselves to positions of status and authority in society, such as obtaining a faculty position, we have a tendency to assume that they will become a part of the “accepted” group. This study, along with the existing literature on Black faculty in four-year universities, demonstrates that the systematic structures of anti-Blackness and gendered racism in our society place Black faculty in a category of “conditionally accepted”. They are accepted as long as they know their place and do not challenge hegemonic structures, and they

are accepted to show or maintain the institution's supposed commitment to diversity, but they are never truly accepted in their totality, in all of their Blackness. Black faculty must maintain a dual identity and are forced to develop strategies of resistance to white supremacist structures that are culturally taxing and emotionally exhausting. Not only are they expected to "fit" the professional (white male) standards physically through the way they dress and style their hair, they are also expected to "tone down" their Blackness to make others feel comfortable. In the same breath, there are both stated and unstated expectations by the institution that they partake in cultural clubs and committees designed around serving Black students as a disproportionately impacted equity group. They are accepted as long as they are doing the labor for the institution that fits the mission of serving marginalized groups, but their acceptance is conditional as they are often policed in very these spaces by administrators and colleagues (by both white and non-Black faculty of color).

Although understudied with regard to inequality in education, the California community college system serves an important role in the lives of students who are often left behind in the education system. The Black faculty in this study each made the informed decision to work within the community college system for a variety of different reasons, but one of the most common responses was because of the interactions they get to have with a diverse population of students. Community colleges attract students from a variety of different backgrounds and walks of life such as formerly incarcerated, first generation, international, military and adult re-entry to name a few. In addition, community colleges are more teaching-focused and tend to have more student-centered classrooms because the faculty are not required to conduct research or complete publications, allowing them more time to engage with students and focus

on their teaching. Many of the participants in this study expressed their frustration with the assumption that community colleges are 'less-than' in comparison to universities, and stated they treat their students and design their classroom the same way they would at a university. Anything less than that is a disservice to students, especially students who will end up transferring to four-year universities without the tools to be successful and meet the university's expectations.

As with any other system in our society, community colleges are stratified in various ways that create a hierarchical relationship among tenure and non-tenure or adjunct faculty. Tenure track positions are hard to come by, and when they are made available it seems as if they already have someone in mind. The adjunct faculty who participated in this study had varying amounts of teaching experience both in community colleges and university level but expressed some of the challenges they have experienced in going for a tenure track position. The very first challenge is the application process, which is often laborious, detailed and often requires degree equivalency paperwork that creates an additional step in the process for some. The second challenge occurs at the interview level, if they even make it past the application process, which some express as a frustrating experience they go through to not even get a first interview. Because adjuncts are working at multiple institutions, they are often not as up to date with the administrative aspects of community colleges, which they express as a barrier to some of the questions asked during interviews. In addition, many of them feel as if they are in a constant state of having to prove themselves and prove their worthiness to both students and colleagues but are not offered the same institutional support in some cases as tenured faculty, such as funding for conferences and work-related travel. The culminating result is adjunct

faculty not feeling like they are viewed with the same esteem or given a voice in particular spaces as their tenured and tenure-track colleagues and yet have to navigate institutional politics just the same.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study demonstrates the importance of looking at the experiences of Black faculty within community colleges through an intersectional lens, taking into account the experiences of Black men and Black women both separately and in the areas they overlap. Black faculty are able to navigate anti-Blackness and gendered racism through various acts of resistance to the ways in which education has been designed. In using their own educational experiences, they are able to establish relationships with students that are both humanizing and liberating for students in the classroom. We often talk about the margins as a place that is steeped in oppression, and yet we see with the Black faculty in this study that the margins is also a site of strength and resilience. Though many of the participants in this study had negative relationships with education, they pursued a career in education so that they can be the professor or counselor in a student's life that they never had. One student at a time, they are setting out to transform classrooms and enact change on their community college campuses that positively impacts the lives of students.

There is a lot of research to be done in this area, as research done at the community college level is very slim. The community college environment and student population are vastly different than that of four-year universities and so looking specifically at issues within the community colleges is important to the continual production of knowledge looking at inequality in education. My plans for future research are to expand the study to community colleges in different regions, and specifically look at Hispanic and minority serving institutions and the ways in which anti-Blackness and gendered racism operate within them. As the United States population continues to diversify, it is imperative that we do not lose sight of the impact of

white supremacy and the values that have been embedded within our various institutions. There is an assumption that the more diverse a population becomes, racism becomes less of an issue, but as we see within this study gendered racism and anti-Blackness are widespread among non-Black communities of color as well. Furthermore, we must understand that institutions such as education reflect the values and beliefs of those who established them and without radical transformation, inequality will only continue to be hidden amongst institutional diversity rhetoric.

Although it seems as if we are attempting to tackle an entire system by acknowledging that the system has been built under ideologies of slavery and conquest, there are real and tangible things we can do now that can drastically alter the lives of Black faculty on community college campuses. First, I would recommend that institutions who are actively working on faculty diversity be specific in their hiring and recruitment practices. If they know that they are lacking in hiring and retaining Black faculty, they should actively be seeking Black faculty and not "faculty of color" as this creates a broad search and often erases Blackness within it. This includes being able to have these conversations in hiring committees, which may be uncomfortable for some, but this is where we need allies to be educated on the issue, step up, join the fight, and be willing to be on the front lines actively looking for Black faculty to hire. However, hiring is only the first step to addressing many of the issues mentioned in this study. The next recommendation I would give is for institutions to do more of their own survey and data collecting about their culture that is specific to faculty. Most of the focus on campus culture and inclusivity that comes out of colleges are aimed at the students and how they feel about their campus, which is important to know, but in reality faculty spend a lot more time

with the institution and should be included in the conversation. A final recommendation, and the one I find to be both the most important and the most challenging, is for institutions to require that all faculty take a course (not a training) that discusses the relationship between Blackness and education. My hope for this specific recommendation is that this exposes white and non-Black faculty of color to the specificity of Black degradation and dehumanization within education so they can examine their own positions within it. This will hopefully create empathy for Black students in the classroom and allow faculty to have some understanding of where they might be in their journey so they can provide additional support and even connect those Black students with their Black faculty colleagues as a form of extended support. Finally, a course such as this might cause some faculty to take a look at their own classroom policies and curriculum to find ways to incorporate Black voices.

I refrain from putting the burden on Black faculty to solve institutional issues because the burden should not be on the oppressed, and as a people we have carried burdens for too long. As demonstrated in this study, Black faculty are doing their part and more in regard to addressing and navigating gendered racism and anti-Blackness in their workplace, now the question is who is going to join them in dismantling them? If you are a faculty, I request that you ask yourself: “where am I represented in this study”. If we are not actively fighting to dismantle systems of oppression, we are participating in the perpetuation of them. This study focuses on Black faculty and their experiences, but is connected to the success and liberation of Black students as one of the most underserved and unrecognized populations in the education system as a whole. Black students gravitate to community colleges, and we must do better as a

community in ensuring they make it out successfully through the successful retention and intentional focus on the experiences of Black faculty within those institutions.

APPENDIX A

California State University
SAN MARCOS

Challenging Diversity: Black Faculty Experiences in Community College
Informed Consent

Invitation to Participate:

Dear Faculty Member,

My name is Shawntae Mitchum and I am a graduate student in the Sociological Practice Program at California State University San Marcos. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study on institutional climate of community colleges, specifically looking at Black faculty experiences. You have been identified as a potential participant in this study because you are a faculty member working in a community college who identifies as Black and are 18 years or older. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to the study.

Key Information about This Research Study:
The following is a short summary about this study to help you decide whether you would like to participate. Information that is more detailed is listed later in this form. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the experiences that Black faculty have in community colleges, and how they navigate institutions that perpetuate a dominant ideology and preference for whiteness. You will be asked to complete a 60-90 minute interview that will be completed one time. The primary risk of participation is emotional distress and the primary benefit is contributing to the production of knowledge that highlights the experiences of silenced voices in community colleges.

Study Purpose:
The purpose of this research study is to better understand the experiences of Black faculty in community colleges and how they navigate their institutional climate.

Number of Participants:
If you consent to participate in this research study, you will be 1 of approximately 10 participants.

Procedures of the Study:
If you agree to participate in the study I will be conducting 60-90 minute interviews that will be recorded and transcribed for use in my thesis. The interviews will take place at a location of your choosing, off campus and not associated with your home institution.

Risks and Inconveniences:
There is minimal risk and inconvenience for this research study. These include:

- 60-90 minutes of your time

- Some questions may bring up emotional traumas that may cause discomfort
- Black faculty are small in number in the institution as a whole and within their respective departments, so anonymity can be a concern, however, safeguards listed below will be of utmost importance to protect participants.

Safeguards:

To reduce risks and inconvenience the following measures will be taken:

- All participants can select their own pseudonyms, and the institutions will have a pseudonym as well. I will use limited geographic information provided to ensure the location of the institution cannot be discovered
- I will be collecting limited demographic information about participants to protect identity and ensure confidentiality.

Confidentiality:

Your responses, while they will be recorded, will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used consistently across notes and recordings and only accessible by myself and my committee chair, whose information is listed below. The experiences shared in this study will be used to add to the literature on Black faculty in colleges and universities and will be used in my thesis. No names will be used.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or stop the interview at anytime for any reason without penalty. Your decision to not participate in this study will not have any negative repercussions.

Incentives:

You will not receive payment for participating in this study.

Benefits of Participating in the Study:

While there are no direct personal benefits for participating in this study, your participation will provide a better understanding about your experiences as a Black faculty member in community colleges, as most research on faculty focuses specifically at four-year institutions, silencing the experiences that Black community college faculty have.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions regarding this study contact the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Lori Walkington by email at lwalking@csusm.edu . You will be given a copy of this form for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the IRB Office at irb@csusm.edu or (760) 750-4029.

Participant Consent:

By signing your name you acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age and consent to participate in this study.

- I consent to participating in this study

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

APPENDIX B

Email Recruitment Script

Dear Esteemed Faculty Member,

I am a 2nd year graduate student at California State University San Marcos working on my Master of Arts in Sociological Practice. For my thesis topic, I am looking at the institutional climate of community colleges by relying on the experiences of Black faculty, who are vastly underrepresented. I am looking for 10 participants who: are faculty in a community college in southern California, self-identify as Black, and are willing to offer 60-90 minutes of their time for me to conduct an interview.

I have been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSM to conduct this study, and have attached both my IRB approval and an informed consent document for you to review.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me at brown300@cougars.csusm.edu . If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email for further instructions on scheduling a time to interview with me.

In Unity,

Shawntae Mitchum
Graduate Student-Sociological Practice
California State University San Marcos

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