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**Teaching While Black: Analysis of (In)authenticity among Black  
Women Faculty in the Academy and Black Communities**

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**Teaching While Black: Analysis of (In)authenticity among Black  
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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to the Black women who raised me. The labor and love of my mother and grandmother have given me and their persistent in me receiving my education. I appreciate their love and support of my education and their constant praises of my work. This research is to honor you and the seeds that you planted in my mind and heart.

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## **Abstract**

### **Teaching While Black: Analysis of (In)authenticity among Black Women Faculty in the Academy and Black Communities**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

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*Teaching While Black: Analysis of (In)Authenticity among Black Women Faculty in the Academy and Black Communities* investigates how Black women faculty understand their Black identities by defining Black (in)authenticity in the Black community and white academy. Specifically in the academy, I observe how Black women faculty navigate racial and gender discrimination at the university and how that impacts their identities as Black women. Lastly, I am interested in the academic and non-academic relationships of Black women faculty members to support themselves in both communities. I collected qualitative data from 8 Black women faculty, ranging from varying levels of professorship, to gain insight into their personal experiences with discrimination at a predominantly white institution and how their perceptions of their racial (in)authenticity affects their engagement in their communities through the framework of Black feminism.

My purpose for selecting Black women faculty as my interlocutors for my research originates from the work of Collins (2002), who addresses the history of Black women's marginalization in predominantly White women's organizations and Black men's organizations. In the pursuit of my research, I would hope to (re)center the voices of Black women and understand the uniqueness of Black women faculty's positionality within the white academic space and in the Black community. Ultimately, I hope my project will highlight issues of institutional racism and the inequitable social structures that are imposed upon Black women faculty's academic and non-academic labor. Additionally due to the roles of Black women faculty, I am interested in how these women understand their identities in their respective communities.

Keywords: Black women professors, Black faculty, Black authenticity, Black inauthenticity, Black identity

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## PREFACE

*To be colorblind is to be comfortable  
You are comfortable because the color you see isn't black  
To be black as my body  
Is to be black as the night  
The sky is speckled with constellations  
Each double helix of my DNA is woven together like the intricacies of the Big Dipper  
The North Star shines enough light to guide me back home.  
Shine enough light so I see my way in this water  
Let me wade in this water.  
Cleanse me of the negativity and set me free*

I find *knowing* your race and *acknowledging* your race are two different things. I knew I was Black growing up. I knew Black television shows filled with Black faces, my Black family, Black school, and Black friends. But I can easily recall the moments when I had to thoroughly acknowledge my Blackness. My Blackness in a predominantly white private school in my younger years. My Blackness in supermarkets. My Blackness when people want(ed) to touch my hair. My Blackness was disregarded because I spoke “so white.”<sup>1</sup> My Blackness and womanness have been shaped, reshaped, lost and found. All of my identity development as a Black woman and Black feminist has occurred throughout my life, then and now, in an academic environment.

Patricia Hill Collins discusses Black women’s consciousnesses in her foundational work, *Black Feminist Thought*. In the conception of Black feminist thought, Collins developed a framework to further understand and validate the experiences and

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<sup>1</sup> I am intentionally leaving the “w” in white lowercase in this autoethnography as a political move but also making the capitalized identity of “Black” and “Blackness” focal in this paper. This lowercase “w” in this work decentralizes “whiteness” in hopes to push this dominant ideology and narrative in the margins and recenter Blackness and Black women in this research.

roles of Black women with the Black community and also how Black women survive in the larger oppressive society. This recognition of my experiences as a Black woman as Collins' discusses allowed me to recognize the development of my consciousness through my everyday experiences and understand the productivity of this awakening (Collins 2002, 32) In addition, Ashlee et al 2007 addresses consciousness, or wokeness, by addressing their awakening in their article, *We are Woke* by understanding the significance of their identities as women graduate students of color within a white-dominated institution. The authors define "wokeness" as "critical consciousness to intersecting systems of oppression. To be a woke person is to hold an unretractable embodied consciousness and political identity acknowledging the oppression that exists in our individual and collective experiences" (Ashlee et al 2007, 90). This purpose of this autoethnography provides the reader with a deeper understanding of my research through my personal understanding of my own identity. In this autoethnography, I address two moments in my life where I understood my wokeness, or consciousness, livelihood, and oppression as a Black woman: my senior year of high school and my Spring 2015 - 16 of my undergraduate career.

*To be black as my body  
Is to be black as the berry  
As the forbidden fruit is left to become rotten and to be forgotten  
It was not worthy of the pinkest of lips  
If the color of this purple is too dark,  
It might not have its spark  
To ignite this flame anymore*

High school was an extremely difficult place for me as a Black girl. I attended a predominantly white, Catholic high school where my entire experience stood out to me. This school was filled with rich white students who had things that I did not have. I realized how much I hated more than the high school. I hated I did not have a car to drive like everyone. I hated that my mom could barely afford the school uniform and barely the tuition of the school. I hated that I did not fit in, I could not relate to these privileged students. In addition, I hated that I stood out as one of the few Black girls in that would be in their graduating class. After being at the school for a year and a half, I remember my mom and I sat in the principal's office. He explained to my mom and I that since she could not pay for the tuition of the school, I had to "transfer." At the time, I did not understand the larger scope of the situation (or recognize how the systems of racism and classism were operating in that situation), but I felt conflicted as I developed a sense of belonging in my non-belonging. I question myself then and now, "what would it mean for me to leave this school? What would it have met for me to stay?" I recognized I did not belong at the school but leaving the school would further solidify that reality. I just made friends at this school! Surely, I could tough out this awful experience of wealth disparities, internal identity conflict, and have a "normal" high school life. If I left, it would be further prove I did not belong in this upper middle-class facade. As a result, I transferred in the middle of my sophomore year of high school to a new school in Oklahoma City.

This new high school was filled with Black and Brown students, which should have been a relief to me but my internalized hatred for my Black identity was already

intensified from my brief time at the white, Catholic high school. I did not want to be like *those Black people*. I was *better than that*. I was not a *ghetto Black girl*. I wanted to distance myself from them and as a result, my friend group was predominantly white as I tried to hold on to the idea that I was not *that type of Black girl*. I did not exactly fit with the Black students at my school and I did not exactly fit with my predominantly white friend group either. At this new high school, the comments I heard were the following: *You talk SO white. You're not like those Black people. Why do you do that to your hair?* And everything in between. Again, trying not to stand out, I kept my hair tied down or straightened, kept my head down and mouth shut on the outside. But on the inside, I realized that these comments boiled under my skin. I did not have the language to explain what I was feeling. I knew I disagreed with these comments but I did not know (or understand) the larger implications of these comments. Until my senior of high school, I discovered feminism... I learned about feminism and Black feminism. This interest in feminism bubbled in my brain as I applied for college and attended the University of Oklahoma, where I took my first Women's and Gender Studies class.

*To be black as this body  
Is to be black as onyx  
The blackest of black  
The complexion does not lack  
Find the imperfections of this stone  
And you will fail to find a fault*

Feminism intrigued me. The ideologies resonated in the wrinkles of my brain. Feminism provided me clarity that I did not have before. I knew systemic oppression but I did not have the words for it. I knew whiteness and supremacy but I did not have the

language for it. I wanted to understand more after I took my introductory class in Women's and Gender Studies. Through this understanding of this course and I took more classes in Women's and Gender Studies and African American Studies. Through this process of learning about feminism, and soon learning about Black feminism, it affected how I viewed my Black identity. In my two years into attending the university, I wore my hair natural in its afro. This embodiment of my identity through my hair meant so much to me after wearing my hair straightened or restricted in ponytails. This display of my Blackness was my first step to acceptance of me as a whole. I recognized and understood the problematic nature of the comments that I heard in high school, I seethed at wealth disparities that hinder the social mobility of Black and Brown families, and I was angry Black people were dying at the hands of police brutality. The anger I felt as a younger age was hot because it took me so long to recognize these disparities and discrimination, but this anger has cooled now. When I *woke* up to understand the significance and the importance of my Blackness, I fully embraced my identity. In Spring 2015, I took an expository writing class based in Women's and Gender Studies and I wrote a poem about womanism and feminism. It was the catalyst to dive back into poetry as I enjoyed reading and writing so much in high school. The poem weaving in and out of this preface was written to affirm my Blackness and womanness, *For You Colored Girl*. This poem was the necessary outlet for me to discover and appreciate my Black identity as I write this, I recall the feeling of relief I felt writing this poem. I was proud and full writing this poem because the state of me loving myself and Blackness was the beginning of the journey of embracing myself.



This process of my self-(re)discovery of my Blackness led me to further question what made someone Black enough in the Black community. This questioning of my identity led me to inquire about how other Black women understood their identities in the communities they interacted with and in. This phenomenon of “Black enough” made me question who is welcomed in Black communal spaces and how Black people navigated white dominated academic communities while still retaining their Blackness in these spaces.

*To be black as this body  
Is to be black as the skin of Sojourner Truth  
Ain't I a Woman?  
Ain't We Colored Women?  
Ain't I a Colored Girl  
In a white man's world?  
To be black as my body  
Is to be black as the pupils of Sandra Bland  
We don't forget your presence on this Earth.  
I remember you.*

*To black as my body  
As to be black as the poplar leaves  
Swinging in the winds of trees  
Ain't no Holidays going to save you from crooked streets  
These dark streets with no lights  
Only the sounds of terror to police you*

*To be black as my body  
Is the be black as my nappy hair sprouting from the roots of my head  
4C never looked so damn beautiful before  
To be black as my body  
Is to love the black body  
With it shades of espressos,  
Cocoas,  
Hazelnuts,  
Mochas,  
And honeys.*

*To be black as my body  
Is to be black as the panther  
That uplifts my black voice,  
Black soul,  
And Black thoughts  
To prowl through the jungle of thorns  
Finding its way to the kingdom*

*For colored girls,  
to be black as my body  
Is to be black as my skin  
Because the ultra-violet rays reflect  
The radiance everywhere...  
This blackness of your body is gold.  
Brilliant gold.*

*But your skin is woven like the constellations.  
Your skin is the purest onyx  
Your skin is the royal purple*

*For you colored girl.*

## **CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION**

Black women faculty members hold a unique positionality at white dominated institutions (WDI) (Ashlee et al 2017) due to the paucity of the population on campuses and their experiences with discrimination (Behar-Horenstein et al. 2012, C. Jones 2006, Patitu and Hinton 2003, Pittman 2012, Walkington 2017). Black women faculty are subjected to discrimination due to their racial and gender identities, which hinders their mobility on their respective campuses and departments. Universities make the experiences of Black women faculty members hypervisible because these women are not afforded with proper work conditions, such as mentorship, equitable departmental resources, and departmental support to thrive in their academic and personal pursuits (Patitu and Hinton 2003, C. Jones 2006, Walkington 2017).

After observing the research focusing on how these Black women faculties navigate the academy due to their racial and gender identities, my research addresses the issue of how discrimination on campuses potentially affects Black women faculty's identities. In addition, I elucidate how Black women faculty members' identities have significant relationships with their Black communities and its' members that assist in supporting these Black women faculty in their continued journey within the academy.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Black women faculty members have a unique positionality in their Black communal space and academic spaces (Collins 1986, 2002). Due to their status in both communities, Black women navigate the perceptions of their race, class, and gender

identities while also addressing the perceptions of their Blackness in both spaces (Griffin 2006, R. Jones, 2006, Webb et al 2018). Black women faculty members have discussed feelings of isolation, invisibility (Bernard et al 2017, Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, Walkington 2017), microaggressions, and other forms of racial and gender discrimination (Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, C. Jones 2006, Patitu and Hinton 2003, Pittman 2012, Walkington 2017) in their respective academic institutions. Moreover, in their Black home communities, Black women can be perceived as the “mule” due to their maternal hard work they performed for their families and other community members, which can be exploited and underappreciated (Collins 2002, 48). This idea of the “mule” can be observed in the academy as Black women faculty members engage in “other mothering,” or caring for Black students, are underpaid for their labor and professoriate status exploited for the sake of diversity (Collins 2000). Current research focused on Black women faculty members fails to address how these Black women’s identities are questioned and perceived in their Black communal and academic spaces due to their racial and gender identities in the framework of authenticity literature.

Through my thesis work, I focus explicitly on the perceptions of Black women faculty and how their racial identity could be observed as “authentically” or “inauthentically” Black in both academic and Black communal realms. In addition, I hope this thesis work fills the gap within the research of Black women faculty and their navigation of their communal spaces and how they are perceived in these communal spaces. Though terminology of Black “authenticity” and “inauthenticity” are subjective in how they are perceived, but both definitions engage in whether the Black women is

perceived “true” or “untrue” to their Black identity (R. Jones 2006). In hopes to address the perceptions of “authenticity” and “inauthenticity,” I utilize a qualitative approach through interviews to allow my participants to recount their experiences in both their Black communal and academic spaces while also discussing the authenticity or inauthenticity of their Blackness.

In addition to the understanding of Black (in)authenticity, R. Jones (2006) and Nguyen and Anthony (2012) present their work in the context of the United States to acknowledge and address Black (in)authenticity in relation to whiteness, white supremacy and negative stereotypes that affect the navigation of Black community members. Explicitly, (in)authenticity in this study is centralized in the context of the United States and this research highlights how Black Americans and African immigrants understand their racial (in)authenticity in the context of whiteness and white supremacy. I provide this context of this study because the construct of Blackness is global and affects the navigation of non-United States citizens as well as United States born Black people. I acknowledge the idea of racial (in)authenticity might not be transferable to other Black non-United States countries. As a result, I hope this study may illuminate how participants, Black Americans and African immigrants, contextualize and understand the conception of “(in)authenticity.”

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this research is analyzing how Black women faculty navigate the conceptions of authenticity and inauthenticity in the Black community and discrimination within academia. My research inquires how Black women faculty understand the concept of being “inauthentic,” in relation to being “bougie,” or “acting white,” which could be mediated through educational and class differences in predominantly Black spaces. My research also queries whether Black women faculty experience racism, sexism, and/or microaggression on a predominantly white campus and how these women cope with these experiences. Lastly, I am interested in the relationships Black women faculty members form academically and non-academically to support themselves in both communities.

This conception of authenticity in the framing of my research will highlight the unique positionality of Black women faculty navigating predominantly white academia while also interacting within the Black community. In addition to Black women navigating and understanding their positionality in these spaces, I am also interested in further defining how racial “authenticity” and “inauthenticity” affects the perceptions of this population (R. Jones, 2006). I explore Patricia Hill Collins’s (2002) *Black Feminist Thought* and W.E.B DuBois’s (1903) coining of the term “double consciousness” to understand how Black women navigate their positionality and how they are perceived and perceive themselves in the academic and home communities.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The findings of this study contribute to the growing research of Black women faculty at predominately white institutions and how this demographic of professionals are plagued with discrimination. Through this research, I hope to understand not only how Black women faculty navigate these hindrances in their academic communities but also how they find support in their Black communities. In addition to these factors addressed in this research, I also focus on how racial and gender identities play a significant role in how Black women faculty are perceived as well as how they perceive themselves. This research also establishes a connection between racial authenticity and higher education fieldwork to address how racial and gender identities are significant and relevant to how Black women faculty embrace their professional identities. As a result, the findings of this study contribute to how Black women faculty embrace their racial and gender identities in academic and Black communities while also combating racial and gender discrimination within their institutions.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Collins (1986) highlights the significance of experiences and subjectivities of Black women in her work as she defines the “outsider within” status. This “outsider within” status “[provides] a special standpoint on self, family, and society for Afro-American women,” which is relevant to the ideologies of Black feminism (Collins 1986, 14). Furthermore, the work of Collins (1986, 2002) and Combahee River Collective (1977) emphasize the importance of Black women’s experiences and their significance to

my research to due to their unique cultural identities. Both researchers address the history of Black women's marginalization in predominantly white women's organizations and Black men's organizations and Black women sought to develop spaces for their own purposes (Combahee River Collective 1977, 211). But these works represent the ultimate claim that Black women's experiences and mobility in society are valuable and important within a research framework as well. Through the themes Collins highlights in her work, the central themes within the epistemology of Black feminism stresses the importance of Black women's self-validation and definition of their identities, the presence of oppression and discrimination Black women are subjected to, and lastly, the importance of Black women's cultural and gender identities (Collins 1986, 2002). These tenets of Black feminism provide insight for my research inquiries and guide me to better understand how Black women faculty members navigate their academic and Black communal spaces.

Through this research, I hope to re-center the voices of Black women as faculty and community members by understanding their experiences, perceptions of themselves, and how others perceive them. The process of recentering the voices of Black women is historical and ever needed as the Combahee River Collective (1977) explain in their work, "It was [Black women's] experience and disillusionment within these liberation movements, and well as experience on the periphery of the white male left, that led to the need to develop a politics of that was anti-racist, unlike those of white women, and anti-sexist, unlike those of Black and white men" (Combahee River Collective 1977, 211). I stress the recentering these voices for this thesis work because the experiences of Black



women tend to be overlooked or under-researched due to structural discrimination and oppression that erases the visibility of Black women in a societal and academic scope. Thus, the utilization of Black feminism for this thesis allows me to acknowledge the experiences of Black women in an academic and Black communal setting, emphasize the common experiences of this population, and shift the narratives of discussion within an academic setting to focus on the tribulations of Black women faculty members. In addition to the use of Black feminism, I also draw on the research and framework of racial (in)authenticity literature. Through, this use of this literature to support the cultural importance of the Black identity and how that identity is perceived. Through the lens of authenticity, I provide a connection with the conceptions of double consciousness and Black feminism to understand how Black women faculty member navigate their Black communal spaces alongside the white academy. Through the questioning of authenticity, I encourage Black women faculty to engage in introspection as a means to understand their sense of selves as Black women and the subjectivity of the identity of Blackness.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To accomplish these goals, I ask three core research questions, for Black women faculty at a public, research-intensive PWI:

1. Have they experienced racism, sexism, and/or microaggressions on campus?
  - a. How do they describe their experiences?
  - b. How do they cope?

- c. How do they practice self-care?
2. How do they define “(in)authenticity”?
  - a. Have they been perceived as “(in)authentic” within their campus communities? If so, how has this impacted them?
  - b. Have they been perceived as “(in)authentic” within their non-academic communities? If so, how has this impacted them?
3. If at all, how have their personal relationships changed as a result of their education?
  - a. If at all, how does double consciousness operate in their professional and personal lives?

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

These definitions are provided to ensure clarity and consistency through my thesis and will appear frequently through this work:

**Authenticity:** R. Jones 2006 describes this term as “being one’s self” and explains that “the ‘authentic’ individual [is someone] who has been aroused from everyday concern... Takes responsibility for their life and thereby ‘choose’ their own identity” (R. Jones 2006, 196).

**Black Communal Space** (Also described as Black Community, Black Home Community, Black Communal Academic Space): Members of Black America and/or African immigrant who are citizens of the United States of America. Also, they are

citizens of the states, counties, cities, and municipalities in which they reside (Henry 1995).

**Code Switching:** “Process of shifting from one linguistic code (a language or dialect) to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting.” (Morrison 2017).

**Double Consciousness:** A term developed by W.E.B DuBois, which describes “the individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts.

DuBois developed this conception to describe the Black American experience (Understanding W.E.B. Du Bois’ Concept of Double Consciousness).

**Inauthenticity:** R. Jones 2006 defines this term as “the bad faith of self-negation in the appropriation of pseudo-selves, white masks, for immediate survival, or even worse, for dominance” (R. Jones 2006, 200). This term can also be adjacent to “acting” and/or “talking White, (Webb et al 2018) or being considered a “sell-out” (Griffin 2016).

**Intersectionality:** Kimberle Crenshaw explains this term as, “[her] objective to illustrate the many experiences Black women face are not subsumed in the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women’s lives in way that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately” (Crenshaw 1994, 1244).

**Social Mobility** (Related terms upward, downward, horizontal mobilities): Movement of individuals, families, or group through a system of social hierarchy or stratification (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014).

## **DELIMITATION/LIMITATIONS**

The delimitations of this study ensured participants exclusively identified as Black, as women, and were employed full-time at a white-dominated, public, research-intensive campus as full-time faculty members and/or instructors. Individuals who did not meet these criteria were not included in this study. In addition to these delimitations, this study was conducted at a single site university in the South. This research site will not be disclosed in this study due to the paucity of Black women faculty at the university. This research hosted at a single institution ensures consistency and control of research/participant environment, thus developing more nuance and depth in my participant findings. In addition, this lack of disclosure will further protect the identities of Black women faculty in this study.

Since this research is focused on the experiences of Black women faculty members, there are several limitations. The sample size of the population is not representative of Black women faculty members at all public research universities, or even all Black women at the institution site. The findings cannot be generalized for all Black women faculty members at all public institutions of higher education. In addition, the experiences of Black women faculty members in this single site study likely are not transferable to the experiences of faculty members at historically Black universities or minority-serving institutions or faculty members who are of different racial/ethnicities or genders (Lowe 2018). Findings may be transferable, but they should be considered in light of the specific context in which these phenomena were studied.

## CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

### BLACKITY BLACK: (IN)AUTHENTICALLY BLACK

Even though there are more Black women receiving higher degrees and entering the ranks of professors than ever before in our nation's history, we are still likely to be seen as intruders in the academic world who do not really belong. (hooks 2010, 101)

African Americans should 'rearticulate the basis for collective bonding' or Black solidarity that neither presupposes an ideal of the 'authentic' Black identity nor leads one to internalize white hegemonic conceptions of 'Black authenticity'" - bell hooks (R. Jones 2006, 200)

In the research and analysis of higher education and the academy focused on Black women faculty members, there is a paucity of research focused on the Black "authenticity" and "inauthenticity" of Black women in their communities and in the academy. This idea of (in)authenticity interrogates how Black women faculty reflect on how their Black identities in academic and non-academic environments are perceived and how members of both communities help Black women faculty understand themselves. In this thesis, I contribute to the literature placing Black (in)authentic in conversation with Black feminism in the context of higher education to elucidate how Black women faculty understand their Black identity. Through this section, I address the current literature of "authentic" and "inauthentic" Blackness as well as address how the intersections of Black women faculty member's identities may contribute to these perceptions.

### **Authentically Black**

R. Jones (2006) begins his work with the questions, "Can one live *Blackness* authentically?" and he later questions in his work, "What is 'authenticity'?" (R. Jones 2006, 195 - 196). R. Jones. describes "authenticity" as a 'being one's self' and further explains this conception of "the 'authentic' individual [is someone] who has been aroused

from everyday concerns by Angst, takes responsibility for their life and thereby ‘chooses’ their own identity” (R. Jones 2006, 196). This definition of Black authenticity highlights the malleability of the Black identity and due to this malleability, it exposes the subjectivity of Blackness. Nguyen and Anthony (2014) provide a similar definition of Black authenticity as R. Jones but these researchers express how Blackness is perceived as “‘real or ‘true’ for cultural products and individuals’ identities.” This definition explains how true Blackness must be recognized and accepted by the Black community as a whole. The researchers further explain “Black authenticity includes ideas and expectations that affect what it means to “‘be Black’ in relation to personal, public, and cultural identities” (Nguyen and Anthony 2014, 770). Both definitions acknowledge how Black community members can define their own Black identity for themselves but these identities can also be perceived and perpetuated in Black communal spaces thus emphasizing Black authenticity.

Though the definitions of “Black authenticity” are personally subjective for each individual, Nguyen and Anthony (2014) address an additional nuance in Black authenticity by observing how the images of Blackness are constructed due to the negative stereotypical imagery of the Black community and/or how these applications of Black authenticity are developed for white consumption and respectability (Nguyen and Anthony 2014, 771). Nguyen and Anthony extrapolate in their work the perception of Black women embodying the stereotypes, such as being “hypersexualized Jezebels” and “welfare queens,” are detrimental representations for Black women to be perceived as, especially by those in non-Black communities. In addition to these implications of

stereotypical imagery permeating the subjectivity of Black authenticity, both Hopkins (2012) and R. Jones (2006) further challenge the idea that Black authenticity must equate to Black poverty. These researchers acknowledge that the lived experience of poverty cannot be generalized for an entire racial community just as the stereotypical caricatures cannot be imposed on the entire Black community (Hopkins 2006, 959). These images in these works expose how social status and stereotypical imagery of the Black community mediates Black authenticity and similarly, limits the subjectivity of Blackness within the Black community.

Ultimately, Black authenticity is a subjective conception explored in the literature mentioned (R. Jones 2006, Hopkins 2012, Nguyen and Anthony 2014) and R. Jones (2006) further explains how “with the many ambiguities and changing definitions of ‘authenticity’ from external community ideals from which the subjective self-constructs identity, to internal self-examination by which the self ‘becomes’ itself...” (R. Jones 2006, 196). These nuances of Black identities create new subjectivities for the construction of Black authenticity research and exposes how both Black identity and authenticity is not monolithic. My thesis work further probes these questions of Black authenticity and identity through the experiences of Black women faculty at white dominant institutions. I ask participants to ruminate on how their authentic Blackness is challenged in white dominated institutions and how their identities as Black women affect their mobility in these academic spaces, especially concerning their race, class, and gender. The interview questions that I pose assist my understanding of how their Black

communal and academic spaces in conjunction with their personal identities affect their Black authenticity and/or inauthenticity.

### **Black-ish: Inauthentically Black<sup>2</sup>**

Though the literature of Black authenticity creates a nuanced and subjective identity for members in the Black community, the nuances in Black identity could lead an individual to be perceived as “inauthentic” in the Black community. R. Jones (2006) defines Black inauthenticity as “is the bad faith of self-negation in the appropriation of pseudo-selves, white masks, for immediate survival, or even worse, for dominance” (R. Jones 2006, 200). This definition and perceptions expose Black inauthenticity as adjacent to whiteness, which is quite notable in class differences in the Black community. Collins (2002) provides the testimonial of Leanita McClain’s explaining how she is “not comfortably middle class, [she is] uncomfortably middle class. I have made it, but where?” (Collins 2002, 61). This intersection of class is significant in my research due to Black women faculty member’s class and social mobility in their professions. Through the interviews with these professionals, I seek to understand if class differences and social mobility creates a difference in their navigation in their Black communal spaces.

The theme of Black women distancing themselves from the marker of middle-classness reoccurs in the work of Maylor and Williams (2011). These researchers desire to define middle-classness and how it can be inherently white but, in addition, the

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<sup>2</sup> The title of this section is based on the television show, *Black-ish*. This show depicts “a family man [who] struggles] to gain a sense of cultural identity while raising his kids in a predominantly white, upper-middle class neighborhood” (Black-Ish)



researchers question the conception of Black middle-classness. In the conception of middle-classness in the work of Maylor and Williams' work, there is a belief that identifying in that socioeconomic group that "'middle-class' people considering themselves 'better than,' and wanting to have 'an advantage over' other people" (Maylor and William 2011, 351). Furthering this discussion of middle-classness, the participants of the study argued that, "Black people who saw themselves as 'better than' other Black people usually moved from multi-ethnic neighborhoods (such as in London where most of the participants lived) to reside in [w]hite suburban communities" (Maylor and William, 351). The researchers, later, discuss how those Black women and families reap the societal and educational benefits of middle-classness through the denial of this privilege of socioeconomic status. This perception of being 'better than other Black people' adheres to R. Jones' definition of the "white mask," and how Black women and families' perceived proximity to whiteness creates a tension within Black communities, especially from those in working-class backgrounds. Due to these accesses to class and educational privileges, Nguyen and Anthony (2014) also express, "transitions to higher education also bring forth challenges for Black students; being both highly visible marginalized can lead to a sense of "Black alienation." These transitions can be a threat to "authenticity and a sense of selfhood." (Nguyen and Anthony 2014, 775). This discussion of being perceived as "better than" other individuals, social class differences, and isolation is highlighted through my interview questions. These discussions from the researchers elucidate questions I raised in my interviews when asking if Black women have been considered "bougie," or relating to the French social class of Bourgeoisie and

their social difference between peasants. Through these questions probing class differences, I learn how these social differences affect the mobility of these Black women faculty members and if they acknowledge their privileges in their academic communities and how they are perceived in their Black communal spaces.

Further observing these tensions of intersecting identities within the Black community, Black women faculty members may express the relevance of the DuBoisian conception, “double consciousness,” which describes “the individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts” (Understanding W.E.B. Du Bois’ Concept of Double Consciousness). Addressing the intersectional experiences of race, class, and gender within the Black community and its impact on Black women, this research exposes the significance of identity as a recurring theme throughout the works of the researchers previously mentioned. Double consciousness further explains “since Black Americans have lived in a society that has historically repressed and devalued them.... It has become difficult for them to unify their Black identity with their American identity” (Understanding W.E.B. Du Bois’ Concept of Double Consciousness). DuBois’s explanation of double consciousness depicts how Black individuals experience their identities within their communities and how they express their identities in the midst of white communities, or for the sake of this thesis, white academic communities. A Black individual’s presence in either community could expose how they attempt to be observed as “acceptable” within both communities. Furthermore, the ability of Black women faculty to navigate both of these communities, the authenticity of these individuals are questioned in their navigation of these environments.

## **TO BE BLACK, WOMAN, AND FACULTY**

“Work might be better conceptualized by examining the range of work that Black women actually physically perform. Work as alienated labor can be economically exploitative, physically demanding, and intellectually deadening - the type of work long associated with Black women’s status as “mule.” Alienated labor can be either paid, as was the case of domestic service, or unpaid, as was Black women’s work under slavery or as is some work within families.” (Collins 2002, 48)

### **Education as Equalizer and Mobility**

Education attempts to create an egalitarian environment to allow all students from all demographics to obtain and to achieve their future careers. Bowles and Gintis (2011) cite theorist Dewey explaining how education has the potential “to see to it that each individual sets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living with a broader environment” (Bowles and Gintis 2011, 56). This assumes that education has the potentiality to equalize the field for marginalized communities to succeed in society. Bowles and Gintis highlight that education was established to create “social equality” according to liberal theory of education and later, the researchers cite a modern liberal view expressing how education lacks equity for the impoverished communities because these communities do not have access to job training and compensatory education. These researchers also highlight discrimination against impoverished communities by explaining how poverty and inequality are perceived as a personal choice for individuals (Bowles and Gintis 2011, 56). These assertions fail to address the issue of social inequalities due to the systematic disenfranchisement of Black and other marginalized communities who attempt to gain access into the system of education. Moreover, excluding systematic structures and

histories of oppression within American society fails to highlight how slavery, discrimination, and racism disrupted the mobility of marginalized communities.

McCandless (1992) further articulates how the presence of systemic structures and their effects on the advancement and mobility of Black communities, especially Black women, by addressing slavery. McCandless highlights how the disenfranchisement of the Black community in the United States and slaveholders denied the enslaved access to education to decrease the event of rebellion on the plantation (McCandless 1992, 453). Even after the emancipation of the enslaved, the caricatures and stereotypes of the Black communities insinuated that the communities were inept in the educational sphere. The Antebellum South continues to affect the educational mobility of Black women, especially after they began receiving access to higher education and faculty positions. Though Black women faculty and students alike had access to higher education, this demographic was still “limited by law to all-Black institutions,” at the beginning of the 20th century (McCandless 1992, 453). As Black women began their pursuit into higher education, it is observed how the remnants of discrimination and impositions of stereotypes continue to affect the mobility of Black women faculty members, especially due to the current research site in a post-Antebellum Southern location.

### **Discrimination within the Workplace, Classrooms, and Academia**

Black women faculty have expressed their struggles with racism, sexism, heterosexism, microaggressions, and feelings of inadequacies within academia. In this research, there are central themes of isolation, hypervisibility, and invisibility with each

testimonial of Black women faculty members (Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, Bernard et al 2017, Walkington 2017). Researchers have highlighted these issues by examining microaggressions within classrooms (Pittman 2012), the development of imposter syndrome (Bernard et al 2017), and lack of diversity and tokenism in institutions (C. Jones 2006). Collins's (1986) concept of the "outsider within" is important when describing the nuances of Black women faculty's experiences in the academy as an "outsider" due to their racial and gender identity, but are "insiders" because their professoriate status and access to workplace (i.e. insurance) and research benefits. In addition, Black women within the workplace occupy the same space as their white men colleagues but not with the same credibility and privilege. In addition to this outsider status, Black women also navigate the intersections of gender, race, and class within workplaces. Collin's cites Dill as she explains, "identifying as Black or female is a product of patriarchal strategy to divide and conquer and the continued importance of class, patriarchal strategy, racial divisions, perpetuate such choices both within our consciousness within the concrete realities of our daily lives" (Collins 1986, 521). Dill highlights how the intersections of being a Black woman and faculty member creates a unique experience for these women. Hotchkins (2017) further elaborates on this experience of being an "outsider within" by expressing how Black women faculty are subjected to "double jeopardy" because this demographic has a "more likely [chance] to be the target of oppression due to being both Black and women" (Hotchkins 2017, 144). Hotchkins explains that this type of oppression Black women experiences within the

institution as “gendernoir” articulating the “nuanced experiences of racial battle fatigue” (Hotchkins 2017, 145).

The reoccurrence of the concepts “outsider within” and “gendernoir” is reflected in the experiences of Black women faculty as they explore navigate negative interactions with students and colleagues. As a result, the fraught diversity efforts to include Black women faculty and overt discrimination significantly affects the mobility of these professors (Behar-Horenstein et al. 2012, C. Jones 2006, Pittman 2012, Patitu and Hinton 2003, Walkington 2017). Pittman (2012) explains in her research how the prevalence of interpersonal racial oppression emphasizes how the interactions with discrimination create a significant amount of stress mentally and physically for Black faculty members (Pittman 2012, 82). These racist interactions or microaggressions Black women faculty engage with invalidate their work and presence such as an overtly racial interaction (microinvalidations), using racial slurs (microassaults), and/or covert interactions (microinsults) (Pittman 2012, 83). Pittman explains these types of microaggressions exist at each facet of Black women faculty’s experiences in academia. She highlights how “[w]hite colleagues commented that African American faculty members were unqualified affirmative action hires” (microinsult) and the classroom interactions with “[w]hite students by challenging the authority and credibility of Black faculty (microinvalidation)” (Pittman 2012, 84). These interactions Black women faculty experience depicts the complexity of their positions within the institution. In these interactions and experiences presented by Collins 1986, Hotchkins 2017, Pittman 2012 discuss the themes of isolation and alienation Black women experience due to race and gender discrimination.

The lack of diversity and the presence of discrimination in academia is an ongoing issue documented in the research mentioned and furthermore, these researchers expose how the issue of diversity has yet to be solved at an institutional level (C. Jones 2006, Patitu and Hinton 2003, Walkington 2017). This issue further questions what institutions are doing to provide support for Black women faculty. Explicitly, Walkington (2017) addresses initiatives attempting to “diversify” the student, faculty, and administrative positions fail to distinguish the needs of Black women faculty and other faculties of color in the pursuit of diversity work. Patitu and Hinton (2003) highlights how Black women attempt to gain promotions while racism and sexism hinder this progression within the institution. The authors explain that “race [of Black women faculty members] was more salient in their efforts to retain their positions and seek promotions” (Patitu and Hinton 2003, 81). The saliency of race affects the hiring pool for faculty of color as Patitu and Hinton cite Sagaria (2002) explaining how Black faculty and other faculties of colors are filtered from job searches and hiring pools (Patitu and Hinton 2003, 80).

The results of eliminating Black faculty and faculty of color is also acknowledged in the work of Patitu and Hinton (2003) as they provide an example from Lemon State University explaining how “there were not female vice presidents, deans, associate deans, or assistant deans: they are all [w]hite males” (Patitu and Hinton 2003, 81). In other words, covert racist and sexist ways of hiring and promoting reinforces power dynamics benefiting white men within academia while failing to engage in diversify various tiers of the institution. C. Jones’ (2006) research, though focused in the United Kingdom, offers a

similar sentiment presented by Patitu and Hinton (2003) and other researchers by expressing “Black women academics have not attained the progressive benefits that have accrued to [w]hite women in the wake of gender equality initiatives and directives.... Black women academics are still trailing behind [w]hite female colleagues in pay and promotions” (C. Jones 2006, 149). C. Jones mentions the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000 (RRRAA) as a means to “address institutional racism and often severe disadvantages that flow from racial inequality” (C. Jones 2006, 150). This amendment sought to highlight the inequity Black women faculty members experience in their careers. But the issue that arises in the passage of this amendment because “getting employers to *accept* cultural diversity in the workforce is better than enforcing affirmative action policies because diversity promotes choice and delivers economic impact” (C. Jones 2006, 150). This amendment hopes to create a culturally competent work environment for Black faculty and faculty of color; but instead, any diversity initiatives like the RRRAA could be seen only as “survival economically” for the sake of higher education and the institution (C. Jones 2006, 151). Ultimately, these attempts at diversifying the institutions fail to be perceived as a necessity for the promotion of the academy and women of color faculties.

In these attempts to gain equity and diversity with the institutions, there is a question of “how far have we come?” posed by Walkington (2017) through the analysis of Black women faculty members. Walkington cites Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) expressing that “Black women’s labor as faculty is both the cheapest and least valued” (Walkington 2017, 39). This statement is a consistent idea throughout the other works I



have mentioned in this section. In conjunction with microaggressions, racism, discrimination, lack of diversity initiatives, and Black women's work and labor perceived as undervalued and underappreciated exposes a relationship between discrimination and perceptions of Black women faculty's labor. Walkington (2017) also highlights how Black women occupy the "outsider within" status mentioned by Collins in these spaces of the institution and the classroom. Understanding the mental and emotional toll Black women faculty experience, this issue calls into question what type of support Black women faculty members have at their institutions. In this next section, I will expose the lack of support systems and mentoring Black women are subjected to and, as a result, I will also examine the coping mechanisms they develop as they navigate institutional spaces.

### **How Do Black Faculty Women Cope?**

As mentioned, Black women faculty are subjected to racial, microaggressions, and stereotyping within their classrooms and institution. As a means for Black women faculty to survive in these spaces, it is important for these women to develop coping mechanisms to resist these negative and continue to thrive in hostile conditions. Walkington (2017) mentions the importance of resistance in her work by explaining "resistance range[s] from interpersonal mentorship to call from departmental and campus-wide policy change" (Walkington 2017, 57). For example, if a Black woman faculty member lacks representation within her department, she could find solace in other departmental and non-departmental networks to find support for her pedagogies,

research, and even, personally. In this section, this research calls attention to the experiences of Black women faculty members' isolation, invisibility, lack of support, and belonging in academia. Additionally, this section explores the impact of racism on Black women faculty, what mentality Black women faculty members develop to navigate discrimination, and themes of survival and resistance highlighted in these works.

Bernard et al. (2017) focus on the mental health of Black students when faced with racial and gender discrimination within the institution. Bernard et al. explain the issue of “racial discrimination may increase vulnerabilities for feelings of imposter syndrome by decreasing self-esteem and self-efficacy” (Bernard et al. 2017, 155). In addition to the extent of racial discrimination, Bernard et al. extrapolate how “women may be more susceptible to internalizing imposter syndrome” (Bernard et al 2017, 155). These issues are parallel to the experiences of Black women faculty members, such as feelings of isolation, tokenism, and lack of belonging within academic and institutional spaces (Behar-Horenstein et al. 2012, C. Jones 2006, Walkington 2017). Black women faculty members also experience the symptoms of imposter syndrome within the institution, especially mentioned by Dade et al (2015) citing a participant explaining, “no matter how many successes we experience as Black women, it is hard to escape ‘imposter syndrome’” (Dade et al 2015, 137). This testimonial of Black women faculty and Black students combating imposter syndrome by Bernard et al (2017) expose the impact has a significant effect on how Black academia communities perceive themselves as ‘not belonging in the academia’ for a multitude of reasons.

Due to the underrepresentation of Black women faculty, Behar-Horenstein et al. (2012) mention the importance of mentoring, specifically cross-culturally. Behar-Horenstein et al. notice the importance of cross-culturally mentoring to establish “trust between the mentor and the protégé, acknowledge racism, monitoring visibility and risk pertinent to minority faculty, articulating power and paternalism within the institution, highlighting benefits to mentors and mentees, and lastly, discussing the unacknowledged racial dynamics in mentor relationships” (Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, 71). Though these aspects of cross-cultural mentorship are important, this type of mentorship must be critical addressing interracial and/or interdepartmental relations, especially in institutions with a lack of Black women faculty mentors. In addition to an orchestrated mentorship program, another method of coping discussed in Patitu and Hinton’s (2003) work is how Black women faculty members relied on support networks within their religious faith and Black women family members to cope with discrimination and devaluation (Patitu and Hinton 2003, 84). These non-academic support groups mentioned stress the importance of developing supportive networks for Black women, especially when there is an absence of Black women in an academic community. Moreover, the presence of Black women mentors is “crucial for the professional socialization and personal success of both Black women faculty and graduate students” (Patitu and Hinton 2003, 57).

Behar-Horenstein et al (2012) highlight themes of survival, resilience, and resistance within Black women faculty members while they navigate white academic and institutional spaces at large. The researchers explain “because [Aisha, a vice provost for student development] experienced much of that racism and sexism characteristic of the

others' experiences, she has had to learn coping and survival technique to preserve her sense of personhood and sense of purpose" (Behar-Horenstein et al. 2012, 83). The acts of surviving, resisting, and being resilient are coping mechanisms assisting Black women faculty to create space for themselves and as mean to navigate being/feeling underappreciated, overworked, and overlooked within the classroom and workspaces. In addition, this coping is a means to combat the internalized discrimination Black women faculty experience in their workplaces. This type of 'resilient' mentality is important for Black women to survive in these spaces but also it is imperative to note as self-care and mental health check-up as mentioned by other researchers.

Walkington (2017) mentions the importance of empowerment through her inclusion of Black feminism. She cites "importance of self-definition, the significance of self-evaluation and respect, the necessity of self-reliance, and independence, and the centrality of a changed self to personal empowerment" are key methods to ensure Black women faculty are able to retain their "sense of personhood and sense of purpose," explained in Behar-Horenstein's (2012) work. The development of these themes Black women faculty embrace through mentoring and being mentored as Walkington (2017) explains as a strategy of resistance against racism as a means of affirming oneself and others (Walkington 2017, 58). In addition to affirmations, Walkington (2017) highlights the importance of "speaking truth to power," as a means of validating the experiences of discrimination rather than silencing and dismissing those experiences.

## **(IN)AUTHENTICITY AND THE ACADEMY**

By design [academy] is not a humanizing place. Ask yourself how much you are willing to bare and risk remembering that we never get ourselves back in full when racism, and for you, racism and sexism and heterosexism, strike their target. (Griffin 2016, 374)

Understanding the unique positionality Black women faculty members assume in the institution and in the Black community, this population combats not only the discrimination within the institution but also how they navigate their perceptions in the Black community. The status of Black women's professorship has multiple perceptions in either community as the intersection of their race, gender, education, and class status could make them "not Black enough," or "acting [w]hite" (Webb et al. 2018). This conception of "not Black enough" could result in being or feeling removed from the Black community especially, in conjunction with working-class and non-traditionally educated Black community members (R. Jones 2006).

Further complicating the notions of Black inauthenticity and double consciousness, the conception of "acting [w]hite" provides an additional discussion of Black inauthenticity. Webb et al (2018) provide research located at a historically Black college (HBCU) to address to complications of "acting [w]hite" and to question its association with Black students and their achievement in their schooling (Webb et al 2018, 172). The negative conception of 'acting [w]hite' tend to create an isolating experience for Black students (Webb et al 2018, 175). Webb et al (2018) further explain the burden of 'acting [w]hite' is also due to "underrepresentation [which] can perpetuate stereotypes about minorities' intellectual abilities and the value of education in the Black community, or lack thereof" (Webb et al. 2018, 175).

Griffin (2016) presents her autoethnography under the pseudonym Dr. Eva Green, a Black biracial, bisexual professor, who analyzes her positionality as a tenure-track professor from a working-class background. Dr. Green ruminates over her positionality in the academy, after her interaction with a student, as she explains circumstances of “being challenged by [her] students” and further mentioning that “she was challenged in ways that her male of colleagues [was] not” (Griffin 2016, 370). In addition to her professorship and authority being challenged by her students, Dr. Green questions, “And why am I ‘mean’ or ‘in the brazen words of one past student ‘sellin’ out I see’ for academic truth?” (Griffin 2016, 370). These excerpts and among others in this work expose the continuous internal turmoil this Black woman professor undergoes in her interactions with her students and colleagues. Her “authentic Blackness” can be demonstrated through her desire to support and uplift the success of her Black students, Black representation, and research within the white space of academy. But her “inauthentic Blackness” can be observed in her positionality in the academic space, where she may to succumb and assimilate to the certain aspects of the academy. For the sake of this thesis, I interrogate how these experiences and interactions with students, faculty, and the academic environment affect Black women professors in their pursuit to the professoriate through their successes, promotion in the academy, and embracing their Blackness in white academic institutions.

## **White Academy, Black Community: Black Feminist Thought<sup>3</sup>**

Black women academicians' positions as outsiders within foster [a] reclamation process. Stimulated by the knowledge that the minds and talents of our grandmothers, mothers, and sisters have been suppressed, the task of reclaiming Black women's subjugated knowledge takes on special meaning for Black women intellectuals (Collins 2002, 13).

As I addressed in this literature review how Black women faculty have a unique positionality within the academy. The research discusses the experiences of Black women faculty members, the discussion of being “an outsider within” the academy. In the academy, Black women faculty member found themselves “[working] twice as hard to be considered half as good,” as they combat isolation, racial and gender discrimination (Behar-Horenstein et al, 2012, Bernard et al 2017, Collins 1986, Hotchkins 2017, Pittman 2012, Sule 2011). Due to the unique experiences of Black women faculty members in white academic spaces, this thesis relies heavily on the theoretical framework of Black feminism (Collins 2002, 22). Patricia Hill Collins explains the framework “encompasses theoretical interpretation of Black women’s reality by those who live it” as a means to understanding how Black women navigate their locality in the academy. Collins explains “throughout history of the United States, the interrelationship of white supremacy and male superiority has characterized the Black woman’s reality as a situation of struggle, a struggle to survive in two contradictory worlds simultaneously, one white, privileged, and oppressive, the other Black, exploited, and oppressed” (Collins 2002, 22). Using Black feminism to guide my thinking, I argue Black women experience the “interrelationship of

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<sup>3</sup> Title inspired by Martha Hodes’ 1999 book, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South*.

white supremacy and male superiority” in the white, male-dominated institutions to which Black women faculty members are appointed and experience challenges in how they navigate their appointments and positionality at their respective universities. Explicitly, Black feminism in the context of my research illuminates how Black women understand their Black identity in relation to the white, patriarchal society through the use of racial (in)authenticity. Racial (in)authenticity addresses how Black women perceive their identities in the multiple environments they engage in. In her work, *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins explicitly illuminates the idea of Black women’s consciousness to address the standpoint of Black women in their roles as mothers, educators, and community organizers. Collins illuminates the need of Black women’s consciousness in her work not only to emphasize the value of Black women’s intellect within Black feminism, but Collins also addresses how these theories and ideologies of Black women have a history of being silenced and invalidated.

Through this research, I devise a similar type of standpoint theory in the role of the Black woman as professors but I intervene by parsing out how Black women perceive their identities as “Black” through the framing of Black authenticity/inauthenticity. This idea of “Black in/authenticity” encouraged my participants to illuminate how they perceive and define their Blackness in the white-dominated academy as well as in non-academic Black dominated communities. Through this work, I anticipated to further elucidate how intersectional identities are understood in relation in the aforementioned environments. I continue this lineage that the idea of “Black in/authenticity” can be in



conversation with Black feminisms as a means to introspectively understand the Black identity.

In a similar vein, I investigate how Black women faculty navigate Black communal spaces, are perceived in these communities, and how they perceive themselves in these spaces. Even in the Black communities, Black women have a unique positionality as they are associated in domesticated and submissive roles. Collins cites the work of Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, as Hurston explains how Black women are treated like the “mule uh de world” (Collins 2002, 43). Through this analysis of Hurston’s work, Collins addresses the Black women’s oppression within the Black community. The oppression of Black women can be observed in unpaid family labor, underpaid work-labor, lower-class status, gender subordination, and racial oppression (Collins 2002, 44-45, Sutherland 1990, 21-22). Collins further discusses the intersections of Black women’s experiences by providing the testimony of Leanita McClain explaining her upward social mobility due to her employment McClain expresses, “I am a member of the Black middle class who has had it with being patted on the head by white hand and slapped in the face by Black hand for my success” (Collins 2002, 61). Referring to the labor, class status, and identity of Black women faculty members, the experience of McClain may not be unique to her but could provide an explanation of how Black women faculty experience and navigate their Black communities as well. In addition to the utilization of Black feminism to acknowledge white supremacy and superiority in their academic communities, I also contextualize how Black women are perceived due to their social status and professorship in their Black

communities. Through these analyses, I seek to understand Black women's perceptions of themselves and how their academic and non-academic communities perceive these Black women faculty, the saliency their identities as Black women, and the significance of Black authenticity and inauthenticity.

## CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

### OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was utilized for this study to examine the experience of Black women faculty members (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2007, Ragin et al. 2009). Qualitative theory can be seen as a methodological approach that helps the researcher gain a more “naturalistic, contextual, and holistic understanding of human beings in society” (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2007, 557). In addition, qualitative approach “stresses the relationship between the research and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 8). Explicitly, this methodological approach functions in my work is to observe how the social experience of Black women faculty interacting in academic and non-academic spaces affects how they understand and embody their racial identities. Furthermore, qualitative data provides the researcher means to articulate the rich descriptions of the social phenomena to demonstrate the nuanced possibilities of Black women in the academy to avoid generalizing these unique experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 9). In addition, qualitative data exposes the constraints of everyday life individuals interact with and for the sake of my research, I hope to understand how Black women faculty understand their racial identity in a predominantly white academic workspace while combating racism, sexism, and microaggressions (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 9).

The basic tenets of qualitative research involve “[seeking] detailed knowledge of specific cases, often with the goal of finding out ‘how’ things happen or happened,” “to make the facts understandable and often place less emphasis on deriving inferences or predictions from cross-case patterns,” and lastly, involves “in-depth, case-oriented study of relatively small number of cases” (Ragin et al. 2009, 10). These basic tenets of the qualitative approach highlight the inquiries of my research as I question *how* Black women faculty navigate their experiences with racism, sexism, and microaggression, *how* they perceived themselves through the lens of the concept of “authenticity” and “inauthenticity,” *how* they perceive any changes in their personal lives due to their educational pursuit, and lastly, *how* double consciousness operates in their lives at Black women faculty member.

In hopes to understand the answers to these research questions, I further explored the qualitative research design of an experience-centered narrative approach through interviewing, or storytelling. Narrative approach demonstrates how the quality of experience can be recorded to determine patterns of human interaction (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, 2). Through the process of interviewing, narration provides participants the opportunity to utilize and center their voice within the data collection through the act of storytelling. In this research, storytelling helps me better understand each Black women faculty’s experience within the academy (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, 4). Grele et al. (2016) further explains this approach as “texts which can bring stories of personal experience into being by [the] means of the first person may be fragmented and contradictory” and furthermore, narration as storytelling addresses “these lived and told

stories and talk about those stories are ways we create meaning in our lives and communities” (Clandinin 2006, 44). In addition, the act of storytelling among participants creates a “shared narrative unity” to better understand the commonality and frequency of experiences (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, 3). Ultimately, the purpose of narration demonstrates how human experiences can develop innovative theoretical frameworks such as the lens of “inauthenticity” in my work to observe racial identity perception within higher education (Connelly and Clandinin 1990).

The tenets of experience-centered narration highlight these recounts result in “human sensemaking” or how individuals make sense of their interactions and their world-views. The process of sensing making emphasizes the “special relationship between people and stories.” In addition to this point, the act of narration also “conveys experience through reconstituting it, resulting in multiple and changeable storylines” or these process recounting experiences allows the narrator to speak their truth about their livelihood. Lastly, the purpose of narration can be a transformative act, or these stories can provide “resolutions” to local and societal issues and through the use of stories can provide improvement to certain conditions (Grele et al. 2006, 43 - 45).

Experience-centered narration and storytelling demonstrate how phenomena and research methodologies can deepen the complexity of research narratives. (Clandinin 2006, 45). Through the use of storytelling, this qualitative approach highlights common phenomena that Black women faculty members experience at a predominantly white public research institution and acknowledges their perspectives in both academic and communal environments. Through my interview questions, I ask these Black women

faculty to recall specific experiences of their livelihood such as “Have you experienced racism, sexism, and/or microaggressions on campus?” and following with a probe for them to provide an instance of this type of discrimination and how it felt for the them to experience that moment. Experience-centered narratives provides insights of Black women faculty members in both academic and non-academic spaces through the semi-structured interviews. Through this method, it allows participants to feel open to discuss as much of their personal narratives as they are comfortable sharing with me. As a result, these narratives provide research ‘truths’ through the retelling of personal stories (Grele et al. 2006, 45, 48).

### **RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION**

After receiving IRB approval in early July, I crafted a list of faculty listservs, or mailing lists, to ensure Black women faculty from all departments were notified of this study (Appendix C). Through the use of the mailing lists, I was contacted by professors who qualified for the study and Black women professors who were nominated for the study as well. In addition to the submission of recruitment email, I also engaged in snowball sampling by asking for faculty nominations from those who were involved in this study. After the first round of recruitment, I sent out another recruitment email in late August to listservs that were not contacted in the first round of participant requests and, in addition, my recruitment email was included in a newsletter for Black faculty and staff to gain more publicity for the study. I recruited interested participants from the beginning of July to the beginning of September.

Recruitment efforts yielded eight participants. Data collection ended due to both practical and research-sensitive issues. This sample size is the result of difficulty in scheduling of participants occurred because their personal and academic schedule were not as flexible as the upcoming school year was approaching and lastly, the time consumption of interviewing participants and transcribing interviews led to the discontinuation of the study. Additionally, the number of Black women faculty at the university is limited. Statistical reports state in fall 2017, the total number of faculty at single site university was 3162; of the total faculty employed at the university, 1298 were identified as women and even more miniscule, only 119 were identified as Black, and of that number, only 57 are Black women. Data collection also discontinued because I recognized the data and theoretical saturation of my results. Saunders et al (2018) expresses that when data and theoretical saturation occurs due to the “comprehensiveness of both the data collection and analysis” (Saunders et al. 2018, 1896). As a result, I acknowledged the repetition of similar responses in interviewing (data saturation) and through the lens of Black feminism and authenticity, I recognized how the responses of the participants aligned with the tenets of the framework.

After participants expressed their interest in my study, I required all participants to complete a demographic survey (see Appendix B). The survey questions indicated their contact information, hometown, logistical information about their professorship at their respective institution and, if applicable, their experience thus far as a tenured/tenure-track professor. Each participant provided their verbal consent to participate in the study. I conducted one-hour interviews with each participant unless all questions were not

answered in the allotted time for the first interview session, then the participant and I scheduled a follow up interview session to complete the remaining interview questions. The interviews, on average, lasted an hour and 15 minutes, which includes participants who did accept the offer of a follow-up interview (see Appendix D). Interviews took place in participants' offices and conference rooms in campus buildings based on the preference of the participant. All interviews were audio-recorded unless the participant stated otherwise and I took notes on a laptop to record all additional information, such as shifts in body language, any other visual cues, and/or as a back-up if the recording device failed. There was no incentive for the interview, but participants received thank you cards to express my appreciation for their participation in the study.

### **THEORETICAL TRIANGULATION AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Data collection and transcribing process were completed simultaneously. Each of the eight interviews were transcribed and collected from August to early January. I utilized the online software, *Transcribe*, to transcribe all interviews. After the transcriptions were completed, I reviewed all of the material for accuracy. All interview recordings were located in a password protected cloud storage service. Each file for the participants were labeled under generic pseudonyms, such as "Professor Rogers" to further hide their identity. Once interviews were completed, the recordings were immediately uploaded into the cloud storage service and erased from the audio device. After the data analysis of the recordings, they were erased (Lowe 2018).



Journaling and memoing during my transcriptions was important due to my theoretical sensitivity to Black feminism and authenticity literature, developed through prior exposure in previous coursework, research, and my own personal life experiences (Hoare 2012). As a result of this sensitivity, I established credibility and ethical validation in my study by maintaining a journal to recount my reactions during and post-interviews with my participants and also as I transcribed each participants' interviews to reflect on their answers and our conversations (Hays and Singh 2011, 208). In addition, the act of memoing and journaling throughout the data collection process and analysis, it helped minimize researcher bias as well as reflect on arising themes, suggestions, and concerns for myself throughout the collection process. (Hays and Singh 2011, 148). Through this use of reflexivity in my research, it ensures the researcher "[examines] the ontological and epistemological assumptions built into particular methods of data analysis by those who both develop them" (Mauther and Doucet 2003, 417). In addition, as I transcribed I developed memos for my transcriptions to explore the themes and answers to research questions that arose during the interview. To ensure trustworthiness with my participants during my interviews, I asked clarifying questions to ensure I understood the participants' recounts accurately, or member checking, and I submitted a final draft of my thesis to my participants for them to review their profiles and the conversations from our interview to ensure they were accurately and authentically represented and their personal identities remained confidential (Hays and Singh 2011, 203; 206).

The use of theoretical triangulation is important in this research because the utilization of “alternative theories as analytical frameworks explore different facets of or viewpoints about research phenomena” and furthermore, this triangulation provides “a pragmatic process of inquiry that draws on distinctive yet complementary theoretical perspectives to generate deep understandings and explanations” (Pitre 2015, 285).

Through my theoretical framing of my research, I utilize Black feminism to complement to the framework of (in)authenticity to highlight the saliency of cultural identity, specifically Blackness, the importance of community spaces, and the significance of membership or belonging. Through this theoretical triangulation, I confirm the significance of the Black identity the participants experience while also acknowledging the centrality of the participants’ identities as women.

The transcriptions were coded with the software, *Dedoose*, to sort and analyze the data. I performed three rounds of coding analysis to develop emerging codes for this research. In the first round of analysis, I looked for emerging themes in the interviews or emic coding. Emic coding in my study represents how the participants own words and concepts developed a code to represent their data (Maxwell 2012, 97, Miles et al 2014, 81, Saunter et al 2018). In the second round of analysis, I revised codes that were not relevant to my research inquiries and further defined each code for consistency in the data. Lastly, I coded deductively to acknowledge how my participants exemplify the tenets of the frameworks of Black feminism, Black (in)authenticity, and provided answers to my research questions (Maxwell 2012, 98).

An example of a deductive code from my study is “authenticity.” The framework of “(in)authenticity” does not have a distinct definition in this research, so I asked participants how they would define and embody the construct. This data reduction process from raw codes to themes among participant data allowed me to understand how the participants define “authenticity.” For example, I developed the code “authenticity” to address my research inquiry. This code represented excerpts from participants explaining “doing and saying what feels natural,” “to be true what your [God-given passions],” and “to be honest, to be forthright, and at this point, unapologetic.” Next, from these codes were developed thematic categories representing how these participants represented “authenticity” in their personal lives. Authenticity for these participants were observed through their pedagogical practices and their research focuses as professors as well as their religious affiliations in their personal lives.

I display the ideas as narrative vignettes to highlight the authentic voices of my participants and not distort the message behind the participant’s recollections. Vignettes provide a snapshot of the participants’ experience and this display method also demonstrates a “useful way of making concrete events and [experiences] of practice, facilitating the identification of individuals’ situated understanding and practical theory” (Miles et al 2014, 182, Spaulding and Phillips 2007, 960). Additionally, some vignettes will not display only one participants’ responses but rather display multiple excerpts from participants to demonstrate the commonality of Black women faculty’s experiences. During the selection of the vignettes, I engaged in a crystallization process to elucidate the type of data that represented my research inquiries. Ellingson (2008) addresses how

crystallization represented in research in five methods: (1) “crystallization seeks to produce knowledge about a particular phenomenon through generating a deepened, interpretation,” or (2) “utilizes forms of analysis or ways of producing knowledge across multiple point of the qualitative continuum, generally including at one least one middle-ground or middle-to-right (postpositivist) analytic methods and one interpretative, artistic, performative, or otherwise creative analytic approach,” or (3) “crystalized texts include more than one genre of writing or representation” or (4) “[featuring] a significant degree of reflexive consideration of the researcher’s self in the process of research design, data collection, and representation,” and lastly, (5) “eschews positivist claims to objectivity and a singular, discoverable truth and embraces, reveals and even *celebrates* knowledge as inevitably situated, partial, constructed, multiple, and embodied” (Ellingson 2008, 13).

Crystallization helped me to further understand how racial identities through the lens of (in)authenticity to further understand how Black women understand their identities introspectively and how community perceive these Black women’s identities. Through this method of crystallization, I engaged in a deeper and more rounded analysis of how one understands their identities. In addition, the method of research reflexivity was an integral method for this research, which can be observed in my preface and positionality in this chapter. My reflexivity also demonstrates how I am situated within this research but also I how came to my own understanding of Black (in)authenticity and how it contributes other frameworks, such as Black feminism, to understand how one experiences their racial identities. Furthermore, reflexivity was significant in this study as

a means for me to determine the relevant data as participants described their own personal engagement in understanding their identities as Black women. Lastly, an important method in this research was, the results does not seek a single objective truth but rather engages with the unique subjectivities of participants' experiences and responses to address the phenomenon. This is significant in my study as I sought subjective responses in how the participants understood their unique inauthenticities and authenticities and how these constructs are embodied in their academic and non-academic communities.

### **RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY**

This research was inspired by the personal experiences of navigating my own educational desire to escape my low socioeconomic status while also attempting to find solace in my Black community within my home state of Oklahoma, which is articulated in-depth in my preface. I spent my elementary and high school years in school hearing comments and dealt with interactions of me “not being Black enough” or “acting white” affected my personal understanding of my own Blackness. Thus, the idea of how the Black identity is situated within higher education intrigued me due to the ideas of “not being Black enough” and “acting white.” This led to me further question the subjectivity of the Black identity and how it functions in non-academic and academic spaces. More importantly, I questioned how Black women faculty perceived their identity inside and outside of the academy.

Through this research, these conversations with Black women faculty affirmed my Black identity and provided new perspectives to my own definitions of racial authenticity and how I navigate my experiences as a Black women graduate student in predominantly white spaces. As a result, I maintained a journal to describe how I felt during the interview and post-interview as well as provide any feedback for myself to utilize during the next interviews I conducted. In addition, these interviews helped provide insights in the realm of higher education within a white dominated campus and the importance of mentorship and community in the academic and non-academic environments. As a result, I will take away from this research the importance of finding a support network of Black women to uplift myself in my pursuit of higher education.

Due to the scarcity of Black women faculty members at public research institutions (Behar-Horenstein et al, 2012, Bernard et al 2017, Hotchkins 2017, Pittman 2012), I wanted to uplift and affirm the experiences of these faculty members to ensure that their stories were told and observed as valuable. Through this research, I hope to further inspire more research to focus on the stories and experiences of Black women faculty members to be the catalyst for academic change and support. Additionally, I hope my research encourages the discussion of racial identity perception within the discipline of education to understand how discriminatory experiences within the academy affect the identities of Black women faculty members.

## **CHAPTER FOUR - PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROFILES**

This chapter presents the demographic information of the eight participants in this study who consented to be a part of this study. Each participant completed a demographic study (see Appendix B) via email to be completed prior to their interview. The site of the study is located a large, public, research-intensive university in the South. Of the eight participants, two participants are full professors, four participants are assistant professors, and two professors were instructors and/or lecturers. The departments of these eight professors reside in are two professors in the Chemistry, one professor in Area Studies, one professor in the Arts, three professors in Biology, and one professor in the Physics department.

The participants' ages range from 25 to 75 years old. The hometown of each professor was primarily in the Southern United States except for one professor who had emigrated to the United States and another professor from the Midwest United States. All participants in this study identified as African American and/or Black. All participants identified as women and used she/her pronouns. Each participant was provided a generic pseudonym to maintain confidentiality and further protect their identities. These descriptive profiles provide a way to contextualize the experiences and conversations that I had with the participants. All the information is representative of the participants' experiences and has been written in a manner to ensure the protection of their identities (Lowe 2018).

## **PROFESSOR ROGERS**

Professor Rogers and I sit in a conference room as I interviewed her for my research. I sit in a comfortable chair as she sits on the far side of the sofa across from me with my digital recorder between us. Her posture is catty-cornered on the sofa as we begin our conversation at eight o'clock in the morning. I ask Professor Rogers what her pathway to the professoriate looked like for her as we began our interview. She explains her professor, who taught her at her undergraduate institution, declared after she graduated that she would be a “great teacher one day.” At the time of the comment, she doubted her investment in teaching. In a later position in her life completing volunteer work engaging with students, she realized how much she truly enjoyed working with students. As she completed her graduate degree, she began teaching her institution in the Biology department.

As we continued the interview, I asked Professor Rogers what identities were the most important to her sense of self. Then, she asked me, “Girl, is this going to be those type of interviews?” in reference to an interview question, which inquired a deeper and intimate discussion of oneself. As we both laugh at her comment and then she answered, “Someone is who is knowledgeable... Someone who knows what they’re doing.” I further probed this question to understand the perception of her identity as a young Black woman is salient to her identity as she navigates her environment to “prove [herself]” belonging in the department and her workspace.



## **PROFESSOR PETTIGREW**

I sit at a table in a conference room with Professor Pettigrew to the right of me and my digital recorder in between us at five o'clock in the evening. Professor Pettigrew explains her pathway to professoriate at her current institution by explaining that she was working in the industry for some time as she was attending university for her graduate degree. Soon, she was faced with a crucial decision that would determine her position at the university or being promoted in the field of industry. After reflecting on the promises of both positions, she recognized teaching provided a strong future as she explained, "And so, I got hired on here, so it was nice, I don't think I would have saw teaching as a gift or as a future. Someone else recognized that as a possibility in me." As a result of her decision, Professor Pettigrew is an assistant professor in Biology at her university.

Then I followed up with the question asking Professor Pettigrew what identities are important to herself. She explained to me that her spirituality "because it who [she does] not matter what circle [she is] in." She also discussed the significance of being a "person of color" because there is a lack of Black faculty members at the institution. Next, she explains the identifier of being a "leader" is significant to her. She further elaborates on how she "[continued] to find herself in leadership positions," in her personal and professional life. And lastly, she mentioned that being a teacher was an important aspect of her identity. I further probed with Professor Pettigrew as why did she mentioned her faith as first in the list of her identities and she explained to me, "I think that God played a big part in my path into where I am. He does all things good even though my path hasn't been what I wanted to be, it's a beautiful path."

## PROFESSOR BOHANAN

Professor and Bohanan and I sit in a quiet library conference room for our meeting. We have seated a large table as Professor Bohanan sits across from me. We began our interview at ten o'clock in the morning and I ask her about her pathway to the professoriate at her university. She explains to me that her pathway to professoriate is not a typical one because she immigrated to the United States from an African country after her acceptance at the university. After receiving her graduate degree, she began teaching at the university as an assistant professor in Area Studies. Before I asked her what identities were the most salient to her, we discussed her experience of being from an immigrant from Africa. Her discussion with me resonated with me and encouraged my own personal reflection on my research is focused on the United States' notions of Blackness. She explained to me the cultural shock and socialization process that she experienced stating,

“You have work hard to look for friends, look for a community. And you come in and you realize that you're "Black" which is not something that is a part of your subconscious where you are coming from, like being an African. You really don't really think of yourself in terms of race and then you find yourself among these community of people where they think of themselves in racial terms”

Through Professor Bohanan's interview, she encouraged me to reflect more on the idea of racial (in)authenticity and its location. She further explained to me how she was faced with an interjection that tore at her core as Black American inquired, “What do you know about being Black Right and I thought, *Really?* And it was just a moment where, like, the illusion of community and solidarity was ripped apart from me.” As we continued to talk with one another, we were addressed Blackness in a global and local context. I followed

up with the question of what identities were salient to herself and she expressed “being African, female, and mom.” She also explains that “being a professor is almost secondary to every kind of identities that validates me... I feel like the family relationships, the daughter, the mom, the wife is more validating to me than academic achievement.”

### **PROFESSOR BAKER**

I sit in the office of Professor Baker across from her as I made note of the paraphernalia from her alma mater and pictures of friends and loved ones decorating her office. It is about eleven o'clock in the morning. My digital recorder is between us on a plaque of hers and we begin the interview as I ask her about her pathway to the professoriate. Professor Baker explains her time at a historically Black college (HBCU) was the catalyst for her interest in pursuing professorship. She spent her time at a historically Black college for her undergraduate degree and then, attended a predominantly white institution (PWI) for her graduate degree. She explains due to the transition culture shock had a significant impact on her from attending the HBCU to the PWI, as she combatted microaggressions and hypervisibility. Nonetheless, Professor Baker was able to thrive in the environment of a PWI. Later in the conversation, she reflects on her time at the PWI exclaiming, “Wow, how awful it must be when you have no professors and few students that actually look like you.” From these past experiences with schooling and desiring representation, she provides mentorship for students in her current department in Chemistry at the university, where she is a full professor.

Earlier in the conversation about Professor Baker's pathway to the professoriate, she mentioned due to her time at her HBCU that she developed a "strong sense of self." As I asked her the question focused on her identity, she explained her Blackness is fundamental. She elaborates that her Blackness is important to "pull [Black] people across the bridge to demonstrate a sense of community." Her identity as a role model is very important to her and she explains, "I believe in you know, helping pull people up, over and, I have a, you know, big commitment in terms of like, role model type of philosophy."

### **PROFESSOR LOPEZ**

I sit across from Professor Lopez in a conference that she booked for our interview at a long, large table. The conference room is filled with natural light from outside because of the large windows on the side of the room. I read her the protocol for my research and she grants her verbal consent as we begin the interview. Professor Lopez explains that her pathway to her professoriate was due to her industrial work. She recognized that she was the first person in her family to be in the industry position that she has now. She explains that was influenced by *The Cosby Show* by seeing the image of a "successful Black person [being in highly specialized fields]." This representation was very important to her because the representation of these characters ignited a passion for her to pursue her current position in the industry and teaching. This passion led Professor Lopez to participate in summer programs in her undergraduate career focused on her interest. At a later point, she attended an HBCU focused on her professional interest and

then, this attendance led to her acceptance to graduate school to be further specialized.

After working in the industry for a while, she explained to me that,

“I think it’s important to stay in academics just because of the rapid pace in the [industry]. I wanted to be in a place where I could be at the forefront of anything new happening in the [industry]. I could still take care of everybody... Most academic center seem to have a focus on, you know, take care of anybody, so, so, all those reasons I decided to stay in academics.”

As a result, Professor Lopez is an assistant professor in Physics. The identities Professor Lopez expressed that are salient to her were “being a Black woman, mom, wife, and God-fearing person.”

### **PROFESSOR WIBLE**

I met with Professor Wible in her office around eleven o’clock and we sit at a table in her office. As I set up my computer, materials, and digital recorder on her table, I listen to the whirl of her air conditioning fill the room. I ask Professor Wible about her pathway to the professoriate and she explains she attended a PWI for her undergraduate degree and graduate degree. At the time that she applied to attend her undergraduate, the admissions of the department did not support her attendance at the institution and went to great lengths to deny her acceptance. This difficulty did not stop her from applying to the institution and inevitably being accepted at the university. At the time she attended her undergraduate institution, she created an organization to support Black students thrive in the discriminatory environment that they were in. After her time in undergraduate and graduate school, Professor Wible recognized that she wanted to work in the industry, but she acknowledged she needed to shift pathways as she was pregnant at the time and the

positions within the industry would be very physically demanding on her. As a result, she considered a faculty position at the university in the Department of Chemistry where she presides as a full professor. I asked Professor Wible what identities were salient to her sense of self and she explained “being a Black woman, Christian, mother, wife, and mentor.”

### **PROFESSOR BYRNE**

Professor Byrne met me in the foyer of her departmental office and led me to a conference room she reserved for our meeting. We sat towards the end of a long table as we begin our interview. I ask Professor Byrne her pathway to the professoriate and she explains she graduated from undergraduate and she immediately recognized her interest to attend graduate school but she was not sure what she wanted to focus on. She knew her interest in biology, so she desired to work in the industry to receive experience. Eventually, Professor Byrne began to apply for graduate schools after receiving advice from a mentor and narrowed her decision down to two top schools for her doctoral degree. After deciding on a school in the northeast, she contemplated tenured track positions and at the time, she was not interested in that pathway because of the experiences she noticed of faculty members at her graduate institution. After a while, Professor Byrne accepted a position at her university as an assistant professor while working in the industry. Soon, she recognized she still needed to add qualifications and change in work hours for her industry position but pregnancy shifted the next steps of her

journey. Fortunately, she received a full-time position at her current university to teach full time in her specialty in Biology.

Next, I asked Professor Byrne what identities were important to her sense of self.

She explains,

“[Her] Blackness because that’s probably the one that people most readily see when they interact with me being [in my position], being a mother. Those are the things that are sort of, I would say calling are just like my everyday they ooze out of me taking care of my kids. And those are the things that require on a day-to-day basis the time and energy. And I guess a teacher, I would say student. I think I’m a better student than I am teacher. And wife, wife is in there.”

### **PROFESSOR TOMA**

I met with Professor Toma on the floor of her department in her small, quiet office at around noon. Professor Toma wrapping up small work before we begin our interview. I read her my appendices and consent form for my study and allowed her to ask any questions she had. After receiving her verbal consent, we begin to discuss her pathway to the professoriate. Professor Toma explains to me she had experience as a teaching assistant for two years with discussion sections she led, which was the catalyst for her path to the professoriate. She is currently received her doctoral degree and is a course instructor in the Art department. After gaining a copious amount of experience as an instructor, she knew that her ultimate career goal was to be a tenured professor.

I ask Professor Toma about what identities are the most important to her sense of self and she explained to me her being a middle-class Black woman was important to her. She explains more about her socioeconomic class explained that,

“I grew up very poor. So adjusting to being middle class has been very interesting. I am from [a Midwest city from] a very poor neighborhood... [It] impacted how I navigate the world. I would say that a lot of my identity formation happened in college, which was in [a Southern city] and so that impacted [me] a lot too. So going from the Midwest to the Southwest [was] an adjustment as well. And now I’m in [a Southern state] and so that also impacts things because I’m getting used to living in the South but it was completely different region of the South and so that’s been taking some adjustments too.”

Professor Toma’s experiences in her personal life and in her home community have a significant impact of how she navigates white-dominated academia. Her adjustments in her geographical and economic status are common factors that affect her sense of self as a Black woman professor.



## CHAPTER FIVE - FINDINGS

This chapter illuminates the findings of the study with Black women professors at a predominantly white institution in the South. These findings represent how Black women faculty members understand their identities as Black and women and professors within their home communities and academic communities. I provide the research questions below to reiterate the focus of this research. For Black women faculty at a public, research-intensive PWI:

1. Have they experienced racism, sexism, and/or microaggressions on campus?
  - a. How do they describe their experiences?
  - b. How do they cope?
  - c. How do they practice self-care?
2. How do they define “(in)authenticity”?
  - a. Have they been perceived as “(in)authentic” within their campus communities<sup>4,5</sup>? If so, how has this impacted them?
  - b. Have they been perceived as “(in)authentic” within their non-academic communities? If so, how has this impacted them?

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<sup>4</sup> In hopes to understand the findings of this study, I am noting that the idea of “community” and “communal space” is a broad term for the participant to imagine whatever community that is viable to themselves. I asked questions combined the concepts of “community” in a broad understanding of the word, and “family” for a more distinct type of community. I offer this explanation to provide additional insight to understand the purpose why professors present certain experiences about their livelihoods.

<sup>5</sup> In regards to academic and non-academic communities, I want to acknowledge the overlap and complexities in observing these communities. For the purposes of this study, I wanted to interrogate how Black women faculty interact in communities, which are Black non-academic home communities and white dominated communities at the institution.

3. If at all, how have their personal relationships changed as a result of their education?
  - a. If at all, how does double consciousness operate in their professional and personal lives?

### **RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: EXPERIENCES WITH DISCRIMINATION ON CAMPUS**

As I began the interviewing my participants, I asked questions focused on their identities and how these identities affected their navigation in society. As I laid this foundation, I understood these professors' positionality in the academy, within their departments, and in their home communities. For my first question, all professors had experienced some instance of microaggressions, sexism, and racism during their career at the university. Overall, each professor provided a resounding "yes" to this question and I further probed to hear the common experience of being perceived as "not belonging" or being "restricted" from the academy or their workspace.

#### **Finding: "Oh, you don't look like you belong here"**

Professor Rogers explained her experience as she attended a faculty meeting at her university. She explained to me after being at her university for numerous positions, she knew the majority of the faculty members who were present in the room. After this realization, she desired to sit next to someone she did not know, but this resulted in a conversation she did not anticipate to engaging in. Professor Rogers explained

So this lady comes up and sits next to and she smiles... And I smile back at her. She, it just... And then it got weird. So she keeps staring at me in the corner of her eye and finally, she says, "Hi, how are you doing?" and I go, "I'm doing fine. How are you doing?" And she says, "I'm doing good." and she was like, "So, did you get a special invitation from the dean to be here today?" And I said, "I mean, I don't think I got anything special, probably the same invitation that everyone else got. I don't know if it was special." And she goes, "Oh okay." And she goes back to eating her food and few minutes later she goes, "Are you like a-a scholarship recipient or something?" And I said, "I mean, I got a scholarship but that was a really long time ago." (laughs) and again, my mind was like, "Where is this going?" Like, you know. And she sits there for few more minutes and she goes, "You aren't a faculty, by any chance, are you?" and I was like, "Why yes, I am actually." And so from there, this look of like, shock comes around her face and she realizes how inappropriate things she said to me is and she starts back peddling. "Oh my god, I'm so sorry. You look exactly like this girl I know that um," and she said something like, "Do you know this girl name Shantrice-something" and I just was like, "No I don't know how that is person," and she said, "I swear you guys could pass for twins. Oh my god Just-." Just stop, stop.

After Professor Rogers explained this scenario, she describes how offended she felt in the moment after interacting with other faculty member. She further discussed how discrimination against her demonstrated the idea of "not belonging" within the interaction between her and the faculty member stating,

"Oh, you don't look like you belong here. Let me make you know that. You could have easily said, "Oh my god. Are you new here? I've never seen you before. Are you faculty?" And it's like, by any chance you could possibly be and it's because I don't look like anyone in this room, you know, I don't belong.

The common theme of "not belonging" was frequently discussed with all of my participants as they were mistaken for non-faculty positions in academia and other workplace positions. Being a Black woman in these predominantly white spaces fails to accurately represent them and thus, it creates the notion that these women disrupt the schema of a "professor" a white dominated university. Professor Lopez explained a similar experience in her current role in the workforce,

Um, as a matter of fact, I was doing something [at my workplace with a client] and I was like in [a specific uniform] like this and I had a hat on like a [work] hat on. [A colleague] is sitting next to me and I'm on the computer of all things, right? So she's like, "Oh, are you here to [get] somebody? I said "Nope." And I'm looking at her like keep going. (laugh) I'm like, let's let's, let's do it today, you know, and so she's like "Are you dropping someone off? I was like, "No." She's like "Are you just sitting here hanging out?" I said, "No." You know and I'm just like giving her the opportunity, like, well, what else are you gonna say? You know, and, and then she's looking at me like, "I have no idea what you could possibly be," you know? And I said, "I'm a [senior administrator]." And she's like, "Oh, I mean, I just assumed like with your [uniform] on...?" I'm thinking, "What would that I could only be [an assistant] like isn't the only thing that you could possibly think of?" Like she was just so perplexed. Like I can't even imagine, you know, so I don't know sometimes I, you know, I've learned to say certain things like "Why do you think that?" or just answer like "no." Like is like, oh you [an assistant] know and, and, and just leave it and let that uncomfortable like, like instead of saying no. I'm a [senior administrator], you know, just like no I want you to realize that this is insane that you just can't imagine or like spread your head, your mind a little bit more and think what else what else could this person in [this uniform] possibly be?

Through these common interactions from their colleagues, I was curious how these women cope with these interactions. Participants provided their unique ways of coping with discrimination within the academy. Coping can be practiced through a) understanding the intention, b) through ignoring the act and isolation, and c) communication of these actions. I will later discuss in depth the different practices of coping, but I am continuing on the discussion of understanding race and racism through the experiences of Professor Bohanan. Her experiences elucidates that understanding one's race and acknowledging how racism has an important significance within the context of the United States and her identity as an immigrant Black woman.

### **Finding: “Was that racist? Oh, my God, that was racist!”**

Professor Bohanan discussed the significance of discrimination she experienced after she immigrated to the United States. She explains to me her experience of being socialized into cultural of the United States as she explains,

When you're not African American, there are something you don't notice, right? You might think that it is because I have an accent or it is because I am a stranger here or a foreigner, you don't have the same visceral to situation the way that an African American who had grew up with the culture understands racism. So, there are some times, that it could take you some processes like, was that racist? Oh, my god, that was racist. Right? You don't... You haven't learned racism in the same way, you're coming from two entirely different worlds...

She further provides me an example by explaining how she faced discrimination in an electronic store early in her experience of being in the United States. She discusses how she did not recognize the racism after the sales clerk failed to continue to work with her. The sales clerk stressed multiple times she should leave and would not accept her forms of payment and as a result, Professor Bohanan explained she was confused by this. The sales clerk finally expressed that he would give her phone call to clear up the issue in the electronics store. After a long point of interacting with the sales clerk and leaving the store, Professor Bohanan made a significant realization that she had a racist encounter in the store. This idea of discrimination within the United States context was an important realization that I needed to acknowledge in my study. Through Professor Bohanan's testimonial, I acknowledge the globality and racialization of Blackness in this study. Professor Bohanan explained to me that she did not recognize the context of racism because she was not born in the United States, where she claimed that Black Americans are raised within a racist society. Thus, Professor Bohanan's experience with racism

provided her clarity in understanding her identity being racialized as “Black” within the context of the United States. In addition, the discussion of Black authenticity with Professor Bohanan provided a distinction in my study as we continued our conversation. I will further address the globality of Blackness in my later discussion chapter.

## **COPING IN THE ACADEMY**

### **Finding: Coping as Understanding the Intentions: “I cannot come off initially as [an] angry Black woman.”**

Both Professors Pettigrew and Wible explained the way they cope with discrimination in the academy is understanding the intentions of the actions. Professor Pettigrew explained two situations where she desired to understand the intentions of someone’s comments. She explained how this experience is depicted in the classroom,

So, I try... I thought... I try to get to know people's story.... As a person of color, as a professor because there might be some discussions that come up in class and the way that the student reacts to me [and] I think, "Is that racism?" But then I have to pause and say, "Let me hear their story." Where are they coming from? What's context of their comment? So, I first I try to get their story, “So share more. You made that statement. Help the class see where you're coming from." And from the very first day of class, I teach [a class in the field], so we're going to talk about racism within the health care setting and all kind of stuff. And I tell them that they're allowed to disagree but they're not allow to fight and everyone comes from different walks of life. So setting that tone of being opening to hear other persons and don't cut them off. I think it's good to hear their story. So I start there first, and then I pray while I'm up there (laugh) I just want to say right thing, you can't change everybody and but also I want to know that my teaching philosophy is “I teach you but I want you to teach me." And so, I need to pause and go back and reflect on that. And maybe it's challenged something that I need to do more research on and so, having an open minded. So, pray for wisdom, having an open mind, hearing their story. And not being so quick to react.

This type of coping mechanism allowed Professor Pettigrew to reflect on how to interpret someone's comment before she responds to their comment out right. Later, Professor Wible explained the "Angry Black Woman" trope that is imposed upon Black women as they display feelings of angry or deep emotion, so by Professor Pettigrew "pausing to hear their story," it could possibly provide a means to avoid this stereotype within her classroom.

To further investigate this avoidance of the "Angry Black Woman" stereotype, Professor Pettigrew also explained another moment where she had to slowly coming to conclusions to reflect on her actions in the context of her experience in the industry. She explains,

I think pausing is important; I had patient once and she calling me "gal." And I was like, "If she call me gal one more time..." Because I perceive that being from the South, that's, you think I'm taking back to on the cotton picking farm and um, how I do go about telling her that my name is so and so, and I wanted to be addressed that way and I was struggling with that. She was an older woman and so I was getting my courage to go in and have this conversation with that patient and the tech was coming in at the same time who was white and she called the tech "gal." I said, "That's just what's she calls everybody." So, I'm glad, like, like, don't be so quick to react.

Professor Wible recognizes the weight of her interactions and reactions she has with her colleagues. She explained how she understands how to play the game in her department to avoid negative stereotypes imposed upon Black women.

And so I think it's just resilience and just sort of, sort of knowing how those games are played. I have had a lot of mentors and I also learned how to navigate various things. So for instance, I learned I cannot come off initially as angry Black woman. I have to come off as help me understand. I'm really wanting to understand and laying out some things that might perceive as being you know, inevitable and almost coming at it from a very place of naivete, right? So really naive, "I don't understand what's going on," but I'm feeling this way and kind of

raising awareness that way and even posing some questions without coming off as angry. But also making sure I've done my homework.

Professor Pettigrew subliminally addresses the trope of the “Angry Black Woman,” while Professor Wible fully engages with the understanding how she is perceived within the academy. Professor Wible recognizes how her angry and other emotions as a Black women can be invalidated and trivialized in the context of academy and other work settings. As a result, she explained “coming from a place of naivete” avoids the imposition of this stereotype upon her.

### **Finding: Coping as Avoidance and Ignoring Discrimination**

As I spoke with each professor, the common coping mechanism among each member is avoidance and ignoring the situation as a means to protect themselves and survive in the academy. Both Professor Wible and Toma explain they limit their interactions with those in their department and on campus to preserve themselves against discrimination.

Professor Wible simply discussed,

Honestly, probably if I have to deal with you, then I will make efforts to elevate our relationship status. If I don't have to deal with you then I don't deal with you. I don't if there's something that's just... I'm not going to be mean to you or anything like that. If you take a whole lot of energy away from me, I'm done with it. I don't know. I just don't feel it. That's how I deal with this, I don't. I mean unless I need to.

Professor Toma presented a similar method of avoidance,

I choose to isolate myself, to be completely honest. It's been a lot easier because I'm not in my coursework. I don't really have to be on campus besides when I teach. So I spend a lot of time in this office and I just choose to limit my interactions with people in the department just because I just don't have time for possible



microaggressions, actual microaggressions and just dealing with the political nonsense that goes on this department. I just first isolate myself.

Professor Bohanan provided that the idea of “self-defensiveness” is a way to protect herself from the interactions on campus and with colleagues, she explained

I just shut myself out. I don't... I don't like to go out of my sphere of comfort to make friends or ally with people. I stick with people who I'm really family with because I don't want to deal with certain kinds of issues. That's one way that I dealt with it. I think it affected me up to now. I like sheltering myself to myself.

In regards to discrimination in their respective departments, these Black women professor explains the best coping mechanism for themselves is to lessen their time engaging their departments that perpetuate discrimination. These factors were very important to each professor to protect themselves in the academy and in their work spaces.

### **Finding: Coping as Communication and Discussion**

Professors Lopez, Byrne, and Rogers found it crucial to discuss and unpack these grievances with friends and family who understood their experiences as Black women in the academy. Professor Lopez explained how she articulated these experiences with friends and family and she also mentioned how she finds a space to voice her experiences virtually as well,

I communicate with others a lot about these a lot of times sharing these same experiences can be helpful therapeutic. There are many different forms, you know face-to-face, people that I might work with, other people that I have worked with [in the past], like we obviously still communicate and then online there's like a Facebook group called [omitted]. There's a group on Facebook, you know, and so there are a lot of stories very similar to that to get shared and some of it's in a not always say looked at lightheartedly, but it's a way to sort of like laugh at the absurdity of it sometimes and, and a safe space. [So I'd say that's probably one of the primary reasons way I'm able to sort of cope with it]

In a similar light, Professor Byrne explained communicating these issues with individuals who share similar experiences to hers to address issues of discrimination.

I think just talking about them with individuals like-minded individuals who are also in the struggle with me or that face similar struggles in different spheres. So, you know other Black friends, we may be dealing with the same issues and their workspace or people in the school who are you know mobilizing with me. [Some friends] may not be Black but they are experiencing it around just working with working through it as well.

Through these different methods of coping in the white academic space, Black women faculty find methods to survive in these spaces to preserve their sense of self. After each interview I asked the professors how they coped in the academy, then, I inquired how these Black women engaged in self-care. This inclusion of self-care was very important to include in this research as I understand coping as means to survive and tolerate the white dominated institution, which can be associated with stress and conflict for some faculty members. I find that self-care, as Audre Lorde discusses, is a means for self-preservation and revitalization Black women faculty should engage for themselves (Mirk 2016). In addition, I recognize the literature focusing on Black women faculties' experiences focus on their coping skills in the white dominated academy and not their self-care practices and thus, I desire to intervene to further understand how Black women observe the saliency of their communities and their identities as Black women.

### **How Do You Engage in Self-Care?**

In addition to the idea of coping with the conditions in their academic departments and institutions, I asked each professor how they engaged in self-care in regards to their academic life and their personal life. Each professor stressed the

importance of community such as their partners, families, and friends. Professor Rogers, Pettigrew, Lopez, Wible, Byrne stressed the importance of their spirituality for their self-care by attending church, praying, and being active in church projects. In addition, each professor discusses how individuals in their work lives, whether supervisors or colleagues, serve as great sounding boards, mentors, and support in their academic and personal lives. As a result, each professor explained their own unique methods to self-care they practice in their own time.

Professor Pettigrew explained how her dedication to her personal health lead to her to live a healthier life at the time I interviewed her. She explains, “Zumba. I try to protect my Mondays for Zumba [with] my favorite instructor. [So,] I try to do Zumba on Mondays.” In addition, she also explained the importance of therapy to help her mental health for her role.

Professor Bohanan expressed her enjoyment of reading as her self-care. She discussed, I find solace in books, right? I'm somebody who reads, of course, you have to read. But now, I look for novels. Things that give me pleasure, right? That I read to soak and immerse yourself into another world that's totally different. If I buy a book and I start reading ten pages and it's too hard, I drop it and pick another. (laughs) Like I don't want things that tax me too, that's takes too much from me. I'm trying to enjoy myself. That's what I'm trying to do. So, if the book is getting too... Too tedious. Like the language is tedious, like... I'm looking for fun. Like this month, I finished a book, it's a book that I've had on my Kindle. I loved it so much and I read it, like, I stop and take my time to luxury read in the beauty of the words. And that.... Those are the kind of book I'm trying to read now. Like, just reading for fun and for enjoyment. And for pleasure. That's one part of self-care.

Professor Baker explained she mentally grounds herself as a means to practice self-care. She explained,

You know a lot just kind of keeping yourself grounded and I believe in finding your center, although I think I'm always looking for my center, you know, just kind of find your center.

And she also explains that,

I try to get rest, you know, I know the importance of rest and, and oh... calming my mind I can't say clearing. My mind is never clear but calming, you know, so I read and, and, like I love sports and so I'll do that. Although I'm getting caught up with sports in and all the drama that goes with that, you know, so if I kind of get into my... If I start getting my Blackness with sports, then I start having issues but I try not to quit deepening everything just let some things be shallow the like, sports, you know what I'm saying? Let it serve the purpose of the entertainment and those choices that people are making in between as their choices, not my deal. So I do that I do that love, you know sports and have friends and you know executive in sports position. So I do stuff like that flower around go to pro-game and you know stuff like that.

Professor Baker recognizes her role as a full professor and her responsibilities in her department creates mental strain and fatigue on her. So by her centering her mind, she finds clarity useful for her complete her tasks in her day. In addition, her interest for sports is significant to her because she recognizes the entertainment value of the events, but she also recognizes the critique of sports resembling modern slavery due to the exploitations of Black athletes and how these Black male athletes' bodies are on display for white, capitalist consumption (Harriot 2017, Shakir et al. 2018) But again, Professor Baker recognizes the significance of allowing her mind to 'rest' to interact with her friends and enjoy entertainment.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: DEFINING (IN)AUTHENTIC BLACKNESS**

Each professor discussed how they embodied authenticity in their own unique way but each member provided a similar definition of authenticity. Overall, the collective definition of authenticity is represented below provided by each professor:

Authenticity is who I am in the space provided. I bring my culture to, you know, just a different point of view than what's considered the majority here. So [being] true to self, like what your God-given passions are, you know. There are things inside of you that resonate[s] with you, that get you going. So I am just being me. You can't fake [it]. Some people say "fake it until you make it" and you really can't. You can try to put up a *front* but the *real* you is going to come out, so just being true to you. I just stay real and don't buy into the hype. People should be true to themselves and certainly, say or do things that are important to them, you know, so I think that's authentic. Like you shouldn't be like doing stuff you don't believe in. I think you should not like hide your beliefs, or [what is] important to you, or do something contrary that I think that's what [you are meant to do]. Authenticity is just being honest, forthright, and unapologetic and doing what feels natural and comfortable [to represent my] different identities.

### **(IN)AUTHENTICITY IN THE ACADEMY**

Though, the collective definition of authenticity presented similar ideas of "realness" and "being true to self." Each professor provided different methods on how they practice their Black authenticity in academia through their (a) teaching pedagogies (b) being respected in the academy. As I observed how these Black women professors embraced their authentic selves, they also explained how they demonstrate inauthenticity in their academic roles. The professors explained that inauthenticity in academia can be seen as (a) performativity or "playing the game" in their roles as professors for these Black women to achieve their career goals.

## **Finding: Authenticity as Teaching Pedagogy**

Professors Pettigrew and Toma expressed how their authenticity is demonstrated through their teaching pedagogy and persona within the classroom. Professor Pettigrew demonstrated her humanity in her teaching pedagogy by explaining that she will make mistakes as she learned her role and with her students. She explained

So, with teaching, I'm the professional. I'm the expert. But I do not know everything. And I think that students knowing that you're human and make mistakes up front then that's okay. I think they put us on a pedestal. Even with this group, I'm working with. I tell them up front, "We're going to learn and grow together. And I'm going to make mistakes. I'm going to own [them]. I'm going to figure out how to fix it." And so, I made mistake a lot this summer. I made a lot and so I go before them and I apologize. And say, "I hear your feedback and some great ideas and the faculty and I are going to evaluate those." And then I come back and say, "We can't do it this way or how about this? Let's compromise." Or I'll just say, "It's against the rules. We can't do it." Just be honest, no sugar coating it. I think just, that's I'm human. Actually being more approachable. I have students call me on the weekend and say, "I'm so sorry to bother you." And I say, "I don't apologize. I gave you my number to use it, so I really mean that." When I say call me, I really mean call me. And then they'll say, "I'm sorry." Don't say... Put sorry out the window. (laughs) We're here talking. If you call at 2 in the morning talking about whatever TV show, then that's a different story.

Professor Toma demonstrated her authenticity in the classroom in a similar sense to Professor Pettigrew by explaining how she maintains her personality in the classroom. She explained the personal aspects of teaching and how she desired that her classroom remain lighthearted, organic, and comfortable for all students to engage in discussion.

She further explained,

I didn't want it to seem like too serious or too academic-y, if that's a word. The students did tell me in their evaluations that they felt comfortable to talk in class. They will come to me during office hours and talk to me then too. So I was very adamant about the creating an environment like that because I've been in classrooms where I did not feel comfortable to just relax and say whatever and so I wanted to have

that environment for them. So I think that that's one thing I've strived for in the class and I think I did a pretty good job of it.

Through this dismantling of the “serious academic tones” in her classroom, Professor Toma provides an example how she desires her classroom to be perceived by her students. Professor Toma embraces her authentic self within her classroom through the careful development of her classroom environment to better facilitate her pedagogical methods.

### **Finding: Authenticity as Respect in the Academy**

Professors Wible and Baker expressed they gained respect from students, other faculty members and staff due to their positions in the academy. Both full professors explained how they demonstrate their authentic selves through colleagues and students valuing of their feedback, status, and boundaries of these women.

Professor Wible explained,

They [those in the academy] know that if they want to they ask my opinion I say, "Do you *want* my opinion?" because I will give it. So I am being to me. To be authentic means that generally if I have an opinion about something it's *really* my opinion. But I have learned at times, either to say it in a certain way or just don't say anything at all. Sometimes, it's not the appropriate time to say it.

Professor Baker presented an instance where she was member-checked by Black students as they were curious if she was a “real sister,” or if she active in her community to truly support Black students. Professor Baker recalls, “They were like, ‘Dr. Baker, we knew we couldn't get away with you that you know with you.’ So you don't just stuff like that. They, then, they realized I guess my authenticity and two, I'll pull them around like an

aunt.” She also explained how she treats these students similar to a family member or a type of fictive kinship by explaining how her Black students could not get away with poor excuses, and again, Professor Baker reiterated the type of respect that students have for her.

### **Finding: Inauthenticity as Performativity in the Academy**

Professors Rogers, Bohanan, Wible, and Toma explained how in their academic departments and institutions the moments of where they could be perceived as “inauthentic.” In the context of the academy and coined in Professor Wible’s interview, it means that professors have to “play the game,” or perform the role the professors need to achieve their goals. Professor Wible explained the idea of playing the game as the following,

It looks like you have to go along with nothing for me, honestly. That was at, I have a... I have a hard step also with anything that, that, I feel could be derogatory towards my race. So [that] won't pass. But maybe I pretend that I like something I really don't like, like music or something that someone else is interested in just to be part of the group. So basically code-switch, you know, I mean, it's like, you know, “Oh really? Okay, that's interesting!” You know that kind of stuff when you could just really give a rat's ass about.

The benefit of playing the game as described by Professor Wible demonstrated the types of advantages can be provided for certain groups on campus due to her position and representation in her department. She voices concerns and increase support for Black students to higher administrative professionals, especially as a means to provide more resources for these students.



Professor Rogers explained how she is conscious of her identity as a Black woman and the negative stereotypes that are associated with Black women. Thus, she developed a persona that her husband and she joke about when she assumes her role as a professor in the academy. She explains,

My husband like “Is this ‘House [Rogers] or ‘Work [Rogers]’”? It’s so funny. Yeah, I mean, I always have to be super conscientious of the way I present myself in different environments and so um, I am very aware of the whole ‘Angry Black Woman’ stereotype and so that underlie the way I talk to certain people in different environments... I’m always conscientious of my stature, you know? I found this working in [my position]. It didn’t matter how calm, cool, and collected I was when situations got heated. When the story was always told with me snapping my fingers (snaps) and moving ya neck around. And I’m like, I distinctly remember none of that happening... You know, and so much as even to know that it didn't happen and I know this is the way it’s going to be received. So even going out of your way to make sure you don’t know those things. You know?

As a result, Professor Rogers expressed she is very aware when she is switching back and forth between these identities but these “switches” occur when she assimilates into her academic persona and transitions out of this persona when she returns back to her home.

Professor Bohanan discussed how she has to be wary in performing her cultural identity because it can be exploited within her department. She explained how there is an expectation of her to bring her African identity within departmental meetings.

As a faculty member, there's a kind of, kinda when you start, you are expected to, bring in your African perspective to somethings [that do] not, not necessarily [anything] specifically African about it. Or they also sitting in this space because you are African and they brought you here because you think will be able to, you know, you're a lens to which they can view Africans. So, those moments make me feel, ack, no, you know?

Professor Toma explained how the course she teaches makes her feel inauthentic performing or pretending that she is knowledgeable of material outside of her expertise.

I teach a lot of different subjects I'm not familiar with, so I definitely felt an authentic trying to teach subjects that I was not familiar with and I would say probably sixty percent of the class was probably things that I was not familiar with and so I did feel inauthentic trying to teach it that was difficult. Specifically, the globalization weeks that we had that was pretty difficult because it's not my wheelhouse at all. And so I definitely felt inauthentic teaching that. Next semester, probably not so much because I've been able to teach, you know, the whole entire classroom. So I feel more comfortable going into next semester, but definitely this semester I felt very uncomfortable and several of the topics that I taught them.

Each professor explains how feeling “inauthenticity” multifaceted within academia due to how it affects these professors individuals and collectively. In reference to Professor Wible’s idea of “playing the game,” each professor recognizes in some regard how they must play the game in the academy to be successful in their positions and how the “academic game” can be restrictive for them to embody their “authentic” selves.

### **(IN)AUTHENTICITY IN THE COMMUNITY**

Overall, the professors discussed how they have received various reactions and interactions based on their degree status and positionality in the academy from community members. They have experienced reactions from respect to validation to jealousy based on their access to education but ultimately, their respective communities have large expectations of these Black women professors. As Black women faculty members reflected on their racial (in)authenticity within the academy, now faculty members reflected on their identities within their communities. The professors demonstrated their authenticity identities in their non-academic communities through (a) community engagement/community role expectations while they also demonstrated inauthenticity through (a) performativity.

## **Finding: Authenticity as Community Engagement and Expectations**

Professors Pettigrew, Lopez, and Wible discussed how regardless of their role in the academy, their intentions were to support their communities. In their Black communities, these professors consistently embodied their authentic selves in the projects that they engaged in and the opportunities these professors accepted to further support their home communities.

Professor Lopez explained with her access to education and her current role in the industry that she desires to help work with the Black community. The importance of her current project was very significant to her because her idea was validated when the staff member working with Professor Lopez asked her, “What’s important to you?” Professor Lopez further explained to me her project as she focusing on the wellness of Black and Latina women communities to assist in the need for visibility, education, and resources. She continued to discuss the conversation between her and her staff member explaining her interest in this work,

She was like, “Well they did ask you to be chair? Like obviously you will have a different perspective than other people so I don't think it'll be a big surprise.” Even if it is like oh, of course, she's asked talking about, you know, Black women's issues see, you know. But, hey why not? I'm the only person who will, I guess, so that's how I will, you know, address those things or at least how I tried to in then that was that's just one aspect but actually working with... What else am I doing?

Professors Pettigrew and Wible expressed their community engagement and role in the church. Professor Pettigrew explained,

For the church, I guess because you think you have to live into other people's expectations, whether it's teaching or just saying or even your own, and just

saying, "It's okay, I'm human and I'm embracing my growth. My growth mindset" Um, that's okay. It was kinda tied into the counseling session last fall was, "It's okay. Don't live up to these standards. Be real. You're going to slump. You're going to mistakes as you learn and that's okay!" And so, um, and at church, I'm not going to be the one to wear the hats, I don't sing, I don't play the piano, whatever they're expectations were for a minister's wife is... This is what you get. And so, I had a woman come up to me and say, "You look nice today" because I dressed the way they expected me to dress. And I said, "Thank you. It was the next thing in the closet. I'll probably be back into something else tomorrow probably the next thing in the closet." But I want them to know they can't change the way I dress but in a loving way. And this is what you get (laughs) It's funny. It's sometimes amazing, I love my church though. It's not just my church, it happens everywhere. This is what you get. There's only. I'm work in progress.

While Professor Wible mentioned a similar experience about her church community as she became a deacon's wife and she explains how the church had high expectations for her in her newfound role. But she stressed that she wanted to maintain her authentic identity in the church

But I know I have to wear a certain hat for a deacon's wife at church, right? But the nice thing about that is a... I was just cringing over becoming a deacon's wife. So we had this meeting with the deacons as well as with all of us and the pastor met. [He asked] "What are some of your concerns?" and I'm just going to credit that I was like, up 48 hours in the hospital taking care of my aunt. And this is what came out of my mouth. I said, "I don't want to wear white stockings and white shoes," and the elder ladies looked at me with horror, like, [makes expression] and the other ladies were like high fiving me later, they didn't do it in front of anybody. And he said, "You would say that, wouldn't you?" But you know what he said. He said, "I don't want for deacon's wives to be people who are not approachable." And he said, "That's why all of you why we selected your husbands." And he [said] "We don't know who don't want you to change when you to be authentic."

Professors Lopez, Pettigrew, and Wible demonstrated in their excerpts how their authentic sense of selves was valued and uplifted in their communities. Thus, these communities desired for these women to continue to embody their authentic selves in their communal roles in the church and through community education.

## **Finding: Inauthenticity in the Community as Performativity**

Professors Pettigrew, Baker, Wible and Byrne do not believe they have experienced the idea of inauthenticity in their personal communities and within their families. But Professors Rogers, Bohanan, Lopez, and Toma discussed the idea of inauthenticity through different perspectives of performativity.

Both Professors Rogers and Bohanan have explained to me that their communities and families would not necessarily use the language from my study of “inauthenticity” and “authenticity” but rather their communities understand the professors’ position and engagement in the academy as a performance of the role. In the case of Professor Bohanan, though her family are appreciative of her education and status within the academy, the newfound knowledge that Professor Bohanan has received results in her community perceiving her as “a modernized African.” She clarified,

They wouldn't use a word like [inauthenticity]. They wouldn't. But they would say, you are "modernized African." Or they might say you are "diluted African." Or they might say, "You're Americanized." They wouldn't use that word exactly. But everything leads to being [how] you lost your soul, your sense, your call, your values, your... Your ethic. Your sense of African ethic, right? There's not um, there's not like, there's nothing to be about being an African that says I have to see them from a practical point of view, and I would argue that they would see it as like, you have lost, there's something about you that has shifted. Your set of moral gravity, cultural gravity has shifted, so on hand that they are proud of the things that you have achieved as long as they are cultural, they don't want to deal with you. Things like maybe some of their young ones are forced to cover their heads, as Muslims. And I tell them, "You don't need to do this to yourself," you know? I know that “Yes, you choose this life but there's something wrong with the woman to keep protecting them because you don't want to seduce men.” And they're like, "Ugh! Here comes the Americana." Right? Like, its modesty. A woman that you have to do this. And they tell you that it's very African. And those are things that I

vehemently disagree with. If you don't make it, just as Africanas and covering yourself in layers of material, so we usually have those moments of tension where they think, "Something about you has been displaced." Right? It's not the word "authentic" or "inauthentic" but they will use, "something about you is no longer true." And the truth is defined from their own point of view, which is a particular moral ethic."

Professor Bohanan highlighted how her Western education created a different dynamic in her relationship with her home community challenges her authenticity as an African woman.

Professor Rogers also discussed how her community would not utilize the conception of "inauthenticity" but she explained that her friends understand the role Rogers has to assume in the academy.

They don't... Come out and say "You're not being real, ya know?" It's a joke, it's a running joke between me and my girlfriends. Like, you know? I know in this kind of environment this is the kind of way? You have to act this way. And so, I don't necessarily think that... And this is a generalization from the people that I come into contact with in my life, I don't know if they necessarily look at it as being 'inauthentic' and 'authentic.' I think of it as more on the lines of this is how you have to be in this environment and this is who you are here. It's more of a... This is something you have to do, it's not like you're choosing to be inauthentic right now, like in this environment, and this is what you have to be. But we joke about it. It's not someone's like, "Oh you're not being real." It's just like, "Oh I know you were in this meeting earlier and so and so said, blah blah blah, like this but I know you really wanted to say about..." It's really a joke. Yeah.

This idea of "inauthenticity" discussed by Professor Rogers similar to how Professor Wible understand how professors have to negotiate on when they need to "play the game" because these Black women recognize how they must present themselves in white-dominated environments to avoid their work ethic and contributions to be invalidated in their academic environments. As a result, Professor Rogers and her friends

understand as a means for her to succeed in these white-dominated environments, they may have to assimilate to the dominant culture.

In a different perspective of inauthenticity, Professor Toma does not fully believe her community and family would consider her being “inauthentic” due to her role in the academy. But rather, she questions her role within her own family,

I think that in terms of my family I have felt when I have questioned whether I am the kind of scholar that they think I am. I've questioned that a lot. But in terms of my family because I feel so isolated from them. I don't know that I've ever felt inauthentic, I think that I have questioned my place in my family because I do feel that I am so different from them. I do feel that my education has made me different from them. So, on one hand, I know that they are proud of me, but I do feel like it has separated me from them. And I also because I chose to go to school in different states. I don't know that I could ever repair the distance that I felt was them because I, this physical distance, but I find there's also emotional/mental distance to and I don't think that that will ever be repaired.

Professor Toma elucidates a deep reflection of her relationship with her community to address the idea of inauthenticity may not fully encapsulate in her experience as other professors understood the term as “not being oneself” in relation to their community members and their academic membership. Professor Toma seems to introspectively reflect on her role in the academy and her relationship with her family to understand how they perceive her accolades.

**RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: “WHAT BLACK PERSON THAT HASN'T BEEN SUCCESSFUL, HADN'T [GONE] BACK [HOME] AND [HELPED] THEIR FAMILY”**

Professors who came from well-educated families (Bohanan, Baker, Wible, Bryne) did not see a change in their relationships due to their professorship status or position in the academy. Regardless of generational access to education, each professor

claims their families are proud of their accomplishments and status in the academy. Due to their experiences in the academy, each professor expresses not only they feel respected in their communities but also professors acknowledge the awareness they have of their representation for their respective community and the Black community as a whole.

Professor Rogers discusses how their role in the academy influences her role in her church as her church were planning to develop a project.

I'm actually working a project now with my church that's in the [church] community.

And I remember just talking to in passing like, "Hey I got this project I'm working on in the church." And so you know, I want to sit down with you guys and go over everything. And they're like, "Oh okay, sure." And so, I write up this proposal for everything and then, I get to the meeting and I already submitted it to them. And they're like, "Oh my god, this is next level, like, you're really smart! Like oh, my gosh!" You know? And I was actually trying to piggyback some small thing on an event that they [the church] already had there and I wanted to sit down and kinda talking with them about what I wanted to do. They were like, "Well, there's one caveat. We won't be able to allow you to piggyback your thing on our event." I'm like, "Well, that really sucks." And they're like, "Actually what we're going to do is [make] this is your event and we're going to piggyback our stuff of your event." And I was like, "Oh! Okay then!" I think there's definitely a level of respect that comes along with that. People come more often to ask for advice and opinions. Um, yeah. Definitely a different level of respect.

These community members observe her education and experience in the academy as highly valuable in their church community. Professor Rogers demonstrates how her role in the church excels her community's expectations as she works on projects support of the community. Professor Pettigrew, on the other hand, explained how her church community has heightened expectations of her role as a deacon's wife in the church and yet she maintains her authenticity identity.

Professor Pettigrew explains her positionality in the academy did not lead to a significance change in her community but she rather found that she experienced, "a level



of respect would come a bit more once they found out, like if they didn't know it. They would be surprised, in a good way.” In a similar vein, Professor Bohanan explains,

They're [Her family] extremely, extremely proud of me for being able to forge my own path. Um, raise resources for myself, and I mean, I got support from people to do things but to be able to have the vision and being able to have the single-mindedness purpose to pursue it, they actually proud of that. I know they tell that their daughters, “You want to be like her. Like, she, she broke from the usual things that are expected from everybody and followed her own path.” I know they use me as an example for their daughters.

These professors experience a type of respect from their community and peers due to their position in the academy but Professor Baker and Toma explain the negative sides of respect from the community.

Professor Baker explained how she always had the reputation of excelling in her academic career as a student and thus, this reputation continued after receiving her doctoral degree and into her position in the academy.

There was always a little pedestal like, you know for me just because I did quote unquote ‘all the right things’ according to them, you know, in terms, is just how was really. So they always had a look pedestal side plate, you know, when it came to me and they still have that. But you know the other side of this, it is when I look back at it. It's kind of a lot of pressure because you never want to let people down and this and that you see and I think that's part of it, you know what with, with some of the things were going our community. We just have high expectations, [w]hite people use have high expectations, and you know, for people for our own this stuff. And you know that accountability I think some people would good because they didn't want to let people down you know. So and as I don't know how healthy it is, whatever but you gotta have some level of accountability somewhere, you know, when your family community or something. So yes, I don't think I don't think much has changed. I was kind of one of those little pedestal kids.

This idea of heightened respect and expectations is an experience Professor Toma also found herself experiencing in her family as she explained the idea of the “Golden Child.”

I feel like my family views me as like "The Golden Child," in terms of like, I am not the first one to go and get a degree, my mom actually is but I'm one of the first to go away. I have several family members who have gone away and haven't graduated. I'm one of the first to have gone away and have graduated and so I feel like I am the golden child in my family. And so like my older cousins will like pull me as like, "Oh look at what [she's] doing! Oh you should talk to her about blah blah."

Professor Toma further explained why her doctoral degree made a significant change in her relationship with her family.

And so I feel like that also plays into why my family members feel like they have to be a certain way around me and that is frustrating to because I get why because they're like we want you to do good and what you to do xyz here's an example of someone else who's done it but it kind of turns me into like a not a caricature, but kind of a caricature or like or like a larger-than-life person. And I think that that makes people, like they just don't know how to interact with me don't like a regular level.

In this interaction with her family, Professor Toma acknowledged how her degree and position within the academy makes me a bit difficult for her to interact with her family members.

Professor Rogers explained the significance of her position in the academy for herself and her community.

Professor Rogers discloses with me that, "[there is] the expectation is to representation myself and my community well. To be a role model for others coming up, like if I can do it, Little [Professor Rogers] from the hood that went to [this high school], you know, anybody can do it. And so, that's kinda what I based what I do on... As far as my family to just kinda... Breaking the cycle of not graduating from college and um, furthering my education to um, just being, being more aware of things that we didn't know ahead of time. Um, that kinda relates back to the [the project] I have [completed], I use what I learned to educate my family and maybe change some of the things that they do. And um, for my community, probably about the same type of things as my family.

The professors demonstrate how their relationships with their families and community has changed significantly because of their status in the academy. But these professors

express how they utilize their access to the academy and their education to better support their respective communities.

Professor Pettigrew explains the work she is doing in her church community.

So, my church is a [research] site so, bringing those resources there. And when we do a project, just not doing it, so now there's something at church going on, now we have evaluation playing in place, so let's see if this is effective. I said, "Now, we have more [resources], we should do it the right way. (laughs) I don't say it in a way that "I've been to school and I know more", but we want, we really want to not repeat mistakes, so let's evaluation this. If we're trying to do such and such ministry. And now, I'm using [my degree] in the church and in the community.

In similar vein, Professor Bohanan explains that

The first thing was when I came to US, my thought was going to go back to [my home country], I will establish, um, some kind of educational resource or project. Or something to help other, you know, to lift up or to study something that has to do with education. I didn't have it clearly then.... I want to... help the sponsor and look for opportunities. I believe there are some many opportunities in the world that are open to minorities if only you know where to look. I want to help people to look. I want help to them to build the confidence to search and knock on doors and ask for things, and to be able to propel themselves beyond their immediate situation. When I go back to places where I grew up and I see some people who didn't leave, right? Because they didn't have the dream, they didn't have the motivation, or anything, I feel like their life could be much better than what it is now, if they had a dream and was propelled by that dream. There is so many other way we can go. There's so many parts of our culture ethics that we can use to empower ourselves. So I can participate now but much more than that, I want to use it to find a way to find an empowerment ethic. Like some kind of ways of educating is specific that a young set of people grow up and think that their ethics are wrong. These are the things that come with me now. I haven't fashioned out in entirely yet, it's something that I keep working towards in my public engagement. And I do a lot of public engagement in [my home country]. I tried to find a way to put all of these things together and see how like, "How can we push the society as young as it is now?" And maybe some time in the future, I want to set up a school. I really have that in mind. A school where you can bring in really talented children who, are experience cannot afford that education that give them, and it's not just teaching to them to pass, but it very critical learner that would bring up the education, that would read. Not a set of elites but elite thinkers, who can, um, who can think for the society, who can think creatively. Those are things that I have in mind.

Similarly, Professor Byrne acknowledged that she felt very inclined to assist her community due to the knowledge that she received from her Biology degree,

But now I think I feel like it's my part of my charge to help them be better and so example. Our family reunions three years ago. I did a presentation about taking you where we talk about our family tree. What about your health history at the health history tree. So we have all of these nearby got diabetes. Everybody's gotta okay, sit down with your family and figure out who's got what and you know mental health sorts of things like cousin so and so we thought you know, she was you know touched or okay. Well, maybe there's something to that like so when you go to the doctor you have an idea of what so just giving back in that sense and then so I guess that's local and then greater broader community.

Professors Baker explained the expectations to financially support her families after receiving her degrees and role as a professor. She explains,

What Black person that hasn't been successful, hadn't go back and help their family. I still do then you can tell my attitude.... So anyway, I expected you know to help the family and, and, and you know, those kinds of things so I think expectations was on whatever but I don't really put a lot of expectations on people and all that kind of stuff because I mean, who am I really? So I think for the most part I'm good.

Each professor explains throughout access to education and their roles in the academy, they have found methods to assist their families in their home communities either financially and providing access to education.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS AS MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESSES**

The idea of double consciousness was another method to probe at the (in)authentic identities of Black women faculty. In this research, I defined double consciousness as “the individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts” (Understanding W.E.B. Du Bois’ Concept of Double Consciousness).

Each professor discussed significance of the double consciousness in their professional and personal lives.

Professors Rogers, Baker, and Lopez expressed the idea of having “multiple consciousnesses” and “awarenesses” as they navigate their personal and professional lives. Each professor discussed the “constant awareness” they felt as they navigated their identities as Black women. Professor Rogers explained

It’s just a constant awareness. Looking around the room and see who’s there. It see... You know, who’s in the room governs the way you carry yourself. Um, I don’t know.. I think it’s become so part of life, and I’m saying this constant awareness, like, it’s so constant that you don’t realize you’re even doing that it’s become about of who you are. Yeah. I mean, I feel like I had to do these things for so long. That... You don’t even think about it anymore until someone brings it up and asks a question. You have to do it so much and all the time. I don’t know. It’s becomes a part of who you are. You don’t even have to think about it.

Professor Rogers presented the idea of being hypervisible of her identity in specific spaces and explains to me how the idea of double consciousness is not apparent to her anymore in this point in her, which is a similar idea Professor Wible presents in her interview that I will discuss later.

Professors Baker and Lopez discussed the idea that double consciousness is a type of awareness but explicitly highlight the definition of the concept by addressing how their identities are separated into parts. Professor Lopez stated,

Multiple consciousnesses. Well, yeah, I mean, I feel like I'm a different person. As a mom, as a wife, as a person at work, as a person at church as a person part of my family, like my parents. I feel like [that with] my friends. Yeah.

While Professor Baker explained,

And so I got a little bit of both [in regards to double consciousness] you know, so bicultural although my friends say I'm tri-cultural because I'm a [city] girl. So

that's a whole other culture. So, like multicultural in the truest sense. But um, so yeah, we navigate those systems all of the time but it's not easy. I don't even know if it's conscious. I just think it's who we all know right sort, um, but yeah, we do it all the time. That's just how we operate.

These professors discussed the awareness that they feel as they discuss the distinctions of their identities in their personal and professional lives and even the multiplicities of the Black women's identities.

Professors Wible and Byrne discussed how their identities as Black women seemed to have merged into one over time and expressing how the idea of double consciousness is not as distinct to their identity development as this point in their lives. Professor Wible explains, "Yeah, It's so weird right? It's probably for sure but it's so natural. You don't think that it is." Professor Byrne explained she does not feel double consciousness as a divide in her racial identity but rather she explained how she is aware of her distinct between her professoriate statuses. She explained,

I don't know that I've experienced that recently where I felt divided I think maybe when I was younger, that may have been the case. But I feel like I'm able to embrace all of who I am. I think the only tension I might experience is not necessarily related to race. But in this space, tenure versus non-tenure track when I was hired the dean was like, "I really want you to you know, come on the tenure track. I understand this is where you are." You know, if you're doctorally prepared the expectation is that you do this and there's this second almost second-class citizenry that takes place in that regard but doing what I need to do for my family and my sanity.

In a similar vein, Professor Toma expressed the effects of double consciousness within the academy and how it affects how she teaches specific topics in her course. She explains,

Yes, I think that one of those struggles I had this semester in particular is... I'll go back to that week, the week that I taught race and gender that was definitely a really

rough week and I had to, in very quick thinking I had to think about like what like protecting my students of color who were feeling attacked by their white peers, but also remembering that I'm still my white students' teacher too. That was very difficult for me because my first instinct is to be like I'm protecting them. But these are some of my students like and I have to be mindful of the fact that I'm their professor. I'm not just one person's professor. I had to teach 65 students and I have to think about all of them and that was that was very difficult for me to do because that does not come naturally to me. My first instinct is to always protect my students of color but that's not always case it's not fair to my other students.

This idea of double consciousness that Professor Toma is expressing is how she negotiates her identity as a Black woman professor and her desire to support her students of color in the white academic space.

As Professors Byrne and Toma presents a new idea of double consciousness in the lens of academia, Professor Bohanan further explored her distinction between her idea as a African woman in the Black community. Professor Bohanan expressed

Yes, in the sense that, the two stirrings in me is not Black and American. It's Black and African. I'm constantly aware of my gay friends, even among African American colleagues. I know that, I know that I have to take the Black identity, right? Which is not the way I used to see myself but I know I have to take it on to be able to function. It feels like, I know this is going to sound weird but it feels like you have to enter into Blackness to be able to function in America. You can't... There's no space for you as an African, there's no such space. So for you to able to thrive, you have to be Black. You have to be able to either... Selfishly appropriate African American body... In the sense that... How do I explain this? I need somethings to open, for doors to open for me, and I get into the space that I declared my African American through their histories of Civil Rights and advocate those labels. I see a lot of Africans get in that space and when you call on them to do some hard work, then pull back and say, "I'm not Black, I'm African." Do you get it? Right? I feel that we all of that get into the US, nothing like African here, it's Black. We get into that Blackness, and you become a Black American to be able to function in America. But becoming that Black also, there's also so many tensions, right?

Each Black women professor troubles the idea of double consciousness to understand how it is more complex and distinct in their livelihood. The idea of double consciousness

is understood as the feeling of navigating between the white and Black communities to understand their experiences as Black women faculty in white academic and Black non-academic communities. But rather these professors present a unique understanding of how they understand and navigate their environments, due to their intersecting ideas as Black, woman, mothers, wives/partners, professors, and caretakers. These professor understand their roles as Black women as more nuanced and complex than the original understanding of the term by DuBois. In addition, the discussion of these findings in the next section will provide further elaborate upon how Black women's identities are in conversation with double consciousness.



## **CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research addresses the experiences of Black women professor in a predominantly white institution in the South to address how their identities within the academy and Black community might be (re)shaped based on their education and role within the academy. Black women faculty members have a unique positionality within the academy based on their gender and racial identity and the paucity of Black women faculty members on predominantly White institutions (C. Jones 2006, Behar-Horenstein et al. 2012, Patitu and Hinton 2003, Pittman 2012, Walkington 2017). The findings not only address how Black women professors navigate their roles in the academy but also how they understand their roles in the academy, their Black identities inside and outside of the academia, and how they think their community members perceive their roles in both the academy and community. In addition, this research also presents an important intervention in the framework of Black feminism to understand how Black women understand their racial identity through the lens of (in)authenticity. In this discussion section, I will express the significance of these findings, address recommendations for the institutions, and future research.

### **FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION ONE**

Findings for research question one examines how Black women faculty experience racism, sexism, and microaggression on their campuses. Each professor provided resounding “yes” when I asked each of them this question and explained the varying degrees of how they were discriminated against on campus or within their

departments. The experiences of Black women faculty members combating racism, sexism, and microaggression is not a unique circumstance to these women because the research of Behar-Horenstein et al. (2012), Patitu and Hinton (2003), and Walkington (2017) have also illuminated this issue that this community of professors have undergone. Furthermore, the literature highlights the paucity of Black women faculty members at their respective universities and as a result, each study presents how Black women faculty combat discrimination on these campuses. My research continues contribute to the literature previously stated in regards to Black women faculty experiences combating discrimination at white dominated institutions and their minimal departmental representation, this environment has a significant effect on their professorial experiences. Explicitly in my research, Black women faculty provided examples of their presence not being “welcomed” or not seen as “belonging” in the academic environment as concisely expressed by Professor Rogers stating, “Oh, you don’t look like you belong here.” This idea of Black women faculty perceived as non-belonging in academic spaces demonstrates how in the predominantly white academic environment continues to value white men and women as the sole image of what a professor looks like. Through these anecdotes provided by the professors in this study, discrimination and the perceived non-belonging at the institution presents the larger issue of the university’s failure to provide a supportive environment for Black women faculty (Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, Bernard et al 2017, Walkington 2017).

This idea of discrimination within the context of the United States is significant as I mentioned before the globality of Blackness must be addressed with Professor Bohanan

as she experienced the system of racism within the context of the United States. She explains how she experienced racism in her time in an electronics store. This idea of Blackness as a global concept was an important acknowledgement I needed to make in this study because of Professor Bohanan. She provided her perspective to understand her experience as an African woman in the academy and how the constructions of racism, sexism, and microaggression affect her navigation in the white dominated institution. In addition to her experiences these types of discriminations, she expanded my definition of (in)authentic Blackness because my understanding of (in)authenticity is explicitly centered in the context of the United States. In clarifying her experience with discrimination and her realization of how she was racialized as “Black” in the United States, Professor Bohanan encouraged me to reflect more on how understanding one’s “authentic” identity might be perceived differently within the context of the diaspora. This crucial perspective of identity within my research would not have been acknowledged without Professor Bohanan’s participation. In addition, I further address this idea of racialized identities in research question two as well.

Understanding how the academic environment affects Black women faculty, I inquired how these women cope and they provided me various methods they use to address discrimination, which were understanding intentionality of discrimination, avoidance and ignoring and finally, communicating these incidents to trusted communal members. Behar-Horenstein et al (2012) addresses coping mechanisms in her work to highlight how Black women faculty “survive, resist, and remain resilient” in the academy as my research further supports the claims she provides in her research. The act of coping

is a type of survival in the white academic space that Black women endure to maintain their status and sanity. Professor Wible explains in her interview that she “cannot come off initially as [an] angry Black woman.” She discussed with me that she has to come from a place of understanding and ignorance. The idea of the “angry Black woman” is a stereotype imposed upon Black women to invalidate their disdain for a situation. Collins (2002) highlights how negative imagery has a significant impact on Black women’s navigation of their environment. She explains how the significance of controlling imagery of Black women as explicitly the matriarch, mammy and jezebel within a societal standpoint are “designed to make racism, sexism and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life” (Collins 2002, 68). Professors Wible, Rogers, and Collins understand how the negative imagery of Black women is weaponized against them in the dominant white society. As a result, by coming from a place of understanding provides an opportunity for these Black women faculty members to avoid the stereotyping of their identities.

The act of discrimination against these Black women faculty members takes a significant toll on their mental and emotional health as researcher Walkington (2017) discusses in her research. Walkington explains how academy has been a difficult place for Black women faculty members because “they face a type of double minority status that negative impacts perceptions of them as less than capable educators, researchers, and scholars” (Walkington 2017, 53). As a result, Professors Wible and Toma explained avoiding the environment or individual who enacts discriminatory behavior is necessary because it is an easier task to follow. These negative perceptions, whether covert or overt,

for Black women faculty to combat in their time at the academy, thus this option of avoidance from these issues and individuals alleviates these hindrances in the Black women faculty's daily objectives. In addition, Collins observes how "survival for most African American women has been an all-consuming activity that most had few opportunities to do intellectual work as it has been traditionally defined" (Collins 2002, 6).

Professors Lopez, Bryne, and Rogers expressed how the communication of discrimination is very important coping mechanism for themselves. Each professor explains communicating these issues with trusted community members, whether online or in-person, helps them understand they are not alone in these circumstances. Throughout this research, Black women faculty expressed feelings of isolation, tokenism, and lack of belonging at the white dominated institution, which are similar findings researchers Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, C. Jones 2006, and Walkington 2017 elucidated. This research further affirms how Black women faculty at white dominated institutions failed to be supported adequately departmentally and institutionally. Collins (2002) discusses how community for Black women is crucial as she explains, "One danger facing African American women intellectuals working in these new locations concerns the potential isolation from the types of experiences that stimulate an Afrocentric feminist consciousness, lack of access to other Black women and to a Black women's community" (Collins 2002, 31). These new locations could be new academic departments or institutions, but Black women faculty are a small percentage at these institutions. Explicitly, these Black women professors included in this study represent 8 out of the 57

Black women professor out of 3162 professors total at an institution from 2017. Behar-Horenstein (2012), Collins (2002), and C. Jones (2006) and Walkington (2017) stress how Black women's intellectual community needs support, equity, and access to community within the academy to avoid isolation in the academy.

In addition to asking how these Black women faculty how they cope in these circumstances, I inquired about their self-care practices. Audre Lorde explained, "caring for [herself was] not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare" (Mirk 2016). It is crucial to distinguish between self-care from coping in this research to highlight how these acts function differently in the lives of Black women faculty. Each professor provided similar acts of self-care such as their spirituality, time spend with their families, health and wellness, and having mentors supporting these women in each aspect of their lives. Reiterating the quote from Collins (2002), it stresses the importance for Black women to avoid isolation in the academic space but rather they develop and maintain a sense of their Black communities within the predominantly white academic environment. Collins further explains the idea of safe locations for Black women to find their voices and themselves. She discusses, "extended families, churches and African American community organizations are important locations where safe discourse potentially can occur" as a means to help lessen the feeling of isolation these women might feel in the academy (Collins 2002, 95). Through these acts of self-care also assist these Black women preserve their sense of self in their positions to complete their projects, engage in teaching, and represent their departments. By highlighting the act of self-care in this research in addition to coping mechanism, I hope this creates a catalyst

for future research focused on Black women faculty to address self-care and mental health in their pursuit in the academy.

## **FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION TWO**

The act of (in)authenticity in the academy and in the community demonstrates the continuity of identity Black women professor experience in both domains of their lives. As observed in chapter five, each professor presented similar definitions of authenticity expressing how they embody their own personal identities, unapologetically. Overall, the key theme for each Black women faculty explained was embodying what they perceived as their “real” selves as a means for them to demonstrate their unique Black authenticities. In their research, Nguyen and Anthony (2014) explain Black authenticity “includes ideals and expectations that affect what it means to ‘be Black’ in relation to personal, public, cultural identities” (Nguyen and Anthony 2014, 771). Nguyen and Anthony note an important aspect of the definition of Blackness that I also desire to illuminate in my research and that is the importance in acknowledging the complexities of the Black identity (Nguyen and Anthony 2014, 771). These complexities of the authentic Black identities is demonstrated throughout the livelihood of Black women professors in the study. Professors Pettigrew and Toma explained how their authentic selves were demonstrated through their teaching pedagogies. Pettigrew explains how she desire her humanity to be fully embraced as a professor because she explains it should be anticipated that she will make mistakes. In addition, Professor Toma encourages a similar

method of relaxing the classroom environment to lessen the “academic-y” climate to encourage facilitation with her students.

Professors Wible and Baker demonstrated another method on how they display their authentic selves as they recognize the respect for their identities as a Black women in their departments. The respect these women receive from students and colleagues alike is significant because their status in the academy as tenured professors in their departments influences the maintenance of this respect. In addition, Collins (2002) highlights the significance of respect in the tenets of Black feminism by addressing self-definition. Collins explains how Black women writers respect from the Black community and further discusses how the mutual interaction between self-respect and respect for others is important for the politics of Black feminism (Collins 2002, 108). It is evident based on the rich work history of Professors Wible and Baker at the institution that they have accrued this type of respect from their peers and students and thus, exude self-respect in their positionality in the academy.

Conversely, the idea of Black inauthenticity demonstrated in the academy can be observed as performativity in the academic realm. Griffin (2016) discusses this concept in research as she questions, “And why am I ‘mean’ or ‘in the brazen words of one past student ‘selling’ out I see’ for academic truth?” This idea of “sellin’ out” has a similar connotation of performativity these Black women professors experience as they engage in their roles and negotiate their identities as Black women at a white dominated institution. Professor Rogers, Bohanan, Wible, and Toma have explained how they had to “play the game” to perform the role necessary to navigate the academy. Professor Wible



understands how she can play the game in her role but she recognizes how she can play the game strategically gain support from higher administrators and donors as a means to benefit certain students, student organizations, and causes because she has a type of “insider” knowledge to navigate the academy.

Professor Rogers demonstrates how she “plays the game” through her “switches” in personality as her husband has coined her “House Rogers” and “Work Rogers” personas. Again, Professor Rogers recognizes how the negative stereotypes can damage the idea of Black women in their navigation of the academy, just as Collins discussed. Professor Rogers explains how stories are recollected with her, “snapping [her] fingers and moving [her] neck around” which further exposes how the negative imagery associated with Black women’s anger is trivialized through their gestures and body language, so as a result, developing the two personas of her identity helps lessen the impact of the stereotypes.

The constructs of authenticity and inauthenticity in the academy make the intervention of understanding how Black women faculty reflect on their identities and roles in the academy and Black communities. Through these experiences of Black women professors, their experiences expose how their identities as Black women are continuously negotiated as they advanced through the academy. This research affirms the idea of “authenticity” discussed by Nguyen and Anthony (2014) and R. Jones (2006) demonstrating how one perceives their Black identity as authenticity is nuanced and unique to each individual. Collectively, these Black women faculty provide a similar understanding of their authenticity but their perception of their own personal authenticity

demonstrate their unique embodiments of their real selves. After observing how Black women faculty navigate their academic community, I inquired how Black women faculty members navigated their home communities. Black women faculty demonstrate authenticity in their Black communities, whichever they may be, to further support and uplift their communities and how those communities also uplift the Black women faculty. The common desire among Black women faculty was to offer any resources back to their community, either through communal engagement, education, and/or financially to continue to support their families and other communal members.

Professor Rogers, Pettigrew, and Wible discussed how they are active in their church communities through community projects and their roles in the church. In conjunction with their roles in the academy, Black women faculty provide new perspective for their community to better support and uplift the community. Collins (2002) discusses how educated Black women tend share the wealth of their knowledge with their communities explaining how their education “[is gained] not just for their own development but for the purpose to race uplift” (Collins 2002, 149). This type of community work is significant work for these women, and is eloquently expressed by Professor Lopez when explaining her newfound role in her workplace and her interest in focusing on Black women’s issues. She states, “I’m the only person who will [do this type of work for Black women], I guess, so that’s how I will address those things... What else am I doing?”

Professors Rogers, Bohanan, Lopez and Toma have discussed being “inauthentic” was not a common perception of their identity in the communities due to these

professors' roles and accomplishments in the academy. But Professor Rogers, Bohanan, Lopez, and Toma explained how their identities could be perceived as inauthenticity in their communities due to their performativity in their roles as professors within the academy. Professor Bohanan and Rogers explained in their respective communities, that their community members would not use the research terminology I use—"inauthenticity"—as way to describe their professional identities, as Professor Bohanan explained with the idea of the "modernized African" while Professor Rogers explained performative as an understood joke among her friends. This type of performativity and perceptions of one's identity due to their positionality in the academy further demonstrates the complexities of identity perception within the communities and how communities understand how these Black women professors must navigate their newfound environments.

### **FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION THREE**

Collins (2002) explains the significance of communal support is for Black women. She explains how Black women's formal and informal relationships and organizations "have nurtured powerful Black women's communities" (Collins 2002, 97). These relationships with close friends, acquaintances, and strangers for Black women provide support and affirm the livelihood of Black women. Furthermore, Collins presents an example of an older Black woman participant from a workshop she organized expressing to her, "Honey, I'm real proud of you. Some folks don't want to see you up there [in the front of the classroom] but you belong there. Go back to school and get your

PhD and they won't be able to tell you nothing" (Collins 2002, 98). The professors explain how each of their families expressed how proud they were of their academic pursuits and professorship in the academy. Professors Rogers, Baker, and Toma also demonstrated how their community members perceive their professional roles with high regard and as a result, these professors have high expectations placed upon them from their communities. Professor Rogers further discusses the importance of representation for her community, especially being the first individual in her family to receive a PhD. She explains, "To be a role model for other coming, like if I can do it, Little [Professor Rogers] from the hood that went to [this high school], you know, anybody can do it." Collins eloquently presents the idea in the earlier question how Black women educators will give back to their communities, in any method, to support their communities like their communities support them. This idea that Professor Baker inquired in our interview, "what Black person that hasn't been successful, [hasn't gone] back and help their family?" Professor Baker presents an important phenomenon, which is a consistent idea with each professor in this study of how each woman desires to give back to their community in some form to ensure that their communities are benefited from the resources that these women can provide due to their positionalities. As a result, these Black women faculty and their communities demonstrate how education and their roles as professors are collectivity affirmed and supported.

In addition to Collins' emphasis on community for Black women, Ashlee et al (2017) also express the importance of community as her colleagues and herself discuss the importance of "sista familia" in their work. The idea of "sista familia" or "sista

scholars” demonstrate collective need for women of color scholars to create community with one another as a means of “self-healing and [liberation]” from oppressive structures (Ashlee et al 2017, 100). Furthermore, Ashlee et al (2017) explain by “[sharing] stories of defeat and triumph [unites] us and [helps] give us power that has been otherwise denied” (Ashlee et al 2017, 100). This research and among others (Behar-Horenstein et al 2012, Bernard 2017, Hotchkins, Pittman 2012, Sule 2011, Walkington) support this claim in my research by emphasizing the significance of community for Black women faculty within and outside of the academy to maintain their sense of self and connection with their community to endure the academic space. In addition after speaking with these Black women professors, I recognize how their relationships with their communities (in)directly affects how these professor perceive their identities and how they understand their purpose in the academy.

#### **FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR**

Collins (2002) discusses the uniqueness of Black women’s identities in society as their Blackness and their womanness affects how they enter academic and communal spaces. Understanding the uniqueness of Black women’s identities, I question the type of consciousnesses these professors experienced in the academy and Black community through double consciousness. This idea of double consciousness in this research illuminates how Black women negotiate the perception and understanding of their identities in both their academic and communal spaces to better understand how Black women professor navigate predominantly white and Black environments. Collins (2002)

would address this DuBoisian phenomenon as “outsider within” as Black women professors claim space within the white academic environment to promote their success of themselves and Black communities within the academy (Collins 2002, 11). The outsider within status in conversation with double consciousness exposes how Black women professor’s positionalities and identities are continuous finding a space of belonging in these environments.

The idea of double consciousness developed by DuBois probed at how Black people understood their sense of self in the broader white society, “the individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts.” Each Black woman professor expresses the continuous awareness of their identities and consciousnesses as Black women but these consciousnesses are not distinct as proposed by DuBois. But these women further trouble the idea of double consciousness by expressing a multiplicities of consciousnesses as they navigate their lives. These Black women professors discuss how they reckon with their identities in both their professional and personal lives. DuBois’s double consciousness fails to address the intersectional aspects of Black women’s livelihood and solely focuses on Black Americans navigation of Black and white spaces. This lack of intersectional framing of double consciousness explains why these Black women understand their multiple identities/consciousnesses to navigate their outsider within statuses within the academy and their Black communities. Their roles as professors, mothers, daughters, community members, mentors, and mentees create complex paths they must navigate as insiders and outsiders of both communities. As a result, these Black women professors illuminate an intervention in the

framework of double consciousness to emphasize how their identities are shaped and perceived in the environments they engage in.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY, FUTURE RESEARCH AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY**

The implications of this research address the complex livelihood of Black women faculty and how they perceive their identities as Black women in academic and non-academic spaces. This research interrogates these phenomena through a phenomenological experience centered narrative approach. This study highlights how Black women faculty, regardless of their role and prestige at the university, continue to combat racism, sexism, and microaggressions. At an institutional level, the results of this result demonstrate how the institution needs to better accommodate Black women professors as I mentioned later in this section as a means for them to succeed in their roles. In addition, this research implies at a theoretical level how Black women explicitly understand and perceive their identities in relation to sexist and racist environments they engage in and how they navigate these spaces.

### **PRACTICE AND POLICY**

Black women professors in this study stressed the importance of mentorship in their respective departments. Both Professors Pettigrew and Baker explained that mentorship for Black women is very significant to sustain these women in the academy.

Professor Pettigrew discusses how mentorship is important for the retention of students and faculty of color. She explains,

He's a good mentor but in my head, I was like, "Here we are a [w]hite dominate world and my role mentor is a [w]hite male." And it's like, which is okay, but it's just proves my point that we need more mentors that looks like me. It's not like they can't do the job, I mean, my writing improved with him, but [it would] be nice to have someone who kinda understood my walk. And understand the struggle it takes to get there and because there's privileges that they have that they might not recognize that the struggle is different.

Professor Baker presents a similar issue in her department as well and the desire to have more mentorship opportunities for Black women professors. Both professors explained they both had mentors that could not relate to their identities as Black women but they appreciated the skills and support they received from these mentors none the less. As a result, I suggest that institutions implement a mentorship program to assist Black women professors in their various roles at the university, which is a solution also mentioned by Walkington (2017). But due to the paucity of Black women faculty at the institution, the idea of cross-cultural mentorship presented by Behar-Horenstein (2012) could present more opportunities for mentorship for Black women at different professoriate ranks and skills, either intradepartmental or interdepartmental, from other faculty and staff who have similar experiences to support these Black women professors. Through this type of mentorship, it could alleviate the feelings of isolation and lack of support Black women faculty experience in their roles.

Addressing how Black women engage in different environments and understand their multiple consciousnesses due to their identities, it would be important for these women to have mentors and therapists for different aspects of their livelihoods. The



access for Black women to have career coaches, mentors, have memberships for task forces for their academic lives could bring institutional change for these Black women faculty to find their belonging on campus. By developing a mentorship program for current and incoming Black women professors, it would hopefully encourage retention at the university and reflects in a positive correlation of recruitment for more Black women faculty at the university. Black women professors should be offer resources such as career coaching and therapy, which could be included in their insurance plans from the university. This idea of the mentorship in both academic and non-academic environments Black women engage can acknowledge their multiple consciousnesses in both communities and allow these women to sustain themselves in their communities. In addition to their professional lives, it would be beneficial for Black women faculty to have access to therapy and familial mentors to support these Black women in their personal and communal lives

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

For future research to understand the conception of (in)authenticity to observe how Black women faculty at each rank understand (in)authenticity in their personal and professional lives. In hopes to understand this phenomenon in-depth, I hope to examine explicitly tenured Black women professor to understand their perception of their identities in their academic and non-academic communities. I recognized how the tenured Black women faculty in this study provided interesting insights about their experiences in the academic due to their responsibilities, work history, and how they would demonstrate

their (in)authentic selves. This research provided a glimpse of how tenured Black women professors understand their sense of selves. I propose a qualitative study to observe to continue to observe this phenomenon of Black women faculty in understanding their identities in the academic and non-academic space. In addition, this research could be extended to other faculty and student of color populations to understand how they understand how their identities are perceived and understood in academic and non-academic environments.

## CONCLUSION

This research was a personal inquiry of “Has anyone else experienced this?” similar to the questioning Patricia Hill Collins experienced as she developed *Black Feminist Thought*. This research allowed me place Black feminism and Black in/authenticity in conversation with one another to further understand Black women’s consciousness and how Black women understand their identities in academic and non-academic environments. These questions of identity I have inquired about throughout my formal years of schooling lead to the question of “What does it mean to be Black enough?” after receiving comments due to my education of “acting white.” Through this research, I explored the idea of what it meant to (in)authentically Black within the context of education. Each professor in this research solidified what it meant for them to be authentically Black within the white academic space, reaffirming that the subjectivity of Blackness within the community. This complexity of Blackness presenting a richness of multifaceted experiences thus broadening the definition and embodiment of Blackness.

In addition, these conversations emphasized how collective communal member is important for the survival of Black women professors. These Black women professors allowed me to personally reflect on my growth as a Black woman scholar and understand the importance of my own identity. Through these interviews and the preface of my thesis, I reflected on my own understanding of my Blackness and what it means for me to be a Black woman graduate student at a predominantly white institution.

## APPENDIX A – RESEARCH RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Greetings,

My name is Shawntal Brown and I am a Master's student at the University of Texas at Austin. I am hoping to recruit participants for my study who are identify as:

- **Black women**
- **Are employed as professors at UT Austin.**

My qualitative study is focused on the experiences of Black women faculty and how these individuals navigate the academy and Black community. Through these interviews, I hope to understand how Black women faculty members are perceived in the Black communities and in the academy acknowledging how (in)authenticity affects this perception.

Participations in this study will be asked to participate in two semi-structured 60 minute interviews. All interviews will remain confidential throughout participation in the study. All participation is voluntary. If you are interested in participating or would like to nominate another individual to participate in the study, please contact Shawntal Brown ([shawntalbrown@utexas.edu](mailto:shawntalbrown@utexas.edu)) to learn more about the study, or for questions or concerns. I will contact you soon after regarding your inquiry.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Shawntal Brown

Shawntal Brown, M.A. Candidate  
Program in Women's and Gender Studies | College of Liberal Arts  
University of Texas at Austin  
Study Number: 2017-12-0060  
Approval Date: 06/15/2018  
Expires: 6/14/2019

## APPENDIX B – QUALTRICS PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

### Prompt:

Hello! Thank you for your participation in this study. Prior to your interview, you will need to complete a survey for demographic purposes of this study. This data will not be published or public and be utilized for only research purposes. Any questions that you are not comfortable answering or not applicable to your professional and personal identity, you may filled those in as N/A. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me, Shawntal Brown, at shawntalbrown@utexas.edu.

### Participant Sample Survey

1. Name (First and Last) (Open-Ended)
2. Email (Open-Ended)
3. Office Phone #: (Open-Ended)
4. Best way to contact: (Open-Ended)
5. How do you racially identify? (Open-Ended)
6. What pronouns do you use? (Open-Ended)
7. What is your hometown? (Open-Ended)
8. What is your sexual orientation? (If you feel comfortable disclosing; if not, type N/A) (Open-Ended)
9. What is your marital status? (Open-Ended)
10. What level of professorship do you fulfill?
  1. Distinguished/Endowed
  2. Full Professor (Senior-Level; Tenured Track)
  3. Associate Professor (Mid-level)
  4. Assistant Professor (Entry-level)
  5. Research Associate, Lecturer, Instructor (Non-Tenure)
  6. Adjunct Professor (Part-time)
11. If tenured, what year and institution did you receive your tenure from? (Open-Ended)
12. At the university that you received your tenure, what department did you work for? (Open-Ended)
13. How long did you work in this department? (Open-Ended)
14. If tenured, what type of institution was the university that you received tenure?
  1. Private, White, four year university
  2. Public, White, four year university
  3. Private, Black, four year university
  4. Public, Black, four year university
15. What department(s) do you work for? (Open-Ended)
16. How long have you worked in this department at the University of Texas at Austin? (Open-Ended)

## APPENDIX C – FACULTY LISTSERVS

This is a current list of faculty listservs that I will submit my recruitment email as a means to ensure that all departments at the University of Texas at Austin are contacted and knowledgeable of this study to gain a sufficient sample.

Key:

TT - Tenured faculty

NT - Non-tenured faculty

<https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/lists/facstaff>

- [aaafsa@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:aaafsa@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Asian/Asian-American Faculty and Staff Association
- [aads-50-100-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:aads-50-100-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - AADS 50/100% faculty
- [aads-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:aads-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - AADS Faculty
- [artfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:artfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - art faculty mailing list
- [das-afl\\_fac@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:das-afl_fac@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Department of Asian Studies Affiliate Faculty
- [dses\\_faculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:dses_faculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies Faculty
- [ece-faculty-adjuncts@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:ece-faculty-adjuncts@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Ece-faculty-adjuncts
- [facultywomen@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:facultywomen@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - UT Faculty Women's Organization Listserv
- [fsel-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:fsel-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - FSEL Faculty
- [italian-ttt@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:italian-ttt@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Italian Tenure & Tenure Track Faculty
- [jewishstudiesfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:jewishstudiesfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Jewish studies faculty
- [lbjfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:lbjfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - LBJ School Faculty Listserv
- [math-department@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:math-department@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Math-department
- [math-fac-women@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:math-fac-women@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Math-fac-women
- [artarhdept@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:artarhdept@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - Academic info from dept
- [astro-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:astro-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu)
  - All faculty in dept of astronomy (TT and NTT)

- astro\_faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All Astronomy Faculty
- bio-ntt-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - NTT faculty in BIO office
- bsom-musethno@utlists.utexas.edu
  - Butler School of Music Muse List Serv
- britishstudies@utlists.utexas.edu
  - British Studies
- caaas-faculty-list@utlists.utexas.edu
  - CAAAS Mailing List
- chemistry-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All faculty in Chemistry (TT and NTT)
- chupacabra@utlists.utexas.edu
  - UT Latin American Studies Listserve
- cid-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - Faculty in CID
- cns-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All CNS faculty - TT and NTT - no emeritus faculty
- cs-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All computer science faculty - TT and NTT
- helpsa@utlists.utexas.edu
  - Helpsa List
- ib-tt-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - TT faculty in Integrative Biology
- ib-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All faculty in Integrative Biology
- icmbfaculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All ICMB faculty
- mals\_faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - New listserv request for MALS faculty
- mbs-tt-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - TT faculty in MBS
- ms\_health\_care\_faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - MS Health Care Faculty
- neuro-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All TT and NT faculty - does not include emeritus
- nu.apn@utlists.utexas.edu
  - APN Faculty List
- nu.faculty-staff@utlists.utexas.edu
  - School of Nursing Faculty & Staff
- nutr-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - all faculty in Nutrition (TT and NTT)
- physics-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu

- CNS Physics Faculty including NTT and TT
- psydiversity@utlists.utexas.edu
  - UT Psychology Department Diversity Mailing List for Faculty and Students
- sohe-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - All faculty in SoHE (TT and NTT)
- spc-faculty@utlists.utexas.edu
  - SPC Faculty List
- ssw@utlists.utexas.edu
  - School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin
- txa-faculty-all@utlists.utexas.edu
  - TT and NTT faculty in textiles and apparel



## APPENDIX D – IRB RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Research Questions:

For Black women faculty at a public, research intensive PWI:

1. Have they experienced racism, sexism, and/or microaggressions on campus?
  - a. How do they describe their experiences?
  - b. How do they cope?
  - c. How do they practice self-care?
2. How do they define “(in)authenticity”?
  - a. Have they been perceived as “inauthentic” within their campus communities? If so, how has this impacted them?
  - b. Have they been perceived as “inauthentic” within their non-academic communities? If so, how has this impacted them?
3. If at all, how have their personal relationships changed as a result of their education?
  - a. If at all, how does double consciousness operate in their professional and personal lives?

### [Introduction]

Hello, thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this study. In this study, I would like to focus on the experience of Black women faculty and how they navigate the academy and the Black community. In addition, I want to unpack and address how the “(in)authenticity” function in each community. This study will involve two 60 minute interviews. I will begin to record this interview now.

The first set of questions are about your experiences as a Black woman professor at a PWI.

- Tell me a bit about your pathway to the professoriate.
- Tell me about the identities most important to your sense of self?
- Have you experienced racism, sexism, and/or microaggressions on campus?
  - What does that look like? Can you give an example?
  - How do you cope? Can you give an example?
  - Do you engage in self-care? Can you give an example?
  - What organizations or groups support you and your profession?
  - What relationships and/or people do you seek solace with?
- How do you define what it means for you, as a Black woman professor, to be authentic?
  - Reflecting on your academic career and your position as professor at a PWI, have you ever felt inauthentic?
  - Has anyone in the academy (faculty/staff/students) ever called you inauthentic? How did that make you feel/how did you react? (See: “boujee”, “sell-out”, “coon”, “oreo”, “acting White”)

- (Possible probe) Do you find yourself code switching within the academy and in the Black community? Could you provide an example of this?
- (Possible probe) Have you ever been considered “bougie” or “inauthentic”? If so, tell me about that experience.

The next set of questions are going to be about your non-academic community(-ies).

- How does your family and/or community view your educational pursuit and current position within the academy? Were/are they supportive?

There is a phenomenon in the literature about how gaining a high level of education can change the relationship of a person to their families and communities.

- Has this happened to you? Can you give an example? How did that make you feel?
- Did your interactions with your community/family change after you received your degree?
  - Did community members treat you differently after you received your degree(s)? If so, how?
  - Have you ever had a stranger who is also Black treat you differently after you mention your degrees? Tell me about that/how did they react?
  - Have you ever engaged in self-censorship? If so, what did that look like? How did that make you feel?

There is a “common sense” perception that education = mobility.

- Does that concept resonate with you? Why or why not? Can you give me an example?
- What expectations did you have for yourself, your home community, and family after receiving your degree?
- Have you been able to realize those expectations?

We’re going to return to the concept of authenticity now.

- Reflecting on your education and relationships with your family and community, have you ever felt inauthentic?
- Has anyone in in your personal life/community ever called you inauthentic? How did that make feel/how did you react?

We’ve talked about your relationships with your community as well as the concepts of education as mobility and authenticity. You described some challenges you have faced in those domains.

- Tell me about how you cope with those challenges? Can you give an example?
- Do you engage in self-care? Can you give an example?
- What organizations or groups support you and your personal life?
- What relationships and/or people do you seek solace with?

- Are you familiar DuBois's concept of double consciousness?
  - How have you experienced this as a professor (if at all)?
  - How have you experienced this in your personal life (if at all)?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences as a Black woman faculty member at a PWI who must navigate her identity as a professional and community member?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for your time!

## **APPENDIX E – RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

This study has no known risks. However, during the interview if any conversations focused on racial and gender discrimination triggers you at any point, you have the right to discontinue this interview. I have provide resources that are either free or low cost for faculty members at the University of Texas at Austin or those in the Austin area.

### **Texas Health and Human Services System**

#### **Employee Assistance Program**

Available 24 hours, 7 days a week

**Phone:** 1.800.396.2467

**Web Access:** [www.txhhsseap.com](http://www.txhhsseap.com)

If you have any other questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the following

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