

**Racialized Researchers and Students in Academia: Narratives of Struggle, Resistance,
Transformation, and Resilience**

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“Verily, with hardship comes ease” – Quran, 94:6

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Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday experiences of racialized researchers and students as they navigate and resist whiteness in academia. Using semi-structured interviews, this thesis centers the lived experiences of racialized researchers and students to examine how participants experience exclusion, censorship, and surveillance through institutional norms and practices that produce and reproduce whiteness, affecting their ability to belong and produce knowledge in academia. Grounded in Critical Race Theory, the analysis draws on multiple theoretical frameworks to illustrate how participants navigate, adapt, contest, and challenge whiteness to survive within these spaces. Rather than positioning participants solely as victims of systemic exclusion, this research project foregrounds their resistance, agency, and the knowledge they carry from their communities.

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Introduction

Despite the increased rhetoric surrounding equity and inclusion, as well as institutional commitment to diversity, racialized bodies remain underrepresented across Canadian universities (Douglas, 2022; Mohamed & Beagan, 2019). For racialized faculty and students who do make it to academia, their experiences are often marked by overt racism, hostility, and microaggressions that foster an unwelcoming environment (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019; Settles et al., 2021; Sue et al., 2011). Academia's chilly and hostile climate provokes feelings of exclusion, alienation, and isolation amongst racialized faculty and students, often leaving them feeling like outsiders within the institution. These feelings of exclusion are further exacerbated by the erasure and silencing of their knowledge, histories, and ways of knowing, as a curriculum continues to uphold Eurocentric frameworks and knowledge (Henry & Kobayashi, 2017). Many scholars trace the mistreatment of racialized bodies in academia to the legacy of colonialism that has entrenched whiteness in the very fabric of academic life (Thobani, 2022).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the everyday experiences of racialized researchers and students as they navigate a predominantly white space. Grounded in Critical Race Theory, this thesis explores how whiteness shapes the lived realities of racialized researchers and students. Using semi-structured interviews, I examine how whiteness is produced and maintained through institutional norms and practices that contribute to the exclusion and marginalization experienced by participants of this study.

Structure of Thesis

In chapter 1 of this thesis, I present my literature review in which I argue that academia is a white space. To demonstrate this, I first highlight the relationship between knowledge

production and colonialism, highlighting the epistemic dimension of colonialism. In highlighting the epistemic dimension of colonialism, I showcase how European ways of knowing were established as universal and how whiteness became entrenched in the very fabric of academia. What follows is a discussion of how the exclusion of racialized bodies in academia parallels their historical and ongoing exclusion in settler states. I argue that academia is an extension of the settler state, therefore replicating and reproducing colonial structures that continue to exclude and dismiss racialized bodies. This chapter ends with a discussion of the contemporary experiences of racialized academics in academia, highlighting their exclusion, resistance, and strategies of survival.

Chapter 2 of this thesis presents my theoretical approach for analyzing my data. This thesis is grounded in Critical Race Theory to situate the experiences of racialized researchers and students against the broader historical context of racism. I also introduce concepts such as Bourdieu's practice theory, epistemic injustice, inequality regimes and outsiders within to showcase how exclusion operates in academia. In addition to focusing on how exclusion operates in academia, I also draw on the concept of Community Cultural Wealth to analyze participants' experiences of resistance against academia's domineering structures.

In Chapter 3, I outline the methodological approach that guided my research project. This chapter includes a discussion of the recruitment strategy adopted, the criteria used to identify potential participants, and the methods of coding used to analyze my data. I also reflect on the evolution of my research project, showcasing how my use of semi-structured interviews and inductive approach to my project aided in the development of my research project. Furthermore, I discuss my project's shortcomings and include a discussion of the important ethical considerations that formed the basis of my project.

Chapter 4 presents my findings. This chapter is separated into four different sections. The first section demonstrates how interviewees experience whiteness in the academy. By focusing on the curriculum, lack of representation, and the everyday interactions between participants and white faculty and students, this section demonstrates that whiteness is protected and reinforced through academia's doxa and habitus. In section two, I highlight interviewees' experience with self-censorship and self-surveillance, showcasing that these strategies are used as defence mechanisms against academia's white doxa. The third section highlights interviewees' strategies of resistance as they try to build a more inclusive space for themselves and other racialized researchers and students. The fourth section demonstrates that despite their resistance, academia continues to reinforce their outsider status, showcasing how inequality is deeply embedded within the structures.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

It may be argued that a significant amount of scholarly attention from the West has lately been devoted to understanding the enduring consequences of colonialism on present-day life. This literature has looked at the political, economic, and imperialistic nature of colonialism to understand the exploitation and subjugation of Indigenous communities across the world. While this has contributed to the literature greatly, there has been little focus on the epistemic dimensions of colonialism (Castro-Gomez, 2008, p.269). The role of knowledge production as a necessary tool in advancing the colonial regime has been of intellectual interest to a subset of Latin American thinkers. This review engages with their work to demonstrate the inextricable relationship between knowledge and coloniality and highlights how knowledge has historically served, and continues to serve, colonial purposes.

Postcolonial theorists make an important distinction between *coloniality* and *colonialism*, which is important to note as I use both concepts throughout this section, but not interchangeably. Colonialism refers to the political and economic control exerted by one nation over another (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p.243). Conversely, Mignolo (2021) conceptualizes coloniality as the underlying logic behind the domination and control responsible for the expansion of Western civilization from the Renaissance period to the present (Mignolo, 2021, p. 724). Further, Mignolo (2023) uses the “colonial matrix of power” to describe how coloniality is embedded in the control of knowledge and subjectivity, amongst other domains such as the economy. In summary, while colonialism has a seeming end, coloniality refers to the ongoing influence of colonialism and its enduring impact on society even today.

In speaking of the colonial matrix of power and coloniality, Mignolo's work speaks to the expansion of European civilization that occurred through the militaristic conquest of the Americas. European conquest created a globalized system of domination that continues to influence and shape our societies today. Both Quijano (2000, 2008) and Mignolo (2002b) concur that the organizing principle behind this global system was race; perceived differences in race became the primary means through which the world's population was organized and classified. As such, the concept of coloniality may shed light on how colonialism, although it has long since ended, continues to impact the production of knowledge today, including who produces knowledge and how it is disseminated.

Understanding the concepts of coloniality and the epistemic dimension of colonialism is crucial to understanding the ways in which the academy continues to be a structure that maintains, reinforces, and replicates colonial ideology (Masta, 2019). In other words, it sheds light on the patterns of exclusion, marginalization, and injustice experienced by racialized and Indigenous peoples within the academy. Furthermore, highlighting the epistemic dimension of colonialism paves the way to understanding the hierarchical system of knowledge that has and continues to center European thinkers and logic at the center of knowledge production. As demonstrated through the literature, this hierarchy system was necessary to create a divide not only between knowledge systems, but by proxy individuals as well.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how whiteness continues to shape the experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia. Bourdieu (2004) and Mignolo (2002b) similarly argue against the a-historicalness of knowledge; both argue against the objective nature of knowledge production but differ in the sense that Bourdieu argues we must pay attention to the social conditions in which knowledge is created while Mignolo argues we must pay attention

to the colonial conditions in which knowledge has been created. This line of thinking is crucial to the first part of this literature review, which outlines the relationship between colonialism and knowledge to showcase the colonial processes that were necessary in creating and legitimating the hierarchy of knowledge we have today. In addition, this section also sheds light on the crucial role of knowledge production in the subjugation and marginalization of Indigenous communities that gave way to European dominance.

The second part of this literature review outlines how Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) have become subjects of exclusion in the academy. To illustrate this, I situate the academy within the process of nation and state formation to show how discourses of national belonging and the ‘other’ in a nation state similarly frame racialized academics as ‘suspect’ within the academy. (Thobani, 2022, p.7). This chapter concludes with a brief overview of the contemporary experiences of BIPOC faculty and students in the academy, particularly highlighting their experiences of exclusion. As the literature reveals, one of the many consequences of a lack of belonging in the academy results in the practice of self-censorship amongst academics. As such, this section gives a brief overview of the practice of self-censorship as it occurs in the context of academia and points to the lack of research that explores the act of self-censorship because of the unbelonging experienced in the academy.

In reviewing the literature, I argue that my thesis bridges a necessary gap in existing literature on censorship and surveillance in academia, as experienced by racialized researchers and students. To begin, I acknowledge the vast amount of literature that explores the experiences of BIPOC faculty and students in the academy. This literature also explores the feelings of unbelonging as experienced by these scholars and students and rightly points to self-censorship because of that unbelonging. Moreover, through the work of scholars such as Sunera Thobani

(2022), there is a link drawn between the history and processes of colonialism and the experiences of BIPOC scholars and students in the academy. However, this literature does not pay attention to the epistemic dimensions of colonialism that have contributed to the conditions of exclusion faced by BIPOC scholars and students in the academy today. Moreover, while the literature points to the practice of self-censorship amongst racialized researchers, it does not explore it further.

1.2 The Colonial Nature of Knowledge Production

The relationship between knowledge and colonialism dates to the Enlightenment period, also known as the Age of Reason. This period refers to the intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries, which saw a shift from religious dogma to empirical observation, rational inquiry, and fueled European expansion. It is within this context that we see the emergence of modern science, grounded in objectivity, neutrality, and universality (Thésée, 2006, p.26). One can argue, then, that the birth of modern science coincided with the expansion of Europe, fostering a synergistic relationship between the two.

While military and economic means were integral to European expansion and dominance, Castro-Gomez (2008) notes that it also required scientific legitimacy (p.266). Underpinning European expansion was the creation of disciplines such as anthropology, astronomy, and geography, which played a key role in advancing Europe's imperialistic goals (Thésée 2006). However, Thésée (2006) argues that the most significant development was the natural sciences, such as biology. Biology gave way to the social construction of race, a key tool employed for the advancement of the colonial project (Quijano, 2008; Thésée, 2006, p.28).

Thésée (2006) notes that disciplines such as anthropology and biology created discourses of *difference* that justified the domination and subjugation of bodies based on these differences

(p.29). For instance, she explains that through anthropology, Europeans took note of the cultural and linguistic differences between themselves and Indigenous peoples when preparing for their imperial conquest. Furthermore, Thésée (2006) found that differences in physical attributes, genetics, and skin colour through biology were seen as markers of differences by the Europeans. In exploring how these differences aided the colonial regime, Castro-Gomez (2008) makes an interesting point in arguing that our perception of ourselves and of others is a key tool for domination (p.265).

Castro-Gomez's (2008) argument may be seen in Tatum's (2002) analysis, as she argues that differences perceived by the Europeans were used as a means of classifying and differentiating themselves from Indigenous communities. This act of classification was based on the newly constructed category of 'race' that was used to codify and differentiate between the dominated and dominant (Quijano, 2000, p.216). Quijano (2000) notes that apart from biological differences, cultural differences were also codified based on this new caste system. Through the colonial gaze, differences in culture, religion, governance, and way of life were interpreted as signs of inferiority due to their deviation from Western norms (Mignolo, 2021, p.728). This resulted in the labelling of Indigenous populations as the primitive, dangerous, and savage other, and legitimized the creation of the colonial state premised on the assumed superiority of European settlers (Nagra, 2017; Razack, 2008).

Both scholars, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) and Santiago Castro-Gomez (2008), argue, respectively, that colonization was not just achieved through the forced killing and subjugation of Indigenous peoples but also through cognitive processes that were premised on racial and cultural differences. Quijano's (2008) concept of *coloniality of power* provides a framework to understand the argument put forth by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) and Castro-Gomez

(2008). Quijano (2008)'s coloniality of power refers to the system of organization and distribution, mainly through race, that reproduces the colonial regime. He argues that we must extend our focus beyond the militaristic and imperialistic aspects of colonialism and instead study the ways in which education and knowledge were leveraged to advance the colonial regime (Quijano, 2008). It is through this framework that we can understand how colonialism subjected Indigenous peoples to not only the exploitation of all their resources, but also to a hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge systems by way of forced assimilation (Alcoff, 2007, p.83).

As noted by Castro-Gomez (2008, p.281), Quijano (2000) argues that apart from physical domination, settlers constructed narratives of Indigenous inferiority, stating that the European way of life was superior. Having established Indigenous peoples as racially inferior, an emphasis was then put on defining the Indigenous way of life, practices, and culture as being primitive and savage (Tatum, 2002). These discourses that centred on the inferiority of Indigenous peoples not only legitimated the settlers' control of them but also laid the foundation for the imposition of Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism functions today as the global system of power that privileges European thinking and knowing.

Mignolo and Walsh (2018) define Eurocentrism as the epistemic phenomenon in which settlers projected as universal their worldviews (p.207). Eurocentrism is a form of knowledge whose development occurred in parallel to the expansion of Europe and thus encompasses that knowledge that became hegemonic (Mignolo, 2002a, p.197; Quijano, 2008, p.198). According to Battiste (2017), the imposition of Western knowledge systems occurred through the legitimization of Eurocentrism, primarily through systems of hierarchy that denoted Indigenous peoples as in need of civilizing, further justifying the settlers' continued dominance and control. In imposing narratives of Indigenous inferiority, it may be argued that they were also

simultaneously assimilating them into the Western way of life. In this way, settlers were slowly destroying Indigenous knowledge systems by erasing and replacing their knowledge system with European knowledge, and in this way, knowledge became bound with the settler project's aim of the reproduction and legitimization of settler colonial authority (Midzain Gobin 2022, p.1719).

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018) in his book *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* speaks briefly on the devastating impacts of the imposition of Eurocentrism on Indigenous communities. According to Santos (2018), the imposition of Western values and knowledge systems contributed to a massive epistemicide – the killing of Indigenous knowledge – as part of an attempt to disempower colonized communities (p.8). It may be argued that epistemicide is a systematic attack on a community that targets every facet responsible for sustaining that community, the economy, traditions, language, and religion. It may further be argued that destroying their knowledge systems was an attempt to impede the community's ability to self-govern, build their economy, and ultimately result in a cultural disintegration.

Building on this, Battiste (2017) uses the term *cognitive imperialism* to understand the mental, physical, and emotional effects experienced by Indigenous peoples because of this massive epistemicide. Cognitive imperialism is the process by which other knowledge systems are discredited and ultimately replaced (Battiste, 2017). Aside from knowledge, cognitive imperialism also denies the language, culture, and beliefs of a group of people, while maintaining the legitimacy of one language, one culture, and one belief system (Battiste, 2021). The imposition of Eurocentric thinking occurred in parallel to the repression, denial, belittling, and subjugation of existing knowledge systems (Jegen, 2023). Within the context of colonialism, it is through cognitive imperialism that knowledge became synonymous with concepts like

objectivity, rationality, and science, establishing Eurocentric ways of thinking as universal and as the only way of understanding the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). On the other hand, Indigenous knowledge grounded in spirituality, lived experience, and community were classified as myth and illogical because of their direct contrast with Western notions of objectivity and rationality, creating a line between which knowledge is considered legitimate and which knowledge is illegitimate.

1.2.1 The Epistemic Line

As noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), the processes of colonialism discussed above have delegitimized Indigenous knowledge systems and, as a result, have created what he calls the *epistemic line*. The epistemic line is the line that divides and categorizes Western knowledge and non-Western knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In this case, non-Western knowledge refers to the knowledge produced and owned by the colonized subject, whereas Western knowledge refers to the knowledge owned and produced by settlers. Speaking of this epistemic line, Quijano (2000, p.221) explains that this divide between the colonized and settlers was based on categories of irrational and rational, primitive and civilized, magic/myth versus scientific. Mignolo (2002b) further states that this division conceptualized knowledge to a geopolitical space (Western Europe) and erased the possibility of knowledge stemming from other local histories (p.59).

Much of Walter Mignolo's work focuses on the unequal power distribution brought forth by colonialism, in which European knowledge is privileged over other forms of knowledge. Like Anibal Quijano (2008), Mignolo (2002b) traces the unequal power relations in knowledge production to colonialism and its byproduct, race. Both scholars concur that colonialism was not just about the systemic exploitation of land and resources, but also about establishing a global

system of power through coloniality (Mignolo, 2002b; Quijano, 2008). To this end, Mignolo's work offers several ways of understanding the epistemic line and its relationship to coloniality.

In *Re-Thinking the Colonial Model*, Mignolo (2002a) describes the colonial difference as the difference between Western and non-Western knowledges that have impacted the way we see literature, society, and knowledge today (p.160). Accordingly, he states that the colonial difference places nonwestern thought into a dilemma, in which they are either regarded as so different from Western thought that they are beyond legitimacy, or that they must become like Western thought to gain recognition. These differences, stemming from colonialism, reinforce power imbalances between Western and non-Western cultures. Finally, Mignolo (2002a) argues that the colonial difference also accounts for the ongoing effects of colonialism on knowledge production, as these differences create the division by which certain knowledges produced are placed on either side of the epistemic line.

This division of knowledge is further explored by Boaventura de Sousa Santos's (2007) concept of *abyssal thinking*. Santos defines abyssal thinking as the type of Western thought that divides the world into two realms: one of visibility and one of invisibility. This system of visibility and invisibility is central to the dichotomies of classification and hierarchy that Western thought continues to operate through (Morrice, 2019). Essentially, an object existing on what he terms "*this side of the line*" is granted the status of visibility and therefore legitimacy, while an object on the "*other side of the line*" is declared as non-existent because it is in all ways invisible (Santos, 2007, p.45).

Through processes of colonialism, Morrice (2019) states that the abyssal line creates a distinction between the colonized and the colonizer; the North and the South; civility and uncivility (p.22). As illustrated previously, colonialism through race created a system of

classification and hierarchy that denoted certain bodies as sub-human and others as superior. By their legitimacy as established through colonialism, European thought, values, and beliefs may be placed on *this side of the line*- the side of the line that grants it visibility. On the other hand, the processes of colonization may place the colonized subject on the *other side of the line* by their established inferiority, and therefore on the side of invisibility. As such, what is placed on one side of the line is characterized as traditional, modern, and legitimate, while the other side of the line is the colonized world.

Further elaborating on the abyssal line, Santiago Castro Gomez (2008) conceptualizes it as the line that positions the West as the originator and distributor of knowledge, whereas all other regions, including their cultures, beliefs, and peoples are categorized as inferior and primitive as they exist on the "other side of the line" (p.268). In this way, what this line does is not only create distinctions of visibility and invisibility for knowledge through categories of truth/falsehood and validity/invalid, but it also places the colonized subject into categories of legitimate/illegitimate, and human versus sub-human. Building on this, the work of Maldonado-Torres (2007) showcases that the abyssal line has not only subordinated and denied the knowledge of Indigenous peoples but has also stripped and denied the humanity of the colonized subject, contributing to their invisibility.

The postcolonial scholars whose work I have presented thus far collectively argue that colonialism has had effects beyond political and economic spheres and similarly identify race as the central mechanism through which the settler colonial project was realized. While Quijano (2008) highlights the way in which colonial relations of power continue to persist and shape our society today, Mignolo (2002a, 2002b, 2021) demonstrates the impact of colonality on knowledge, particularly highlighting the epistemological hierarchies in knowledge production. In

a similar vein, the work of Maldonado-Torres (2007) extends this discussion by shifting our focus to the ontological hierarchies created through colonialism and sustained through coloniality. His discussion on *colonialidad del ser* (the coloniality of being) provides an additional layer to understand how coloniality continues to shape the very being of the colonized subject.

The positioning of the colonized subject as outside the scope of humanity was as necessary to the colonial project as was the destruction of Indigenous knowledge systems (Bhopal, 2024). Building on this, Gordon Lewis (2000) argues that the dehumanization of the colonized subject serves to solidify the racial hierarchy between the inferior and the dominant, as it creates an ontological divide between the dominant subject, who is recognized as fully human, and the colonized subject, who is not. In this way, the same logic that places alternative knowledges outside the realm of reason through the epistemic line and abyssal thinking, similarly places the colonized subject outside the category of what it means to be human. Dehumanization, as clarified by des Portes (2024), is not to be mistaken as othering; while the process of othering deems the subject inferior within the realm of being, dehumanization seeks to categorize the colonized subject within a realm of non-being.

Maldonado-Torres (2007) uses coloniality of being to describe the lived realities of the colonized subject, who, under the paradigm of colonialism, undergoes processes that strip it of its humanity, fundamentally distorting its sense of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p.257). This form of dehumanization is accomplished by systematically denying the colonized subject's history, knowledge, culture, and using language that seeks to classify them as existing below humanity. Likewise, this process attacks the very being of the colonized subject, positioning them as being ontologically inferior, and in doing so strips the qualities of humanity from the

colonized subject (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). According to Mignolo (2021), the positioning of bodies as being ontologically inferior also casts them as being epistemically inferior, as their status as less than human means they cannot possibly think or reason (p.728). In this way, characteristics that define humanity – intellect, reason, civility – become the categories through which the colonized subject experiences dehumanization, relegating them to sub-humans who cannot ‘think’, ‘know’ and are uncivilized (Grosfoguel, 2013, p.87). As a result, the colonized subject exists in a “zone of non-being”, where the subject is denied recognition as being fully human (des Portes, 2024; Gordon, 2005; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

The dehumanization of the colonized subject serves a twofold process: it justifies the erasure of the Indigenous body from knowledge production and provides an intellectual justification for the dominance of Western thought and values. Specifically, it ontologically positions the non-white body as being incapable of producing knowledge and as incapable of knowing. These qualities are seen as only belonging to those who are recognized as human – the white man. Likewise, those positioned as ontologically inferior are also cast as dangerous and suspicious, justifying subordination, control, and surveillance (Mignolo, 2021, p.728). This logic not only places Western thought and those who produce Western thought on “this side of the line” - the line of reason and visibility- but also creates conditions for the continued control and erasure of the colonized subject who exists on the “other side of the line”. According to Santos (2007), since abyssal thinking negates the possibility of co-existence, the colonized subject is therefore subjected to complete erasure.

Abyssal thinking is therefore central to understanding how European knowledge systems have been granted the universal status they hold today and how that has led to the detriment of alternative bodies of knowledge and those who produce this knowledge (Santos, 2007, p.47).

This concept is also central in understanding how Western ways of knowing continue to be privileged today (Castro-Gomez, 2008; Quijano, 2008; Santos, 2007). Colonialism, through its forced imposition of Western values and the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge, created a hierarchy of knowledge that placed Eurocentrism at the centre of knowledge production. Indigenous knowledge was placed on the “other side of the line” while Western knowledge was given a place on “this side of the line”; one side being legitimate knowledge and the other side being opinions and beliefs (Santos, 2007, p.47). Santiago Castro-Gomez (2008) builds on this as he argues that one side of the line represents Western culture that acts as the origin of knowledge, while the other side of the line holds the East as primitive (p.268). This division finds its legitimacy in the same discourses that justified the creation of the settler state and the subjugation of Indigenous peoples.

Referring to the processes of colonization and the imposition of Western values, as illustrated above, abyssal thinking was central to the destruction of Indigenous knowledge systems. According to Santos (2007), abyssal thinking provided an intellectual justification for the colonization and subjugation of Indigenous systems, since it denoted Indigenous peoples as being sub-human and as having no knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Furthermore, abyssal thinking justifies the power imbalance within the West as it is seen as rational, and the other is seen as inferior (Santos, 2007). Within the production of knowledge, abyssal thinking has granted modern science the monopoly of the universal distinction of true and false to the detriment of alternative bodies of knowledge (Santos, 2007, p.46).

Since co-existence is not possible in abyssal thinking, knowledge other than science cannot exist and is therefore relegated to the margins, where they are seen as invisible. Furthermore, knowledge continues to be associated with the West as the colonized subject is

similarly rendered invisible through processes of dehumanization and continued suppression. As such, it is apparent that colonialism operated through abyssal thinking in all aspects, particularly in its epistemic dimension, as it made no space for any alternative line of thinking to exist. Furthermore, it may be argued that this is how settlers remained on the side of knowledge production, and Indigenous peoples were seen as non-existent.

Abyssal thinking continues to operate in the elitist nature of global knowledge production that continues to uphold the North as the legitimate site of knowledge and scholars (Demeter, 2020). The notion that knowledge production has been categorized as belonging to a geopolitical space (Western hemisphere), as articulated by Mignolo (2002b), is seen in the findings of Ekdale et al. (2022), who found a consistent underrepresentation of academic scholars from the South in the realm of knowledge production. As a result, scholars from the South struggle to publish in journals in the Global North that are deemed as having more prestige and merit (Naidu et al., 2024). Similarly, scholars Castro Torres and Alburez-Gutierrez (2022) argue that within the social sciences, evidence produced in the North is adopted as universal, while evidence from the South is treated as localized knowledge. Likewise, while the South is seen as the gatherer of data, the North is seen as the site of processing this raw data into concepts and theories (Demeter, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

This hierarchy in knowledge not only continues to legitimize the North as the only site of knowledge but also ensures that dominant frameworks continue to produce knowledge that reflects and serves the interests of colonialism. For instance, this is highlighted by Agozino (2004), who, in his critique of the field of criminology, highlights the discipline's imperialistic and colonial foundations to showcase how criminology, through its focus on punishment and crime, continues to reflect imperialistic logic that disregards criminological knowledge produced

in postcolonial countries. Likewise, he points to the dominance of scholars from former colonial powers as an example of the ongoing influence of colonialism within the field of criminology (Agozino, 2004). This ongoing influence of colonialism is mirrored within academic institutions themselves, in the experiences of BIPOC scholars and students.

1.3 The Exclusion of Racialized Bodies in Academia

According to Patel (2021), higher education plays a key role in sustaining the settler-colonial project (p.162). Dating back to colonialism, education was seen as the perfect vehicle to continue the settler-colonial project because of its close structural proximity to the government and the church (Masta, 2019). In fact, within Canada, the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples was carried out in part through the establishment of the residential schools' system (Clarysse and Moore, 2019). These schools were set up by the government and administered through churches, with the sole objective of indoctrinating Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living. The premise of these schools was the forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples as well as the destruction of the Indigenous way of life.

Though the last residential school was abolished in 1996, the project of settler colonialism within the education system has continued to absorb, silence and replace the non-white other, further perpetuating white supremacy (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p.73). Perhaps the greatest exemplification of this is the fact that *most* Canadian universities are situated on unceded and unsurrendered Indigenous territory (Stein, 2022). As noted by Stein (2022), these institutions not only continue to occupy stolen land but also continue to symbolize and propagate Western knowledge systems and beliefs while simultaneously limiting non-Western thought. This is especially reflected in the lack of diversity in faculty and the curriculum

across institutions of higher education (Bondi, 2021, p.49). As noted by Joseph-Salisbury (2019), the lack of diversity in the curriculum and faculty is reflective of the subtle ways in which white supremacy continues to operate and shape the institutionalized whiteness that characterizes social institutions such as academia (p.3).

Institutionalized whiteness refers to how whiteness continues to be embedded, produced, reproduced, and maintained in institutions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Scholars argue that whiteness in academia is maintained through multiple interconnected mechanisms that reinforce one another and continue to solidify whiteness (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). This is seen through hiring practices, epistemic authority, and the curriculum that continue to propagate whiteness as the ideal (Ahmed, 2012). These processes work to maintain whiteness in academia while dictating which knowledge and whose knowledge is seen as rightfully belonging in academia (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019).

Speaking to the experiences of racialized scholars, the work of Sara Ahmed (2012) in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* sheds light on the exclusionary patterns present within academia. She argues that institutions such as the academy are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others, and in this way, the academy that consists mostly of white bodies illuminates a sea of whiteness. Consequently, she notes that the racialized body that enters the academy is judged and marked by that whiteness and tends to stick out amongst the sea of whiteness, denoting it as out of place. As bodies out of place, Ahmed (2012) argues that racialized bodies entering the academy either become hypervisible or invisible in these spaces, culminating in a lack of belonging. (p.43).

This notion of the racialized body being out of place is arguably best conceptualized by Patricia Hill Collins (1986) through her concept *outsider within*. This term is used to accurately

describe the experiences of ‘outsiders’ who are granted access to these white spaces (Mirza, 2018, p.11). Accordingly, this concept describes the unique space between belonging and unbelonging experienced by people of colour by way of their identities as scholars and people of color. Consequently, these bodies exist in the liminal space between being part of the academy as scholars but also being outsiders because of one’s racial identity. In this way, I argue that the ‘outsider’ within the academy is a temporary guest that exists in an ‘in-between’ space of neither here nor there.

The exclusion of racialized bodies and their relegation as ‘outsiders’ within the academy has been of intellectual interest to Thobani (2022), who argues that the academy is not a mere site of knowledge production, but rather a contested site due to its deep-rooted history in the processes of colonialism. Benita Bunjun (2022), as cited in *Coloniality and Racial (In) Justice in The University*, adds to this conversation as she similarly argues that academia is a site of exclusion and racial disempowerment for BIPOC faculty and students (p.359). Both scholars situate the university within broader contexts of nation-state formation to highlight the processes by which the belonging of certain bodies is beyond question in the university, as in the nation (Bunjun, 2022; Thobani, 2022, p.7). Furthermore, both scholars aim to showcase how the university acts as a site of injustice, reproducing nationalist discourses of unbelonging and disempowerment (Bunjun, 2022, p.359; Thobani, 2022). I draw upon Nirmal Puwar’s (2004) theorization of space to situate the arguments put forth by Bunjun (2022) and Thobani (2022), drawing parallels between the experiences of the racialized other in settler states and academia.

In her book *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*, Nirmal Puwar (2004) theorizes *spaces* as institutional, symbolic, and social environments that are socially constructed and historically shaped by power dynamics such as race, gender and class. These

power dynamics produce consequences for bodies who are either seen as rightful occupants of these spaces, or are marked as *space invaders* (Puwar, 2004). Furthering her argument, Puwar (2004) argues that the body deemed as natural to a given space becomes the ideal through which the belonging of all other bodies is measured. Conversely, those who do not fit within the mould of the ideal are denied the right to belong and are accordingly marked as being bodies out of place (Puwar, 2004, p.8).

Puwar (2004) bases her theorization on spaces, not on bodies being denied entry, but rather the denial to belong. While spaces are, theoretically, open to the entry of all bodies, power dynamics that have historically shaped those spaces continue to operate and shape the experiences of inclusion or exclusion of certain bodies over others (Puwar, 2004). Bodies that are afforded the right to belong in a space are therefore given the freedom to maneuver through it as they will, while the entry of bodies denied the right to belong is seen as trespassing. Puwar (2004) notes that the presence of space invaders provokes discomfort, fear, and arouses suspicion amongst the natural occupants of this space, who then work to manage, surveil, and expel the unwanted trespasser from this space.

1.3.1 The Formation of a Settler State

Sherene Razack (2002) defines Canada as a white settler state whose formation is premised on the violent dispossession of Indigenous communities. As illustrated in part 1.2 of this review, differences premised on race were used as the justification for the forced assimilation and subjugation of Indigenous peoples. This same logic, premised on the racial superiority of Europeans, was used to forcibly remove Indigenous peoples from their land, giving the Europeans complete control of this land. Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) refer to this process as *settler replacement*, whereby the settlers sought to vanish Indigenous peoples and

positioned themselves as rightful claimants of the land. Furthermore, it is through this process and belief that the settlers positioned themselves as rightfully belonging and, therefore, the sole arbiters of citizenship and national belonging (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez 2013).

Bunjun (2022) argues that discourses of national belonging are central to the formation of the state. These discourses often involve the weighing of who has the right to citizenship and who belongs in a nation (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007). Furthering this analysis, Bannerji (2000) describes these discourses as being based on perceptions of skin, language, and are held against the idealized white category. The process by which one individual is seen as rightfully belonging while another is labelled as the ‘outsider’ is crystallized through the creation of the exalted subject, and the “other” (Thobani, 2007).

Thobani (2007) refers to the Europeans as exalted subjects- they are an embodiment of the nation, they represent the values, morals, and ethics of that nation. She notes that the exalted subject is never questioned about their belonging; rather, they are assumed to have an inherent right to the nation. There is then an “outsider”, an embodiment of everything contrary to the exalted subject and lacks the values embedded in the exalted subject (Thobani, 2007). This creates a binary between the national subject who belongs, and the other who does not belong to the nation and is rather seen as a *body out of place* (Ahmed, 2000; Thobani, 2007). The creation of this binary further entrenches a hierarchy whereby the racialized other is seen as less deserving of rights and freedoms associated with citizenship and national belonging in comparison to the exalted subject (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007).

Discourses of the exalted subject and the outsider were crucial in justifying the establishment of a white nation. Scholars such as Nagra (2017) caution that settler states were not naturally occurring but were *imagined*. At the heart of imagined nations was race, through

which whiteness served as the ideal through which the nation was constructed and legitimized (Nagra, 2017). Whiteness, therefore, became synonymous with national belonging and therefore constitutive of citizenship in settler states. As a result, those who possessed the characteristics that fit within the mould of whiteness were naturalized as rightful occupants of the nation, while those in contrast were excluded from the nation-building project (Nagra, 2017).

Furthermore, because the construction of the white settler state took place within the presence of Indigenous communities, discourses of the other framing Indigenous communities as inherently inferior justified their systematic exclusion from national belonging and citizenship (Nagra, 2017). Specifically, the presence of Indigenous communities posed both a physical and ideological threat to the carefully constructed national identity built around whiteness. To resolve this tension, settlers framed the Indigenous peoples as a threat and danger to the purity and sanctity of the white nation (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007). Consequently, Indigenous peoples were not only excluded from citizenship but also forcibly displaced to ensure that whiteness remained the uncontested marker of belonging within the settler state (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007).

Another example of this can be seen in the securitization discourses that arose following the 9/11 terror attacks. Securitization refers to the process where objects of security problems are identified through a discourse of threats and risks, which then will legitimize the use of coercive and exceptional measures that are aimed at mitigating those risks (Ahmad, 2020). Discourses surrounding racialized identities in a post 9/11 context are a prime example of this phenomenon, as their identities are associated with notions of fear, perceptions of risk, and threats to national security (Rivera, 2014). Scholars studying the implications of the securitization of racialized identities have coined the term “Brown Threat”. According to Silva (2016), “brown” is no longer

associated with a cultural, political, or ethnic identity; rather has now evolved to be a category of identification that is rooted in racist ideologies targeting those who do not belong to the nation.

The “Brown Threat” thus conflates notions of threat with skin colour, resulting in Brown bodies being seen as a perceived threat to the nation’s values, goods, and security (Rivera, 2014; Silva, 2016; Thobani, 2007). The categorization and identification of brown bodies as a threat to the nation creates conditions whereby the state feels it necessary to control these bodies (Rivera, 2014; Silva, 2017). As a result, coercion and control by the state are legitimized through discourses shaped by securitization, whereby the need to control and surveil a community is justified through rhetoric surrounding national security (Ahmad, 2020). The framework of securitization and the discourses that arise from it can create conditions whereby increased surveillance and policing of those marked as threats are justified due to the ongoing state of suspicion through which they are seen.

In section 1.2 of this review, I refer to the works of postcolonial theorists to illustrate the epistemic dimension of colonialism. These theorists argue that colonialism was not just achieved through military and physical assault, but also through mental assault on the minds of those subjugated, which was central to the success of colonization (Castro-Gomez 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Quijano, 2008). Further, as demonstrated, abyssal thinking created the hierarchy whereby Western thought and belief were seen as superior, and all other knowledge systems were deemed inferior (Santos, 2007). These processes of exclusion were necessary for the formation of the settler state, as they allowed settlers to impose their values, beliefs and knowledge systems, while simultaneously breaking down the humanity of the colonized subject and rendering them incapable of self-governance.

Furthering the argument put forth by Thobani (2007) and Bunjun (2022), I argue that the same colonial logic that established the superiority of Western thought in knowledge production similarly shaped the foundations of academia. I contextualize my argument against discussions of nation-state formation, arguing that the discourses and ideologies that were necessary for the creation of the settler nation-state are the same discourses that sustain and create the exclusionary practices of academia. As scholars have argued, the construction of the white nation was not solely achieved through the establishment of territorial boundaries but is continuously reinforced and reproduced through social, political, and institutional structures that sustain white dominance (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007). As such, my thesis identifies academia as one of these institutions that continues to reproduce colonial relations of power (Bhopal, 2024; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013).

Based on its foundations rooted in settler colonialism, it may be argued that academia as a site of intellect was imagined as a white space. The codification of academia as a white space was furthered through processes of colonialism that associated whiteness with intellect and the racialized body as being in direct contrast with intellect (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). This process established the white man as the dominant thinker who embodies reason, culture, and science over the racialized other who embodies myth and emotion (Puwar, 2004). In this way, white bodies became constitutive to the academy, further codifying it as a white space (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Puwar, 2004). The codification of academia as a white space, therefore, naturally positions whiteness as the norm and the non-white other as the space invader whose presence in this space threatens to disrupt the carefully constructed norms and established hierarchies (Puwar, 2004).

The racialized body, therefore, is deemed to be a threat to academia's established whiteness. Although allowed entry within this space, the racialized body is regarded as a potential threat to the normative of whiteness established in academia. To manage this threat, racialized bodies are deemed suspect. Suspicion towards the racialized other manifests through doubt, whereby doubt is cast on their intellectual ability (Puwar, 2004). By doubting the intellectual ability of the racialized other, their expulsion in academia becomes justified through rhetoric that positions the racialized other as lacking the qualities and merit associated with being a scholar. These processes of exclusion continue to produce and reproduce coloniality in academia that seeks to uphold whiteness. For instance, the whiteness of the academy is reinforced through a curriculum and pedagogy that privileges Western knowledge and narratives over non-Western thought (Bondi, 2021; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Furthermore, racialized bodies continue to be absent from the faculty and students in academia, perpetuating whiteness as the norm (Bhopal, 2024; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Consequently, when racialized bodies do occupy a space, their presence remains contested, and their legitimacy to occupy this space is questioned (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019).

1.4 Contemporary Experiences of BIPOC Faculty and Students

BIPOC faculty and students' experiences within the academy continue to be shaped by colonialism and racism (Mohamed and Beagan, 2019). According to the literature, many scholars of color report having experienced microaggressions throughout their journey within the academy. For instance, Bhopal (2024) notes that the experiences of racialized faculty are shaped by regular incidents of overt and covert racism, both from colleagues and students. In the same way, Rollock (2017) reports that BIPOC faculty are routinely undermined and undervalued in their departments and have routinely been victims of harassment and bullying by their

colleagues. All in all, these experiences reinforce an unwelcoming and hostile environment for both BIPOC faculty and students, further reinforcing their outsider status in the academy.

Joseph-Salisbury (2019) notes that the experiences of racism, microaggression, and hostility experienced by both BIPOC faculty and students serve as a mechanism to reinforce whiteness within academic spaces. In this way, routine harassment, bullying, and an unwelcoming environment continue to signify the strangeness of the racialized body and act to continuously remind the racialized body of its outsider status within this space (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019).

Drawing on her personal experiences as a racialized professor, García-Peña (2022) recalls an instance where her presence within the academy was questioned by administrative staff. She recalls how her presence within the university was seen as suspicious, as she was on campus grounds during after-hours (García-Peña, 2022). Similarly, Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury (2018) in their exploration of the experiences of black scholars in academia summarize instances of confrontation between faculty members and themselves, in which white faculty questioned their presence within the academy and legitimacy as scholars. In both instances, the scholars' right to belong in the institution is questioned by authorities.

These instances of questioning also illustrate the ways in which white bodies have been naturalized as belonging to the institution, while people of color are marked as trespassers whose movements are therefore questioned (Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). According to Ahmed (2012), with institutional whiteness also comes the expectation of who will be in that institution, and because people of color are not expected, their question of legitimacy and right to belong in that space is often questioned. Mohamed and Beagan (2019) further this discussion on the expectation of white bodies in this space by pointing out that the “unexpected bodies” are required to ease the tensions caused by their presence (p.350). This is in line with Ahmed (2012)

who states that racialized bodies, by virtue of being out of place within the academy, cause discomfort in the academy through their presence and therefore must work to alleviate this discomfort (p.41).

Moreover, racialized scholars are often overburdened with work as they take on additional duties. García-Peña (2022) terms this as the ‘minority tax’ which involves taking on extra responsibilities, such as the mentorship of racialized students, alongside their regular duties. According to the literature, racialized scholars in academia see this as a tax for their inclusion in a space that they otherwise are not invited to. As part of this minority tax, they take on additional labour, including leading mentorship of students and leading diversity committees for their institution, alongside their regular duties. Speaking to their role as diversity leads, Henry et al. (2016) attribute this additional labour to the fact that there is a serious underrepresentation of racialized and Indigenous faculty within the academy. Despite the increase in a diverse student body, there remains no increase in the number of racialized faculty being hired in Canadian institutions (Thobani, 2022). As such, racialized faculty are often sought after by incoming racialized students who seek mentors to help them navigate this space.

Further elaborating on the invisible labor engaged in by racialized faculty, Henry et al., (2012) note that racialized faculty do not receive recognition for this by the institution, and rather it holds no weight when it comes to processes of tenure. Despite the exhausting efforts required to perform their duties as professors and partake in this invisible labor, there is little consideration towards the toll it takes on their physical, psychological, and mental wellbeing. (Henry et al., 2017) These conditions continue to marginalize the presence of racialized faculty and simultaneously reinforce their outsider status. In response, some scholars have found that both BIPOC students and faculty may engage in resistance to combat these oppressive structures.

Building on the work of Yosso (2005), O'Neill (2024) explores the types of resistance BIPOC faculty and students deploy in academia. He notes that many BIPOC students, in response to their exclusionary experiences, actively built their own communities of support with students of similar backgrounds (O'Neill, 2024). Likewise, BIPOC faculty and students demonstrate resistance in their attempts to “speak back to whiteness” by incorporating their knowledge and experiences in both academic and social settings (O'Neill, 2024, p.1011). Additionally, refusal to censor themselves acts as another form of resistance deployed by many BIPOC faculty and students as they refuse to disappear under the white gaze (O'Neill, 2024). However, for students and faculty who did not engage in resistance, the dilemma remains: they have the choice of either conforming to whiteness or risking silencing and erasure (García-Peña, 2022). Faced with this dilemma, many BIPOC faculty and students often resort to self-censorship as a mechanism to negotiate their belonging.

1.4.1 Self-Censorship

Self-censorship within academia is the practice of withholding certain facts pertaining to a body of scholarly research (Zehngut and Fuxman, 2017). For example, within historical research, Zehngut and Fuxman (2017) note that self-censorship takes place in the form of withholding historical facts, interpretations or opinions of historical events. This is seen within the historical community when speaking about the Holocaust, the Cold war, inter-state terrorism, and other forms of political events (Zehngut and Fuxman, 2017). There are several issues with having to withhold information in one's research, and arguably the most important one is that of the free flow of academic research. Researchers are in a way gatekeepers of information, and through their research, they can disseminate information that reaches wide audiences (Zehngut and Fuxman, 2017). Having to self-censor means there is a disruption in the flow of academic

research and information, and the facts and narratives become distorted (Zehngut and Fuxman, 2017).

Self-censorship in academia similarly manifests in the behaviours of those who engage in self-censorship. For instance, O'Neill (2024) notes that BIPOC faculty and students enter academia under the white gaze, and in response, may modify their behaviour to stand out less. Expanding on this discussion, Bhopal (2024) theorizes self-censorship as a way in which BIPOC faculty and students *perform whiteness*. According to Bhopal (2024), self-censorship, through performing whiteness, ensures the racialized other maintains their place in academia. She theorizes performing whiteness as conforming to the white hegemonic framework in academia (Bhopal, 2024). As such, performing whiteness for the racialized student and researcher involves monitoring one's speech, modifying their behaviour and acting in accordance with whiteness (Bhopal, 2024).

While the academic literature explores the practice of self-censorship in academia, it fails to situate this practice against the experiences of racialized academics and their lack of unbelonging. Through my thesis, I seek to bridge that gap using Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice to highlight the different structures in the academy that influence racialized academics and their practice of self-censorship. Furthermore, my thesis adds to the literature on self-censorship as it occurs amongst academics, as it seeks to explore the different mechanisms of self-censorship in academia. I use the term mechanism to describe the different ways that racialized academics engage in self-censorship, whether it be from the way they present themselves physically or through their writing.

1.5 Conclusion

In summary, the purpose of this literature review was to explore the forms of censorship and surveillance in academia, as experienced by racialized researchers. In highlighting the epistemic dimension of colonialism, this review draws attention to the historical processes that have contributed to the unequal distribution of power in knowledge production. This unequal distribution of power is seen in the way that certain knowledges are relegated as being legitimate, while other knowledges are lost through abyssal thinking. This review argues that understanding the epistemic dimension of colonialism is necessary in understanding why racialized bodies are framed as suspect and as the “other” within the academy.

Part 1.3 of this review seeks to highlight how racialized bodies are subject to practices of exclusion within the academy. This is done through a brief discussion of the processes of nation-state formation to highlight the processes that relegate racialized bodies as “aliens” within the academy. Furthermore, situating the academy within these processes allows for an easy link to be made between colonialism that was essential to the formation of the settler state, and, as is necessary to sustaining academia as a site of exclusion for racialized academics. The last part of this review crystallizes the discussions presented in sections 1.3 by outlining briefly the experiences of racialized scholars in academia and points to the need to extend the literature on self-censorship to take into consideration the experiences of racialized researchers.

My research, therefore, adds valuable insight to the literature on censorship and surveillance within academia. In focusing on the experiences of racialized researchers, my research showcases the necessity of examining the influence of colonialism on knowledge production to understand why racialized bodies are excluded from the academy and why they may engage in practices of self-censorship. In my thesis, I seek to bring together concepts that I argue are explored separately by drawing the link between the consequences of colonialism on

knowledge production and the experiences of BIPOC researchers and students in the academy. Furthermore, much of the literature has relied on critical race theory to understand and highlight the experiences of racialized and Indigenous peoples in the academy. My thesis demonstrates that Bourdieu's framework of practice theory offers a valuable perspective on understanding the exclusion of racialized and Indigenous faculty. As will be further explored in the theoretical chapter, Bourdieu's practice theory sheds light on the practices, norms, and unspoken rules embedded within the institution that reinforce and replicate colonialism. In this way, my thesis brings into conversation surveillance of researchers in the academy and extends the analysis on the practice of self-censorship that is currently lacking within the literature.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Racialized researchers and students' experience in academia is multifaceted, complex, and dynamic, and is shaped by a culture of whiteness. Whiteness in academia is pervasive and operates subtly, shaping institutional norms and practices that exclude racialized researchers and students. Despite the barriers faced, racialized researchers and students navigate, at times adapt, and display moments of resistance and transformation, showcasing that they are not merely passive agents experiencing the oppressive structures of academia. Instead, they mobilize their agency as they actively negotiate, contest, and push back against those oppressive structures to build a space where they can belong. To capture this complexity, I bring together multiple theoretical frameworks to guide my analysis.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) situates my research within a broader discussion of whiteness, White supremacy, and the racial dynamics that continue to shape and sustain academia as a predominantly white space. Moreover, using CRT informs my discussion on the subtle and covert forms of racism in academia that create a hostile environment for racialized researchers and students. Similarly, I mobilize epistemic injustice to illustrate how biases associated with participants' racial identities inform their systemic exclusion from knowledge production. CRT, therefore, allows me to demonstrate *why* participants of this study experience exclusion in academia.

While CRT provides a framework for understanding their exclusion, I draw upon Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory, specifically his key conceptual tools—*habitus*, *field*, *capital*, and *doxa* — to showcase *how* this exclusion takes place. Furthermore, I draw upon Joan Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes to further my discussion on how racialized researchers and

students' experience exclusion in academia, particularly highlighting how this exclusion is embedded in the very fabric of academia. As my thesis is interested in capturing the lived realities of racialized researchers and students, I turn to Patricia Collins's (1986) outsider within theory and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth to inform my discussion on how participants navigate, resist, and attempt to transform academia.

2.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory emerged as a reaction to the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement in the 1970s (Delgado, 1995). A core focus for the CLS movement was the critique of modern law, arguing against its objectivity and neutrality; however, legal scholars in the United States were critical of the CLS movement, arguing that it placed an undue emphasis on social class when examining social inequities (Cole, 2017, p.15). While the CLS movement questioned the objective and neutral aspect of law, it failed to address how race and racism shaped the experiences of minoritized people in the United States (Cole, 2017, p.15). In addition, CRT activists were critical of the civil rights movement, arguing that although civil rights laws sought to address the more overt forms of racism and oppression, it failed to address the more subtle, covert forms of racism that had become increasingly prevalent in shaping the experiences of racialized people in the United States (Delgado, 1995). Through this, emerged CRT.

CRT scholars emphasize the importance of viewing identities through an intersectional lens. Developed by Kimberly Crenshaw, intersectionality is a framework that analyzes the oppression stemming from the intersection of social and political identities (Cho et al., 2013). This framework recognizes that different social factors, such as race, class, gender, and sex, intersect to produce unique experiences for people (Cho et al., 2013). Moreover, there is the

recognition that these social factors are culturally and historically situated, and therefore, the social inequalities and realities vary depending on time and place (Walkington, 2017).

A core assumption of this framework is that race is a social construct (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). This construction of race allows society to classify and categorize individuals based on perceived phenotypical differences, whereby one group is seen as superior over the other (Alexander, 2012). This line of thinking has continued to legitimize inequalities in society, despite scientific research debunking any truth to these claims (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As such, scholars within this framework are interested in understanding and examining the social world by emphasizing social categories like race and hope to bring about structural and institutional changes (Schneider, 2004).

The second core assumption is that racism is ordinary, not aberrational. (Delgado, 2006, p.3). Racism is embedded in social institutions and manifests itself through discrimination, subjugation, and segregation of Black people and people of colour in general (Schneider, 2017). Racism is deeply embedded in social institutions and policies, making it an ordinary and everyday experience for people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Given that it is deeply embedded, racism can sometimes be difficult to address, which is why critical race theorists place an emphasis on race, and the need to bring it to the forefront of our discussions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). One of the ways that racism persists in an ordinary manner is through the notion of colour-blind — refusing to see colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT scholars view this as a counterproductive ideology because it promotes a culture whereby race is eliminated from the discourse and ultimately minimizes the more covert forms of discrimination faced by Black people and people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Because race is not said to be important, it masks the overt and covert forms of racism (Annamma et al., 2017). In addition,

because the colour-blind perspective seeks to place all people, regardless of colour, on the same playing field, it arguably obscures the unique experiences of racialized people and instead perpetuates white hegemony. Furthermore, a colour-blind ideology seemingly erases the contextualized experiences and history of people of colour, further allowing for racism to persist.

Critical Race Theory allows us to see how racism is built into the very fabric of society (Yosso, 2005, p.70). CRT theorists, through this framework, attempt to understand how racism shapes American public policies, social institutions, and infiltrates into the everyday experiences of people of colour in the United States. For example, White supremacy—the presumed superiority of white racial identities—was used to justify the enslavement of African American communities in the United States (Alexander, 2010). The perceived inferiority of Black people also contributed to the creation of laws such as the Jim Crow laws that legalized the segregation and systemic marginalization of African American communities (Alexander, 2012).

White supremacy as a concept is not merely referring to the political movements premised on the hatred for race, but also speaks to those every day, mundane actions and forces that shape the interests of white people (Gillborn, 2006, p.320). Accordingly, White supremacy refers to the political, economic, and cultural systems through which whites control resources and benefit from systems that subordinate people of colour (Ansley, 2010, p.592). White supremacy operates not only by subordinating people based on their skin colour but also becomes a social standpoint through which everything that is not white is devalued and considered to be inferior (Muzanenhano & Chowdhury, 2023). This includes material and intellectual property produced by people of colour. Though the effects of White supremacy are universal, I am primarily concerned with the implications it has on academia

2.2.1 White Supremacy in Academia

White supremacy views knowledge as mainly *for* and *by* White bodies (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). Consequently, non-Western forms of knowledge are seen as inferior while Western forms of knowledge are deemed as the logical and legitimate explanation of all social realities (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). A contemporary example of this can be seen in the way that Indigenous methodologies and epistemologies of the South continue to struggle for legitimacy and belonging in social science disciplines. The mere categorization of certain epistemologies as belonging to the Global North/mainstream/ versus the Global South/alternative, rather than there being a unified pool of knowledge, highlights the broader impact of White supremacy on knowledge production.

While the above discussion showcases how White supremacy shapes knowledge production, hiring practices and evaluation processes reveal how White supremacy operates within the structures of academia. For instance, White supremacy in academia manifests through the lack of diversity amongst faculty, students, and within the curriculum (Hodo et al., 2023, p.68). The lack of diverse representation amongst the student body and staff reinforces the notion that white bodies are the norm and rightfully belong in this space. In the same way, the exclusion of diverse perspectives in the curriculum continues to perpetuate white dominance in academia by marginalizing the experiences, histories, and knowledge of people of colour.

As for evaluation processes and practices, these are similarly informed by a framework centred on whiteness. For instance, the legitimacy of knowledge is measured against narrow definitions of objectivity and rigor that reflect the social and cultural assumptions and attitudes historically held by white men (Settles et al., 2022, p.33). This process becomes integral to how knowledge is defined, and ultimately, which knowledge is given space in academia. Likewise,

racial biases and stereotypes that conflate racialized identities with being unintelligent, lazy, and lacking the ability to remain objective are used to devalue non-mainstream scholarship that is normally conducted by racialized peoples. (Settles et al., 2021, p.494).

White supremacy, therefore, operates as a framework in academia that guides the metrics that determine which knowledge is legitimate and who is a legitimate knowledge producer. This framework acts as the basis through which academia's institutional practices marginalize the perspectives of racialized people and generate epistemic injustice.

2.3 Epistemic Injustice

Before I illustrate the concept of epistemic injustice, it is essential to define *epistemology* and *knowledge*. Epistemology refers to the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge (Glesne, 2010). A central component in the discussion of knowledge is the recognition that knowledge is a social construct riddled with power dynamics. Knowledge is power, and it is produced and reproduced through power relations, whereby one form of knowledge will be legitimated over another, and one form of knowledge production is legitimated over another, creating a hierarchy of knowledge production (Potts & Brown, 2005; Felices-Luna, 2010).

Accordingly, epistemic injustice can be understood as a framework that allows us to examine how power and privilege dictate the construction of knowledge. Specifically, it is looking at the instances in which certain individuals are wronged in their capacity as knowers and as legitimate knowledge producers (Fricker, 2007). According to Fricker (2007), this injustice occurs as the result of perceived stereotypes and prejudices attached to the 'knowers' identity. For example, a woman, solely due to gender stereotypes, may be dismissed or devalued. This can be consequential as it limits their opportunity to share knowledge.

Epistemic injustice occurs in two distinct ways: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). According to Muzanenhamo and Chowdhury, (2023), epistemic injustice occurs when either of these injustices happen. Testimonial injustice occurs when an individual's account of an event is discredited by way of attaching a credibility deficit to that person's identity (Arcila-Valenzuela & Páez, 2024). Essentially, the individual's capacity of knowing is called into question, which results in the dismissal of their narrative. Fricker (2007) illustrates this concept by referring to the example in which a woman's account of sexual harassment at work is invalidated by her male boss. Her boss, who holds a position of power, dismisses her narrative by attaching a deficit to her identity as a woman.

This phenomenon is understood as a credibility deficit. Credibility deficit is the process by which an individual experiences a diminished level of credibility based on perceived prejudicial stereotypes associated with their identity (Munroe, 2016, p.924). Referring back to the example of the woman whose complaints about sexual harassment at work are dismissed, Fricker (2007) maintains that her capacity as a *knower* is dismissed due to the perceived prejudicial stereotypes associated with her identity as a woman; that women are irrational, that women are emotional, and that women are attention seekers. Consequently, the woman's capacity as a transmitter of knowledge is also harmed.

Another aspect of epistemic injustice, as conceptualized by Fricker (2007), is called hermeneutic injustice. Hermeneutic injustice refers to the inability of someone to conceptualize an experience or occurrence due to the lack of representational categories in the knowledge sphere (Fricker, 2007). In simpler terms, it is when someone cannot articulate or understand a significant social experience due to the lack of collective understanding of that social experience (Beeby, 2011). This often puts the individual at an unfair disadvantage, as they cannot make

sense of their social reality and are unable to articulate it (Alyce et al., 2023). Referring to the earlier example, the woman could not articulate her experience of sexual harassment at work due to the lack of conceptualization of the notion of sexual harassment at the time.

Epistemic injustice serves as a useful framework to theorize my participants' epistemic exclusion from broader discussions of racism. While my thesis does not document direct instances of epistemic violence, it examines the mechanisms through which this violence is enacted. Namely, I examine how the everyday practices and institutional norms, rooted in whiteness, create conditions in which the knowledge and contributions of BIPOC scholars and students are delegitimized. To further unpack how this system of exclusion is sustained, I draw upon Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory to examine how their exclusion is normalized and sustained through everyday practices.

2.4 Bourdieu's Practice Theory

Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory mediates the tension between the objective versus subjective divide in understanding human behaviour by introducing a theoretical framework that encompasses both the individual and structural influence (Jenkins, 1992). This theoretical framework provides insight into how complex structures and relationships in one's life contribute towards their everyday practices (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Central to understanding this theory are three theoretical tools: *habitus*, *capital*, and *field*. To understand this theory of practice, it is imperative to understand habitus, capital, and field separately, and then to one another.

2.4.1 Field

To understand human behaviour and interaction, Bourdieu argues we must pay attention to the social spaces, or *fields*, in which these interactions take place (Thomson, 2014, p.65).

Fields are social arenas in which social agents compete and struggle for various forms of capital, recognition, and power (Harker et al., 1990, p.9). Fields can be any number of social spaces, such as the field of education, the field of politics, and even the workplace (Ngarchu, 2014). In addition, fields are never value-free or homogenous, but rather are semi-autonomous, consisting of their own implicit set of rules, values, and norms (Harker et al., 1990, p.9; Tichavakunda, 2019). Harker et al. (1990), in their summary of Bourdieu's thinking tools, note that the social agents within these fields consciously or unconsciously accept the rules of these fields and therefore all share the same set of beliefs, or the *doxa* (p.7).

2.4.2 Doxa

Doxa refers to the implicit, un-questioned, taken-for-granted assumptions and ways of thinking that function to produce and reproduce actions in social fields (Deer, 2014). In other words, doxa can be understood as the collective consciousness of a group that dictates between right versus wrong, acceptable versus unacceptable, and normal versus abnormal in a particular field. Doxic beliefs vary by field, but within a particular field are shared by all members in a field, and act as the invisible but guiding force that shapes the norms and behaviors of social agents within a particular field. (Berlinerblau, 2001). In any field, doxa encompasses the shared, and unquestioned values, beliefs, and norms that determine the practices, attitudes, and opinions shared by a group (Zhu et al., 2021, p.3).

As noted by Deer (2014), doxa is closely linked to symbolic power, which Bourdieu describes as the ability to enforce and impose meaning without the use of coercion or force. Rather, meaning is enforced and reinforced through norms, making it appear natural. In this way, symbolic power and doxa have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Since doxa remains natural and goes unquestioned in a field, the power relations that produced doxa remain unrecognized,

sustaining symbolic power. In order for doxa to operate, it requires that its legitimacy, or the legitimacy of those who exert it, not be questioned; in this way, the arbitrariness of the norm remains unrecognized and therefore symbolic power and doxa continue to operate (Zhu et al., 2021).

2.4.3 Capital

Capital can be understood as the currency that determines one's positioning in a particular field (Apps, Beckman & Bennet, 2019; Jackson-Cole & Chadderton, 2023, p.106). In addition, capital is field-specific and determined by the doxa; what one field values as capital may not be considered as capital in a different field (Harker et al., 1990, p.13). There are different forms of capital articulated by Bourdieu: social capital, economic capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital (Moore, 2014). As noted by Tichavakunda, (2019), social capital refers to the benefits one is granted from having social networks and relationships, which further grant access to resources and support in a particular field. A higher number of resources through one's social networks acts as a form of capital because it can facilitate accessing other forms of capital, such as cultural capital and economic capital (Tichavakunda, 2019).

Economic capital refers to the material and economic wealth one acquires, whereas symbolic capital refers to the intangible capital, but culturally significant capital such as prestige and honour (Harker et al., 1990, p.13). Cultural capital exists in three forms: embodied capital, objectified capital, and institutionalized capital. Cultural capital in an embodied form refers to the non-material forms of wealth; your knowledge, skills, and other forms of practices that are acquired through socialization (Yosso, 2006; Xu & Jiang, 2020). Objectified forms of cultural capital refer to the material goods that may signify someone's social standing, such as books or

writings, or art (Bourdieu, 1986). Lastly, speaking to cultural capital in an institutionalized form, Bourdieu (1986) refers to academic qualifications and credentials held by an individual.

Under Bourdieu's framework, capital enables us to examine how social order and social hierarchies within a field are maintained in ways that appear legitimate. As noted earlier, capital is field-specific, and whether something is considered capital varies across fields, contingent on the doxa – the unspoken norms and values – of that field. When an individual possesses capital that aligns with the doxa of a field, that capital may be perceived as merit, competence, or qualification, rather than capital. This alignment thus grants the individual greater mobility and legitimacy in the field (Jackson-Cole & Chadderton, 2023, p.106). On the contrary, those who do not possess field-specific capital may struggle to meet the field's expectations and thus may struggle with advancement in the field. In this way, the existing social order and social hierarchies within a field are maintained by rewarding those who possess capital that aligns with the field's dominant norms and practices.

2.4.4 Habitus

Habitus is a central component of Bourdieu's theoretical framework. This concept was developed to showcase not only how the body exists in the social world, but also how the social world is embedded within the body (Reay, 2004). Formally, habitus can be defined as a system of dispositions that guide human attitudes and behaviours (Jenkins, 1992; Maton, 2014). In other words, it is referring to the tools- rituals, myths, archetypes- that operate at a subconscious level and guide how we act in the social world (Ngarachu, 2014). According to Bourdieu, dispositions are those natural tendencies we have that influence the positions we hold in social worlds (Maton, 2014). The habitus is often described as the “structured and structuring structure” (Maton, 2014, p.50).

Essentially, one's habitus is "structured" in that it is made up of an individual's past and present circumstances (Maton, 2014). This accounts for the ways in which one's everyday practices shape our everyday life. Moreover, it is "structuring" in the sense that the *habitus* shapes our future and present lives (Maton, 2014). The habitus influences which opportunity we will choose currently, as well as in the future. (Veenman et al., 2023). Lastly, it is a "structure" in the sense that it comprises certain dispositions that incline social agents to act in certain ways (Maton, 2014). In this way, the habitus is constitutive by the social and of the social; it is the theorizing link between the structure and the individual as it encompasses the structure within the individual (Maton, 2014; Power, 1999).

A shift away from deterministic ways of explaining human behaviour, Bourdieu's habitus is reproduced and produced in the interaction between the structure and agency (Maton, 2014). According to Bourdieu, the habitus operates on a subconscious level; it produces and reproduces our ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and the way we carry ourselves (Maton, 2014). The habitus thus becomes the physical embodiment of the structure within the individual and changes according to the field we are in (Maton, 2014; Power, 1999). As individuals adapt to different fields and norms, so does their habitus according to that specific field.

2.4.5 Interplay between the habitus, field, and capital

Although habitus, field, and capital are all distinctive and vital tools for Bourdieu's theoretical framework, they cannot be understood except in relation to one another. According to this framework, practice can be defined as the individual's actions and behaviours resulting from the interplay between one's habitus and one's position in a field (Apps et al., 2019). As mentioned previously, the positions one holds in the field is influenced by the amount of capital you can bring (Jackson-Cole & Chadderton, 2023, p.106). While one's habitus influences the

way you act in a certain field, the way you act in a certain field is also influenced by the configuration of one's capital (Legusov, 2020). An example of this is seen in the ways that people of similar economic backgrounds will typically have similar temperament styles as they adhere to the "rules of the game" (Hong & Zhao, 2015).

Bourdieu's framework of practice informs my discussion on censorship and surveillance in academia. Specifically, censorship and surveillance can be understood through academia's white doxa. Informed by whiteness, academia's doxa privileges practices, norms, and ideas that are in alignment with it. Similarly, habitus is informed by doxa, and together they mutually reinforce one another. This is integral to understanding moments in which participants experience censorship and surveillance from academia. This censorship and surveillance happen in covert ways, such as through academia's resistance to creating space for marginalized perspectives and is deployed by social agents who operate from a habitus informed by academia's doxa and therefore seek to uphold its doxa. While this framework provides me with analytical tools to understand the participants' experiences of exclusion, it is not without its limitations.

2.4.6 Limitations

A primary focus of my study is to examine the racial dynamics at play within academia that, in turn, shape the exclusionary experiences of the participants. A common critique of Bourdieu's theory of practice is that it accounts for inequalities because of differences in social class but fails to consider how race also shapes inequality (Tichavakunda, 2019). For this reason, using this framework in isolation fails to consider the impact that race has on academia as an institution, and further, the experiences of my participants. To address this gap, my thesis brings

together Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory in tandem with CRT to provide a holistic understanding of my participants' experience in academia.

Furthermore, while habitus, field, capital, and doxa account for the structural exclusion of racialized researchers and students, they fail to consider how White supremacy is integrated in the very practices that create and sustain the structural exclusion experienced by all participants of this study. Speaking to this, scholars such as Ahmed (2012) and Henry et al. (2017) suggest that racialized academics' experiences of exclusion are systemic and part of broader patterns of inequalities. Exclusion is therefore not experienced as an isolated event but rather as a product of institutional norms and practices that shape the everyday experiences of racialized academics (Ahmed, 2012). To explore this further, I mobilize Joan Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes.

2.5 Inequality Regimes

Inequality regimes are defined as "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within organizations" (Acker, 2006, p. 443). In this context, Acker (2006) defines inequalities in organizations as "the systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes, workplace decisions, such as how to organize work, opportunities for promotion and interesting work, security in employment and benefits, pay and other monetary rewards, respect and pleasures in work and work relations" (p.443). She argues that inequalities exist in all organizations, stemming from specific historical, cultural, and societal contexts and mirror inequalities present in society (Acker, 2006; Knappert et al., 2025). Inequalities are therefore fluid and dynamic, and vary across organizations (Acker, 2006; Olofsdotter et al., 2023; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012, p.253).

In her influential work on gendered organizations, Acker (1990, 2012) identifies gender as an enduring basis for inequality, arguing that gender shapes structural practices and processes that continue to recreate gender inequalities across workplaces. However, upon further analysis, she argues that gender in isolation fails to consider the broader systems of inequalities that shape workplace organizations. Using inequality regimes, she furthers her analysis by bringing into discussion race and class, arguing that race and class processes are created in organizational processes as is gender (Acker, 2012, p.219). For this reason, while inequality can be experienced through other elements, Acker's (2006) inequality regimes are primarily concerned with the intersection of race, class, and gender. She identifies six characteristics of inequality regimes that will be further explored below: 1) *the bases of inequality*, 2) *the organizing processes that produce inequality*, 4) *the shape and degree of inequality*, 4) *the visibility of inequalities*, 5) *the legitimacy of inequalities*, and 6) *control and compliance*.

2.5.1 The Bases of Inequality

Acker's inequality regimes challenge the assumption that organizations are either gender or race neutral and instead argue that they are structured by and through bases of inequalities (Hindman & Paulsen, 2024). The bases of inequality refer to the social category through which inequality is experienced (Acker, 2006). While Acker primarily focuses on the intersection between race, class, and gender, she acknowledges that inequality may be experienced through other elements as well, such as ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, and at times religion (Healy et al., 2011; Knappert et al., 2025). These inequalities are embedded in the everyday processes and practices of the organization, reproducing and preserving these inequalities (Acker, 2006; Hindman & Paulsen, 2024).

2.5.2 Organizing Processes That Produce Inequality

This component examines how inequalities in organizations are sustained and created through everyday practices and processes that are used to achieve organizational goals (Acker, 2006). This includes recruitment and hiring practices, organization of work and work requirements, promotion processes, wage classification, role allocation, evaluation, and informal interactions at work (Bambery et al., 2022; Olofsdotter et al., 2023). These practices are often informed by racialized and gendered assumptions of who and what the “ideal worker” is (Knappert et al., 2025, p.46). Historically, constructions of the ideal worker have reflected the lives of white, middle-class men who are free from external responsibilities and able to dedicate much of their time to the organization (Acker, 2006; Hindman & Paulsen, 2024). In this way, gendered inequalities continue to persist across organizations as the processes and practices are built around the lives of white, middle-class men, excluding women who are typically burdened with familial responsibilities and therefore are unable to dedicate much of their time to the organization (Acker, 2006; Hindman & Paulsen, 2024; Knappert et al., 2025; Puwar, 2001).

2.5.3 The Shape and Degree of Inequality

While all organizations produce inequality, how they manifest and the level to which they do vary and depend upon the organization’s structure (Acker, 2006; Knappert et al., 2025). For instance, while racial exclusion may be the primary bases of inequality in one organization, gender exclusion may be the dominant bases for inequality in another. These inequalities are typically manifested in recognition and advancement practices in the workplace for both men and women (Davies et al., 2020). As an example, Acker (2009) notes that white men typically occupy leadership positions in organizations, highlighting the gender and racial disparity within the organizational hierarchy.

2.5.4 The Visibility and Legitimacy of Inequalities

The visibility of inequalities refers to the degree of awareness of inequalities (Davies et al., 2020). Acker (2006) argues that the awareness of inequalities depends on the position of the individual in the organization, and awareness may be intentional or unintentional (Healy et al., 2011). When inequalities remain invisible, they are legitimated and accepted as the norm, meaning differences in power remain unchallenged and may be accepted (Acker, 2006; Olofsdotter et al., 2023). In this way, when inequalities remain invisible or are justified, efforts for change in the organization become difficult (Knappert et al., 2025).

2.5.5 Control and Compliance

The final component of inequality regimes refers to the mechanisms through which organizational power is maintained (Acker, 2006). This can manifest through bureaucratic rules, technology, rewards, coercion, punishment, and function to maintain inequalities in organizations (Acker, 2006;2009; Knappert et al., 2025). This control is often class-based and may be direct, obvious, or unobtrusive and indirect (Healy et al., 2011). Moreover, control can also be internalized, where members of the organization believe in the legitimacy of the bureaucratic rules (Acker, 2009).

Acker's (2006) inequality regimes allows me to extend my discussion on the exclusion experienced by racialized researchers and students. Complementing Bourdieu's practice theory, this framework allows me to theorize how exclusion experienced by racialized researchers and students in academia is systemic, and inequality is produced through the practices, processes, and structures of academia. This framework will therefore allow me to examine institutional practices and norms that contribute to the exclusion of racialized researchers and students. As highlighted by Ahmed (2012), these practices place racialized academics in a unique position, where they are

excluded structurally despite occupying a space within academic spaces. To capture the lived realities of my participants as they navigate this, I mobilize Patricia Collins's (1986) outsider within theory.

2.6 Outsider Within

Outsider within was conceptualized to capture the exclusion of Black women in predominantly white institutions, such as academia (Bhambra, 2015). This framework has been widely used to explore how certain bodies experience inclusion and exclusion through the intersection of social identities such as race and gender (Collins, 1986). Collins (1986) illustrates this through the example of Black women working for elite white families, who, despite the proximity to the white families, remained structurally and socially outsiders despite the proximity. As insiders, these women were privy to the intimate secrets of white society, gaining knowledge about the dominant group despite not having access to their power (Davison-Vecchione & Carreira da Silva, 2025). This unique positioning offers outsiders a dual perspective, allowing the opportunity to understand and be part of dominant spaces while also remaining critical through their unique standpoint (Collins, 1986).

Using this framework will allow me to capture the lived realities and experiences of racialized researchers and students as they navigate exclusion in academia. Specifically, through this framework, I intend to explore how structural exclusion manifests in the everyday experiences of racialized researchers and students. Moreover, using this framework will inform my discussion on participants' resistance and navigation of academia. As illustrated by O'Neil (2024), a key part of the experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia is one of resistance, and to examine this resistance, I mobilize Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth.

2.7 Community Cultural Wealth

Situated within critical race theory, community cultural wealth (CCW) challenges Bourdieusian notions of cultural capital that situate communities of colour within deficit narratives (Haynes, 2023, p.10). Yosso (2005) argues that these traditional notions of cultural capital are defined by white middle-class values and therefore fail to recognize the cultural assets that communities of colour possess. In this way, people of colour are rendered as being culturally poor, whereas whites are seen as being culturally rich (Haynes, 2023; Yosso, 2005, p.76). This line of thinking contributes to dominant discourses that often view people of colour through deficit perspectives (Fernández et al., 2020). To counter this line of thinking, Yosso (2005) introduces six forms of capital that she argues people of colour possess and rely on when navigating oppressive structures. Below, I briefly outline the six forms of capital.¹

2.7.1 Six Forms of Capital

The first form of capital identified by CCW is *aspirational capital*. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future despite facing barriers (Washington et al., 2024). This form of capital is often seen in racialized families who encourage their kids to pursue lives beyond their circumstances (Haynes, 2023). Likewise, *resistant capital* refers to the inherited, acquired knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviors (Fernández et al., 2020). Resistant capital is grounded in “the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by communities of colour” (Yosso, 2005, p.80). Moreover, this form of

¹ It is important to note that the use of capital here differs from capital under a Bourdieusian lens, which views capital as that which allows for the reproduction of social order and social inequality. On the contrary, this form of capital refers to the positive skills and resources that allow for the transformation of social order. This thesis mobilizes Yosso’s capital to highlight the resources racialized scholars and students bring with them to academia and leverage to transform academia’s doxa.

capital encompasses the knowledge acquired through lived experiences in fighting against systemic injustice and oppression, and passed down through families (Yosso, 2005).

The next form of capital is *Navigational capital*, which refers to the skills people of colour use to navigate and maneuver through institutions not created for them (Yosso, 2005). This capital recognizes the individual agency people of colour possess as well as how they mobilize their networks to persevere through oppressive structures (Washington et al., 2024). *Social capital* emphasizes the importance of community, highlighting the networks of support and resources people of colour have access to for support in navigating oppressive institutions (Fernández et al., 2020; Haynes, 2023; Yosso, 2005). *Familial capital* similarly underscores the importance of community, as it refers to the knowledge, resources, and communities of support that people of colour can rely on (Yosso, 2005). Lastly, linguistic capital refers to the multitude of skills people of colour have in the area of language to communicate (Haynes, 2023; Washington et al., 2024).

As resistance is often a focal point of the lived experiences of racialized academics, using CCW allows me to foreground the tools they use to remain in academia, despite the barriers they face. With a core focus on cultural wealth, CCW gives a name to the everyday acts of resistance and transformation engaged in by BIPOC faculty and students. Likewise, using this framework challenges deficit-based narratives whose notions of capital are derived from Eurocentric and Western ideas, and instead brings to light the capital rooted in community, lived experiences, and shared strength and resilience often found in racialized communities. In mobilizing this framework, I hope to highlight participants' strength, resilience, and unwavering commitment to creating an inclusive space for not only themselves, but those who may come after them.

2.8 Conclusion

To accurately depict the complex, multifaceted experiences of racialized researchers and students, I mobilize multiple frameworks to guide my analysis. I draw upon Critical Race Theory to situate their experiences against broader discussions of race. This allows me to draw upon concepts such as whiteness and White supremacy to explore their exclusion and marginalization in academia. Furthermore, epistemic injustice provides tools to explore how racialized researchers experience injustice in their capacity as scholars. Similarly, Bourdieu's analytical tools allow me to theorize participants' experiences of censorship and surveillance in academia, allowing me to demonstrate how exclusion takes place. To address the limitations of Bourdieu's theory, I draw upon Acker's (2006) inequality regimes to demonstrate how exclusion within academia is systemic and sustained through broader patterns of inequality. Given my thesis seeks to highlight the lived realities of racialized researchers and students in academia, I draw upon Collins's (1986) outsider within theory and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth to highlight how racialized academics navigate and resist the oppressive structures of academia.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Question and Goals

The purpose of my research project is to explore the experiences of racialized individuals in academia. Specifically, this project aims to explore how an individual's racialized identity influences their engagement with knowledge, including its production, acquisition, and dissemination within institutions structured by whiteness. As such, my main research question was: *How does whiteness shape the everyday experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia?* To address this research question, I used the following research goals to guide my research: to examine how whiteness materializes in the experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia; (2) to explore how racialized researchers and students navigate the structures of whiteness within academia; (3) to explore strategies of resistance employed by racialized researchers and students.

3.2 Qualitative Research

This study takes on a qualitative approach to explore the complex and nuanced experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia. Contrary to a quantitative approach that values numerical and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes the interpretation and development of text, with a particular focus on depth, richness, and context (Hammersley, 2013; Lim, 2024). This approach enables the in-depth exploration and understanding of nuanced and complex social phenomena, grounded in uncovering *what*, *who*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to explain human behaviour (Leko et al., 2021; Lim, 2024). Qualitative research's capacity to delve into "the rich textures of human experience and perspective, capturing the contexts and nuances" of social phenomena complemented my interest in exploring the lived realities of racialized researchers and students (Lim, 2024, p.199). My research

approach was grounded in the understanding that the experiences of BIPOC individuals in academia were multifaceted, layered, and complex – they are navigating, resisting, and at times adapting to academia’s oppressive structures. My research project goes beyond understanding how whiteness unfolds in their experiences and moves towards understanding how participants make sense of these experiences, situating their experiences as valid and legitimate forms of knowledge.

Moreover, a qualitative approach recognizes the evolving and dynamic process of research, allowing researchers to adapt their approach based on emerging data (Lim, 2024, p. 203, Table 3). Contrary to the rigid structure of quantitative research, a qualitative research design allows you to follow participants’ insights and respond to emerging themes. Given the evolving nature of my research project, this flexibility allowed me to adapt my research interests based on emerging data. As explored in more detail in the subsequent sections, my initial research interests were to explore the blatant and overt forms of censorship and surveillance in academia, such as silencing, monitoring, and oppression. As my interviews progressed, my research shifted to focus more on how whiteness is produced and reproduced in academia and how this impacts participants’ experiences of belonging in academia.

To guide my inquiry, I drew upon Hammersley’s (2013) concept of “penetrating fronts”. According to Hammersley (2013), people, organizations, and groups unconsciously or consciously put up “fronts”, and it is the role of the social scientist to uncover the truth behind these fronts. As illustrated in the review of the literature, racialized academics experience marginality despite institutional claims and commitments to diversity, equality, and inclusion. Thus, my research explores how institutional claims of diversity obscure the ongoing issues of racism prevalent in Canadian institutions. As noted by Hammersley (2013), interviews are well-

suited for research aimed at uncovering the penetrating fronts, as interviewees can provide insider knowledge on what is often masked through fronts. As such, I conducted semi-structured interviews with racialized researchers and students. As insiders, they were in a unique position to speak to the often hidden and invisible dynamics that reproduce exclusion in academia.

3.3 Data Collection

This section outlines my methodological approach to collecting data. Grounded in qualitative research is the notion that knowledge and reality are best sought from those with lived experiences (Elmir et al., 2011, p.13). My study employed in-depth interviews to capture participants' experiences in academia. Interviews were semi-structured, audio recorded, and transcribed. All but one interview was conducted via Zoom, to allow participants flexibility and comfort. Below, I describe the value of using semi-structured interviews for this study, followed by an overview of the population and sample, including a discussion on the recruitment process and limitations encountered. This section ends with a brief overview of the interview process, where I highlight power dynamics, my positionality as a researcher, and key themes that emerged.

3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews, such as semi-structured interviews, are a common form of data collection used by qualitative researchers to uncover knowledge directly from those who have experienced it (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This method involves the use of standardized, predetermined questions, alongside open-ended prompts (Ahlin, 2019). This allows for the free flow of conversation and enables participants to freely express their viewpoints and experiences while also allowing the interviewer to follow a predetermined guide (Ahlin, 2019). While the predetermined guide allows the researcher to remain anchored in their line of inquiry and move gradually, the

open-ended prompts are particularly valuable as it allows for the emergence of new ideas based on the participant's response (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2019).

I chose to use semi-structured interviews as my primary method for data collection because it allowed me to center my participants' experiences at the forefront of my research project (Hammersley, 2013). One of my priorities as the interviewer was providing participants with an open and safe space. I wanted to ensure participants felt comfortable in sharing as much or as little as they wanted to. Through semi-structured interviews, I was able to ask broad, open-ended questions that allowed the participants to freely express their thoughts without feeling pressure to follow a rigid set of questions. Moreover, the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore topics that may not have necessarily been included in the interview guide but have informed my research project.

For instance, in the initial stages of my research project, I had a very narrow and limited understanding of censorship and surveillance in academia, as I primarily focused on the overt and direct forms of censorship and surveillance. This included active and direct forms of suppression, silencing, and monitoring in academia. While my initial questions were influenced by these themes, my questions remained open-ended, allowing participants to drive the conversation. In this way, the interviews played a critical role in shaping my research project as well as my understanding of my project; my research project evolved alongside my learning and understanding of my project. The knowledge and insight shared by participants enabled me to broaden the scope of my research while not losing track of censorship and surveillance.

Overall, this method aligned well with my research goals as it created space for participants to reflect on and share their experiences at their own pace. The flexibility afforded by semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore, in detail, the complex, layered, and multifaceted

experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia. This method was especially useful in exploring participants' subjective experiences, recognizing that their journeys in academia are deeply personal, and therefore allowing participants to share their experiences in their own words was essential. The data collected through this method reveals not only how participants experience whiteness in academia but also highlights how they make meaning of these experiences. Highlighting these details was a priority for my project as I sought to move towards narratives that also highlight their strengths and resistance, in addition to their experiences of exclusion.

3.3.2 Population and Sample

The initial recruitment of participants was informed by purposeful sampling, where I selected participants based on specific characteristics (Coyne, 1997, p.628). It is noted that, perhaps due to their outsider status, racialized researchers are more likely to engage in nonmainstream topics that are often perceived negatively due to their departure from academia's Eurocentric norms (Chukwuedo, 2023; Settles et al., 2021). Moreover, it may be argued that disciplines such as criminology, sociology, and political science offer more flexibility for researchers to engage in nonmainstream, politically sensitive, or contested topics, such as gender, race, and security. Moreover, it is within these critical fields of study where hidden and invisible dynamics of silencing and monitoring may be more likely to surface. Based on these metrics, the following criterion was used to identify potential participants: 1) individuals who identify as racialized persons, 2) a professor or graduate student at a Canadian institution, 3) studying in the department of criminology, sociology, or political science, and 4) engaging in critical or politically sensitive research.

3.3.2.1. Recruitment. I began recruiting participants in the summer of June 2022 and formally ended the process in October 2024. I primarily focused on recruiting participants from Ottawa by

distributing recruitment posters through the University of Ottawa and Carleton University's Criminology Graduate Student Associations. I did not receive any interest through this process and therefore turned my focus to universities within the Greater Toronto Area. I sent my recruitment poster for distribution to the following Criminology Graduate Student Associations: York University, Ryerson University, and the University of Windsor. My reason for choosing these schools was based primarily on the assumption that there would be a greater number of racialized students at these institutions.

As my initial recruitment strategy did not yield any responses, I adopted a more targeted approach by self-identifying potential participants. This involved visiting the criminology, political science, and sociology faculty webpages of various Canadian institutions, reading the research interests of various professors and graduate students, and sending them personalized emails inviting them to participate in my research. Having received no interest through the recruitment posters I distributed, I had hoped my targeted approach of reaching out to potential participants would yield responses. However, timing posed a significant challenge; many professors expressed interest in my research project but declined participation as they had limited availability during the summer. Other professors suggested I reconnect in the fall, only to decline participation when I reached out again. While timing may have been an issue, it is also possible that professors may have felt hesitant to engage in research that looks at censorship and surveillance in academia.

While I initially relied on purposeful sampling for the recruitment of participants, my method evolved to snowball sampling. Snowball sampling occurs when recruitment of participants occurs through study participants (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2019). During the interviews, many participants gave me the names of individuals they believed had relevant

experiences to share for this project. I also relied on people within my professional and academic networks who directed me towards individuals they believed would be interested in participating. In total, I was able to recruit nine participants. Eight participants were female, and one participant was male. Five participants were graduate students, while four participants were professors. All participants were currently, or had previously, engaged in research on topics considered politically sensitive and/or contested.

Though their specific fields and research areas varied, all participants of this study were situated within the social sciences discipline in universities across Ontario. Some commonalities amongst the participants included their shared backgrounds as coming from immigrant families and identifying as first-generation students in Canada. Moreover, participants came from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the participants varied in terms of their positions and careers within academia; all but one professor had tenure, and the length of tenure held varied across the participants. Likewise, the graduate students were all in different stages of their doctoral studies.

It is important to note that, initially, I intended to recruit an equal number of professors and graduate students to reflect a balanced view of experiences in academia. However, I found that graduate students were more likely to respond to my recruitment emails and engage in conversation with me than professors. My positionality as a graduate student may have fostered a shared sense of solidarity, belonging, and experiences with graduate students, which may have contributed to their willingness to share their experiences with me. As a result, the data in my research project is skewed as it reflects the experiences of graduate students more greatly than those of professors. Additionally, my identity as a female may have impacted my population. As a female, I felt more comfortable recruiting female participants. While I was open to all participants, instances in which I self-identified potential participants, I was drawn more to female professors

and graduate students. In this way, I believe the population of my study is not as diverse as it could have been and is more reflective of the experiences of racialized females in academia.

While I interviewed a total of nine participants, I chose to exclude one interview from my project. After careful consideration and review of the data collected, I concluded that the data did not align with the scope and focus of my research.

3.3.3 Interview Process

A key priority for me during the interview process was to build rapport with my participants. Rapport building involves the exchange of information between the researcher and participant with the intention to build trust and connection (Elmir et al., 2011). Rapport building is especially important and essential when interviewing participants who will be exploring emotional, sensitive, and deeply personal topics. I was cognizant that participants would be sharing confidential and, at times, painful experiences stemming from navigating institutions not designed for them. For this reason, facilitating a safe and respectful space for participants was of primary concern for me.

To ensure participants felt safe and comfortable, I engaged in rapport building both before and during the interviews. Before the interviews, I held brief Zoom calls with participants who shared an interest in my study and were willing to participate. During these calls, I shared information about myself and my project, which allowed us to get to know each other. Rapport building during the interview process took place at the very beginning, where participants were invited to share information on themselves, their background, and their general experiences in academia, outside of the research focus. At times, I also disclosed personal details about myself, such as my educational background and experience as a first-generation student. During this time, I intentionally focused on getting to know participants on a personal level rather than rushing into

my research questions. This was beneficial as it created an open and safe space for participants and allowed me to build a connection with them.

Once rapport was established, I focused on reiterating the purpose of my study and delving into their experiences. My approach to questioning was based on what Boyle and Schmierbach, (2019) refer to as the funnel method in qualitative research, where the interviewer begins with broad questions to develop an understanding of the issue and gradually moves to more specific questions as the conversation progresses. Initially, my questions focused on exploring participants' understanding, experiences, and perspectives on censorship and surveillance. While responses to this question varied, all participants acknowledged the occurrence of censorship and surveillance in academia and acknowledged that they have, in some capacity, experienced censorship and forms of surveillance themselves. However, I noticed that participants struggled to articulate specific instances in which they experienced censorship and surveillance.

Instead, in reflecting on their experiences in the academy, participants spoke about the lack of representation, tokenism, experiences of everyday racism, hostility, microaggressions, and often described academia as a white space in which they struggled to find a sense of belonging. They also spoke about their struggles with legitimacy and recognition as scholars in academia, highlighting instances in which they felt their racial identities shaped their ability to meaningfully contribute to knowledge production. Their narratives suggested that censorship and surveillance operate in academia in subtle, covert ways, through the explicit and implicit expectations, institutional norms, and everyday practices- mechanisms that were shaped through whiteness. These reflections enabled me to shift my focus from exploring covert forms of censorship and

surveillance to uncovering how whiteness operates and materializes in their everyday experiences.²

Overall, the interview process unfolded smoothly. While I initially felt hesitant in the beginning, the participants' willingness to delve deep into their experiences made me feel more comfortable during the interviews. I believe my racialized identity fostered a sense of community and belonging amongst participants, which made them feel comfortable in sharing their experiences with me. Moreover, I also shared a similar cultural background and had similar experiences navigating academia as a first-generation student. This fostered a sense of belonging, community, and trust between us, which may have contributed to the comfort felt amongst participants to share their personal experiences with me. Moreover, sharing a similar background meant I was able to validate their experiences by sharing similar experiences, as I could relate to a lot of the challenges they described. This fostered a mutual understanding between me and the participants, which helped with the overall interview.

Despite the ease with which the interviews occurred, as an inexperienced interviewer, I encountered some limitations in the interview process. One such limitation I want to note is the shifting power dynamics I experienced during the interview process, which also impacted the depth and richness of my data. As a graduate student, I found myself feeling more at ease when interviewing graduate students than I did when I interviewed professors. With graduate students, the interviews felt more conversational and flowed freely. On the other hand, I found myself being overly conscious about how I framed my questions when interviewing professors. I also did not

² The term whiteness in this thesis is not referring to a biological category, but rather is used to describe the structural force, established through colonial processes, that continue to shape and govern colonial structures such as academia. While this thesis recognizes whiteness as a social construct, it highlights how the idea of whiteness is given meaning through practices and norms in postcolonial structures.

always feel comfortable in probing for further details, as I was mindful of the time constraints, given that the professors generally had less time for the interviews than the graduate students. Overall, this dynamic may have impacted the richness of my data, as I may have missed opportunities for further follow-up and further exploration of key themes.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this section, I outline the steps I took to analyze the data collected from interviews. This section showcases how I transcribed my data, conducted rounds of coding, and identified themes to inform my analysis.

3.4.1 Transcription

The first step I took to analyze my data was to transcribe the interviews. Transcribing involves converting recorded audio into written text (Tang, 2023). I chose to transcribe interviews shortly after they took place to retain the context and tone of the conversation while it remained fresh in my mind. I also chose to transcribe interviews manually as it allowed me to reflect on the data early in the research process. All personal information was redacted during the transcription, and interviews were stored in a password-protected folder. Once transcription was complete, I did a preliminary read-through of the data, focusing on overall themes and concepts that stood out to me. This step was valuable as it helped me identify patterns and themes that I may not have considered initially and helped inform questions I asked in subsequent interviews.

3.4.2 Coding

In line with a qualitative research approach, I adopted an inductive approach to data analysis, focusing on capturing emerging patterns and themes through my data, rather than beginning with predetermined categories (Hammersley, 2013). To capture these themes, I conducted multiple rounds of coding. Coding involves the categorization of large segments of

data into simple codes (Rogers, 2023). During the first round of coding, I used broad codes such as censorship, surveillance, racialized identity, and belonging. During the initial round of coding, my focus was to simply highlight instances where participants spoke to these categories. As I progressed with my interviews and engaged with my data, my understanding of my data and the scope of my research deepened. With each interview that I did, I felt I gained more insight and direction for my research and would thus return to my interviews to conduct another round of coding. Due to the evolving nature of my project, coding was an ongoing process for me.

3.4.3 Identification of Themes

To identify themes, I focused on identifying patterns and similarities across all interviews. This involved a careful review of all identified codes and grouping them based on similarities. During this stage, I realized I had used multiple codes that could be collapsed into a broader theme. For instance, after analyzing codes across all interviews, I noticed I had coded themes such as alienation, loneliness, and a lack of representation in academia as separate categories. Through further review of the interviews, I realized that these themes emerged in conversations where participants reflected on their belonging in the academy. As such, the initial codes identified above were collapsed to reflect a broader theme of belonging.

Though my initial coding process was inductive and reflective of participants' experiences, I found it challenging to analyze the identified themes for my research project. This was mainly due to the gaps present in my data. During the initial round of interviews, I may have inadvertently excluded information that did not seem relevant to the scope of my research. I failed to recognize the relevance of experiences that did not reflect direct forms of silencing and monitoring in academia. According to Mabry (2008), the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews allows for follow-up questions and further exploration of topics unanticipated by the

interviewer (p.218). Having a narrow and simplified understanding of my research project, I failed to follow up with my interviewees when they shared key examples of covert forms of censorship and surveillance. This resulted in having surface-level data that lacked depth, posing a significant challenge for me when writing the analysis chapter, as I felt I could not engage with the data without relying on outside sources. Moreover, it limited the number of participants I could use for my analysis since it was not until late in my research process that I began to engage more with indirect forms of censorship and surveillance.

At this stage, I also noticed that although I identified several themes across my interviews, the data lacked depth and richness. Likewise, I noticed that some themes, while relevant to my research, were only supported by a small number of quotes. Moreover, these themes seemed to be standalone themes that did not seem to fit in the broad categories I had identified. This was challenging to navigate, as I did not want to include themes that I could not meaningfully expand upon in my analysis. To remedy this, I explored ways I could further collapse my themes into an even broader category using my theoretical tools. Drawing on Bourdieu's practice theory enabled me to see how seemingly disparate themes could be grouped under one theme. For instance, drawing on the concept of doxa, I was able to group themes of belonging alongside themes that depicted their outsider-within status under the broader theme of how academia functions as a white space. Through this broader theme, I was able to conceptualize how their experiences of belonging were shaped directly by academia's doxa. Using my theoretical framework thus enabled a deeper and more nuanced analysis of my data.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research involving participants are paramount and require ongoing attention throughout the research process (Lim, 2024). As my research involved

collecting data through interviews and working closely with participants, the primary step in my research project was obtaining ethical clearance from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board. Once obtained, ethical considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent remained paramount throughout my research.

3.5.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent in the context of research involves providing all relevant information to an individual and ensuring participation is voluntary (Lim, 2024). Before the commencement of the interviews, all interviewees were sent consent forms that they were asked to date, sign, and return to me before the interviews. At the beginning of the interview, I reminded participants that the interview would be recorded, and I would be using the information shared to inform my research project. Participants were asked to verbally give their consent at the beginning of the interview and were reminded they may withdraw their consent at any time. Given the dynamic nature of qualitative research, informed consent is an ongoing process (Byrne, 2001). In moments where my participants shared sensitive or painful experiences, I made a deliberate effort to check in with participants and ensure they were comfortable continuing the interview. This was done to ensure participants felt safe and in control of the information they shared, while also respecting their boundaries.

3.5.2 Confidentiality

Another ethical consideration was the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. Many participants expressed concerns for their privacy and were hesitant at first to share their personal stories for my research project, fearing their stories might be traced back to them. Based on their concerns and given that I was working with a very small academic community, I understood early on that I had to be very mindful of the demographic details I shared, as any

demographic detail could inadvertently lead to the identification of participants. To mitigate this, I made sure that all personal information was redacted from interviews. This included redacting their names, their institutions, their specific location, and their areas of research. While protecting and anonymizing their identities was essential, I noted that their racialized identities were important for contextual understanding and, therefore, were retained in the analysis; however, only when participants referenced their racial identity in parts of the interviews that were used for this study.

3.6 Conclusion

My research project seeks to understand the experiences of racialized researchers and students in academia. This chapter outlines the research question and goals that have guided my research, as well as the methodological approach for my study. I have demonstrated that situating my research in a qualitative approach was necessary in understanding and exploring the in-depth experiences of my participants. I have also presented the ethical considerations that informed my project and outlined the limitations of my methodological approach. The following chapter provides an in-depth analysis of participants' experiences.

Chapter 4: Analysis

This chapter explores the narrated experiences of racialized researchers and students as they navigate academia. I argue that racialized researchers and students deploy navigational capital as they inhabit a white space where their right to belong is questioned and find their way through it. To protect their place in academia, they are actively engaging in self-censorship and self-surveillance, while simultaneously attempting to transform academia's habitus, capital, and doxa to produce a space where they can feel a sense of belonging. These transformative efforts are countered by academia as it attempts to maintain a social order anchored in whiteness. The first section of this chapter explores how whiteness materializes and is protected in the everyday experiences of BIPOC faculty and students. What follows is a discussion on the strategies of self-censorship and self-surveillance actively engaged in by racialized researchers and students while simultaneously attempting to transform academia's habitus, capital and doxa to produce a space where they can feel they belong. This chapter ends by demonstrating that these transformative efforts are countered using different means to delegitimize and increase the precariousness of racialized scholars within academia.

4.1 Academia as a White Space

Academia operates as a predominantly white space, shaped by a Eurocentric doxa that privileges white perspectives, practices, and ways of knowing. This doxa shapes the habitus of students and faculty who, in turn, engage in practices that seek to protect and maintain this social order. These practices, for instance, include privileging whiteness through the curriculum and dismissing the knowledge of Indigenous and BIPOC scholars and students under the guise of rigour and objectivity. In examining the lack of diversity within the curriculum, faculty, and the everyday interactions and experiences of BIPOC students and faculty, this section demonstrates

how academia's white doxa is upheld and protected while fostering an exclusionary environment for racialized researchers and students.

4.1.1 The Absence of BIPOC Bodies and Narratives in Academia

Racialized faculty play a critical role in the success of racialized students, who are often entering the institution as first-generation students. The presence of racialized faculty cultivates a sense of belonging amongst newly admitted racialized students, which is essential for their success in predominantly white institutions (Enciso & Martinez, 2021). For this reason, racialized students will often gravitate towards racialized faculty, who serve as role models and provide mentorship in navigating academia, as they are more likely to understand the complexities that come with traversing white spaces as a BIPOC person (Chukwuedo, 2023; Gregory, 2001). An absence of racialized faculty may therefore be harmful for racialized students, as it may foster feelings of isolation amongst students who do not see a visual representation of themselves across faculty.

This was the case for many participants of this study, who discussed having had a limited exposure to racialized professors during their academic careers. This lack of exposure and limited interaction with BIPOC faculty directly shaped their belonging in the academy. For instance, participant #7, now a full-time professor, shared what it was like as an undergraduate student to navigate an institution where the faculty was predominantly white:

It was scary because there was no representation of professors that looked like me... I have never had a black professor. I had one racialized prof; she was a South Asian woman...and I had her when I got to not even my master's but PhD level. (7)

The participant's lack of encounter with BIPOC professors suggests that there is an absence of racialized bodies in faculty positions, and more importantly, at the foundational levels for students, such as during their undergraduate years. A lack of representation means BIPOC

students lack role models during their foundational years while navigating the complexities and challenges unique to BIPOC students. These challenges include hostility, exclusion, and being subjected to stereotypes and microaggressions that stem from racial bias and prejudice that undermine their intelligence and diminish their sense of belonging in the academy (Ijoma et al., 2021). In this context, the presence of racialized faculty means BIPOC students have access to individuals who are sensitive and understanding of the nuanced challenges BIPOC students encounter.

Furthermore, a delayed exposure to racialized faculty may deter students from pursuing graduate studies, as a lack of representation in faculty early on may serve as a visual reminder to newly admitted students that racialized people do not belong in academia (Romero, 1997). Racialized bodies on campus, and especially at the faculty level, provide minoritized students a sense of community and feelings of affirmation that they, too, belong in these spaces (Gregory, 2001). In parallel, the absence of racialized bodies is perceived by racialized students as paralleling their future in academia and is therefore harmful for students who look to faculty for inspiration in their pursuits in academia (Gregory, 2001). This is captured in the experience of participant #8, a doctoral student, who, during her undergraduate years, struggled to imagine her future in academia because of the lack of representation:

I only had one racialized scholar in my masters and one in my undergrad so in three degrees I've had 2 racialized scholars... so when you are in undergrad and trying to navigate through all of these things and not seeing a prof look like you, makes it difficult to see yourself navigating the academy, getting a PhD and becoming a prof yourself... but it also makes it especially for first gen students like myself it makes it difficult to have that sense of belonging that you are in the right place and you are supposed to be here when everyone around you does not look like you.
(8)

Over time, due to the lack of encounters with BIPOC faculty, participants internalized the notion that BIPOC bodies do not belong in academia. The invisibility of racialized bodies had

become normalized for participants who unconsciously accepted this as the normative standard.

When racialized faculty were present, they were perceived to be exceptions to the norm:

They were, almost could be anomalies, and it's not to take away... these are fantastic, incredibly brilliant women... but just in terms of like seeing... like there was not a lot of them at all... so I got that message really early on... this place is not meant for me. (7)

The participant, in describing the professor as an anomaly, suggests that white bodies in faculty positions are normalized and seen as the standard. Repeated exposure to white bodies normalizes the notion that white bodies are the natural occupants of this space (Puwar, 2004). In this way, whiteness operates as the invisible norm, marking the presence of non-white bodies as out of place (Ahmed, 2012). Moreover, the presence of white bodies and the absence of racialized bodies in academic spaces function together to reinforce the dominance and normalization of whiteness both symbolically and spatially. The classroom, therefore, becomes an embodiment of academia's doxa that implicitly signals who rightfully belongs in these spaces and who does not.

This normalization and dominance of whiteness also extended to the curriculum. Many study participants discussed feeling disconnected from their course material. This was because the course material reflected predominantly white perspectives, and conversely, lacked the perspectives of racialized peoples. This lack of diversity in the curriculum may be explained by the lack of racialized bodies in faculty positions. An absence of BIPOC faculty means their perspectives, research interests, and worldviews are missing. A predominantly white faculty may inadvertently create a curriculum that centres knowledge produced *by* and *for* white bodies. Over time, the curriculum will be dominated and shaped by a culture of whiteness that privileges Eurocentric perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing. Consequently, the perspectives,

histories, and knowledge of racialized peoples become invisible as white knowledge is seen as the norm and standard.

As academia acts as the gatekeeper of knowledge, this further reinforces and perpetuates white knowledge as being ‘universal’ while other knowledges are deemed peripheral. The prioritization of white knowledge sends an implicit message to those within the institution on which knowledges are deemed legitimate and worthy of exploration in academia (Henry & Tator, 2009). This messaging was felt by racialized students as they grappled with the invisibility of their experiences, histories and narratives in the curriculum:

As a Black student, you see other Black students, not like a plethora but there were other Black students, right so that was nice... but you get that messaging when you go to your classes and all your profs are White. Or you are listening to your prof talk and there is no race analysis. So that was the feeling of unbelonging because there was nobody saying teaching anything that was relatable to me. (7)

The invisibility of non-white knowledge, perspectives, and histories not only renders these knowledges invisible from the realm of knowledge production but also implicitly delegitimizes these knowledges by not creating space for them in academia. This exclusion sends a clear message to racialized students that non-white knowledge is not important. By extension, this also marginalizes students who wish to engage with this knowledge. As these students operate under a predominantly white faculty, they may face difficulty in receiving support when engaging in this type of work, as their work is dismissed as unimportant. This was highlighted in participant #7’s experience as she reflected on the difficulty she faced in finding a supervisor for her major research paper (MRP) that centred the experiences of racialized women:

I could not find a professor to supervise my work, I was 18 months into my master’s program, 18 months... I remember emailing professors, going to meetings and I could not find anyone that was willing to supervise my MRP on [women’s health], specifically for racialized women, specifically Black women. And I remember expressing... I had went, someone had said “try this

person” and he was a white man, very, very well known in the program, he had been around for a long time, and I remember I had went to him and said, ‘this is the work I want to do, here’s the outline’ and he looked at me and said ‘you’re in the wrong program’... essentially what he told me was that I wasted my time, that I should be in a different program... like education or something, and I told him that the reason I chose this program was to like, because it was a program to be known to be very interdisciplinary, and it didn’t pigeon hole you so you could do pretty much anything and that was very appealing to me right... and it was a lot of experiential learning and I loved that and I was like oh my gosh, and he was like oh you’re in the wrong program I can’t help you, and I was just.. I didn’t even know what to say, I think I might even have cried, not right there and then, but like, how am I going to finish? (7)

According to Thomas and Hollenshead (2001), women of colour in academia often receive little to no support for their intellectual pursuits because their work is often viewed as being insignificant, particularly when the work centres on critical and race-related issues. This is highlighted in this instance, where the professor invalidates the participant’s research interests by deeming it a waste of time. Moreover, this instance highlights how faculty members influence and gatekeep knowledge production in academia. Professors act as extensions of the institution, and in this instance, the professor exercised his institutional authority to dismiss the participant’s research interests, denying the inclusion of her work in the wider curriculum. In doing so, the professor also implicitly reaffirms what is considered legitimate knowledge in academia by telling her she is in the wrong program, ultimately shaping the curriculum and gatekeeping what type of knowledge is given space in academia.

In summary, a predominantly white faculty produces a predominantly white curriculum. Together, they act as mutually reinforcing elements that sustain and create a white doxa in academia. Specifically, white faculty members remain in positions of power wherein they can dictate what the standard is in academia. This ‘standard’ manifests in what types of knowledge are centred in academia, the perspectives that are given space to and, as seen in participant #7’s experience, which knowledges and histories are dismissed. The presence of white faculty also

dictates which bodies are seen as belonging and as the norm in academia, and which bodies are seen as exceptions or anomalies. In this way, a white faculty and curriculum not only reflect academia's white doxa but also actively foster and maintain it.

4.1.2 How Whiteness is Protected in Academia

An interesting theme found in this study was that whiteness in academia is protected not only structurally but also by white faculty and students. The everyday interactions between BIPOC faculty and students and non-BIPOC faculty and students reveal how academia's social order is protected and upheld by those whose habitus is aligned and privileged by academia's doxa. Participants of this study experienced this through challenges to their authority, contempt for their research interests, and dismissal of their knowledge. One such instance is highlighted in the experience of participant #9, now a full-time professor who shares her early interactions as a doctoral student with a renowned scholar in her area of study. Like any other doctoral student, she had high hopes of potentially working under the supervision of this esteemed scholar. To her dismay, however, she was instead met with discouragement and hostility when she first reached out:

I specifically looked for a scholar who was well known within Canada and specifically went for that person in that institution. Because I wanted to be affiliated with one of the most well-known Canadian scholars in our country, and I realized that when I started sharing that I wanted to explore areas of racism and racialized experiences...[they] made it very clear that it wasn't something that would be seen as beneficial...And actually, the words that you use, [they] specifically identified it as too controversial. And if I want to be a scholar, that will have to be a topic that I would have to steer away from. (9)

As a white faculty member operating in an environment that is shaped by a white doxa, her dismissal of the participant's research interests suggests an internalization of the norm that only knowledge for white bodies is worthy of intellectual pursuit in academia. This resistance stems from an internalized bias, influenced by academia's doxa, that places white knowledge at

the center of legitimacy and of what is considered worthy of academic exploration, while simultaneously dismissing *other* knowledge as illegitimate and without merit. By labelling research that seeks to challenge the narrative of whiteness in academia as too controversial, this becomes a convenient justification for its exclusion without seeming racially biased. Specifically, excluding ‘controversial’ research becomes justified under procedural standards that value objectivity and rigor. This allows for this form of exclusion to go unnoticed while gatekeepers of knowledge continue to neutralize and censor knowledge production in academia. These practices produce consequences for BIPOC students whose ability to make theoretical contributions is impeded.

Participant #7 had a similar experience as a doctoral student. Her doctoral work focused on correctional facilities, with a particular focus on the lived experiences of racialized women. As such, her literature review consisted mostly of Black-feminist scholars. The participant, during the evaluation of her comprehensive list of literature, faced pushback from her evaluation committee regarding her choice of literature:

So now I put together my comp list and it is heavily weighted with black feminist, anti-racist, Chicana, you know, non-white feminist and theorists, so heavily weighted.... and I get to my comp meeting before my exam and they say to me, essentially its actually the man, he says to me “there’s a lot of Black women on this list, a lot of black feminists on this list” and I was like yeah that was intentional that’s what I wanted...And he essentially told me that I needed to read more of the traditional list, of criminology... people like Foucault... he was like read other criminologists and they were essentially all white men. (7)

A key component of whiteness, as highlighted in the theoretical chapter, is the assumption surrounding the universality of white knowledge. White knowledge refers to knowledge produced by and by *for* white bodies, and this knowledge is assumed to be the universal and legitimate explanation of all social realities. Consequently, white knowledge and white producers of knowledge become the gatekeepers of academia, since all other forms of

knowledge are overlooked and dismissed. White knowledge is therefore seen as the superior way of knowing, thinking, and explaining things.

Given that the participant's research area focuses on the experiences of racialized women in correctional facilities, her selection of Black feminist thought as a key theoretical framework is unsurprising. This is arguably due to the assumption that a Black theoretical framework can provide valuable insights into the experiences of racialized women, unlike other theoretical frameworks. When the committee members critique her sole use of Black feminist thought, they are revealing the assumption that non-white scholarship is not sufficient. This is further reinforced when committee members ask her to include 'traditional' criminology in her work.

Further, the use of the term 'traditional' when referencing works in criminology carries the connotation that those works are representative of the discipline's established way of thinking. As illustrated in the literature review, traditional knowledge encompasses white ways of knowing, thinking, and doing; it is considered the standard. Using this term in reference to Black feminist thought further carries the connotation that Black feminist thought is not "traditional" as it is outside the scope of what is considered the standard in academia. Thus, the underlying assumption here is that non-white research does not meet the institution's standard of what is considered legitimate knowledge to be referenced.

This practice also upholds certain citation practices embedded in academia, as seen in the participant's experience. In encouraging the participant to refer to criminological works written by White scholars, whiteness is reinforced as White scholars are seen as the standard and leading authority in research. The consequence of this is it overlooks non-white scholars and creates an uneven playing field in academia. As a result, this practice increases the symbolic capital of white scholars as their work gains recognition. Simultaneously, this practice makes it even more

difficult for non-white scholars to gain recognition and ultimately symbolic capital in the institution. Ultimately, it signals to racialized scholars that the work they are doing will not count or will be superseded by that of a White scholar.

Lastly, it is important to note the context in which the participant is being asked to reference White scholarship. This takes place during a moment of evaluation, leaving the participant with less space to maneuver and resist:

There was this moment where I'm sitting here and the three of them are sitting across from me and I'm like oh shit like... if I don't somehow convince them, they won't approve my comps list and then I can't move on... anyhow that was a very challenging moment and I got through it and like I said I did what they wanted and threw in these other folks in my comps list. (7)

To maintain her PhD candidacy, the participant must pass her comprehensive exam. In this moment of evaluation, the participant does not resist as she, like all graduate students, wants to complete her doctoral studies. It is in this moment that the subtlety in which whiteness in the institution is protected becomes visible. Referencing White scholarship in her doctoral work is no longer a suggestion but rather becomes a requirement in her passing and maintaining her PHD candidacy. This moment of evaluation creates a power dynamic between the committee members and the participant. By their experience and tenure, the committee members possess greater symbolic capital than the participant. In addition, the committee members may arguably be seen as an extension of the institution, and therefore propagate the academy's norms and values. In resisting the student's use of Black feminist scholars and urging her to reference White scholarship, their actions reveal the underlying assumption of what is valued in academia.

Moreover, the committee leverages their symbolic capital to uphold what the institution considers to be legitimate knowledge and acceptable sources to cite. Therefore, they act as gatekeepers of knowledge, as they can determine whether the participant passes her

comprehensive exam. As a student with less symbolic capital, the participant is forced to conform to the committee's demands. The above illustrations show the subtle ways in which whiteness shapes the interactions between racialized students and professors.

In examining the experiences of both participants #9 and #7, we can see how both participants have experienced attempts at censorship by faculty members who seek to protect academia's social order. In both instances, faculty members operate through a habitus that is shaped by a doxa that legitimizes white knowledge and white perspectives. To this end, the faculty members, in their capacity as professors, operate in ways that uphold this norm. This manifests in their attempt to censor and exclude the knowledge of racialized voices and perspectives to maintain social order.

In addition to faculty members, students also internalize academia's white doxa and engage in behaviours that seek to uphold this white doxa. This is best captured in the racial segregation experienced by participants #2:

I just remembered feeling, and like [name of city] is an interesting city because it feels segregated in the sense I didn't make any white friends, I made only friends with people of colour and I remember the white students hung out with whites, racialized hung out with racialized, and I never understood why that gap wasn't bridged... but yeah, that was my experience too in undergrad, not to say I didn't eventually have peers or close colleagues that were white, but I definitely remember in undergrad feeling it was some sort of unwritten rule... it was bizarre. (2)

The experience above hints at the subtle ways in which whiteness operates within the social interactions between students. Specifically, the assumed, unspoken, but visible social segregation between students of colour and white students suggests an internalization of norms that dictate who belongs in the academy and who does not. In addition, a key component of whiteness is that it creates categories of division. In this instance, there is a division between

white students and non-white students that mirrors the larger dynamic at play, which positions racialized bodies as outsiders in academia.

Participants of this study also shared experiences where they faced resistance and challenges from white male students. Their classroom experiences can be understood within a broader discussion of gendered and racial dynamics that continue to shape the experiences of faculty of colour and continue to reflect the microcosm of gendered and racial relations in society (Jones & Ramdeholl, 2022). For instance, racial biases, stereotypes, and prejudice that position people of colour as less credible and less intelligent often result in students questioning the authority and professional legitimacy of BIPOC faculty (Settles et al., 2022; Sue et al., 2011). These instances of resistance towards BIPOC faculty is further compounded when faculty of colour highlight historical racial oppression or discuss white supremacy in the classroom (Daniel, 2019; Ramdeholl & Jones, 2022, p.19). This form of hostility in the classroom may further be exacerbated when the faculty member is a woman, as racialized female faculty are doubly marginalized through their race and gender. This was reflected in an experience shared by participant #9, who recalls experiencing resistance from a white male student when she began to centre race in her lectures. Upset with the incorporation of race in class material, this student often displayed aggression towards her and went as far as sending her video clips arguing that race needs to be decentred.

A similar experience was shared by participant #2, who, during critical race theory (CRT) week at her school following the murder of George Floyd, tasked students to incorporate CRT in one of their assignments:

There was this instance with [a] student undermining me during CRT week, he, actively chose to pick the question on policing, which was to use CRT to dissect policing and he wrote me an all

lives matter paper, that was violent to me, but this is a CRT week, my job is to teach you how to understand things through CRT, you made the deliberate choice to not engage in this exercise so I'm thinking your intentions were not very nice, so that was a harmful experience to me. (2)

While the encounters illustrated above can be explained through the gendered and racial discrimination that women of colour in academia face, these experiences are also a reflection of academia's doxa that positions the white male at the centre of knowledge production and as the legitimate authority in academia. Academia's white doxa operates as a dual process that legitimizes white knowledge while simultaneously marginalizing all other knowledge. By extension, non-white bodies are also relegated to an inferior status. Within this same framework, white males are seen as the legitimate authority of knowledge and gatekeepers of academia. Conversely, racialized women are excluded from positions of authority in academia through their race and gender due to racial and gendered stereotypes that delegitimize their capacity as scholars. In both instances, the aggression and resistance displayed by the white male students reflect their inability to see the participants as legitimate authority figures.

More importantly, these moments of resistance once again exemplify how whiteness in academia is protected by those whose habitus is in alignment with that of the academe. Despite being students, they display a commitment to protect academia's social order by displaying aggression towards racialized faculty and narratives that threaten to disrupt this social order. For instance, the white male student who pushes back on the task to incorporate CRT in his work through an 'all lives matter' paper is symbolically trying to discount CRT and its very foundation by bringing in white perspectives when the focus should be on race. In these instances, white students act as extensions of the institution who engage in practices that protect and uphold whiteness.

Furthermore, these moments of resistance also shed light on how whiteness reconfigures traditional power dynamics in the classroom and becomes a source of capital for those who are in alignment with whiteness. While traditional hierarchies would place doctoral students in a position to assert authority, their misalignment with academia's doxa means attributes such as legitimacy, authority, and credibility are not conferred to them in the same way they are for their white colleagues. Instead, white privilege works to entitle the white male students who feel emboldened to challenge the authority of the BIPOC doctoral students. To this end, it is not only PhD students whose authority is challenged but also full-time professors who, in all other ways, are in positions of power over the white male students:

As a woman of colour... you're going to get more pushback from students, even sometimes TA's, I had that... I had that. That's really a hard one. Where the TAs are challenging your authority in class. So, you might have students that may not necessarily see you in the same way because of unconscious bias as sort of an authority, and then you have teaching assistants that are challenging your authority as well. (5)

In a similar instance, participant #7 recalls a moment of racial violence she experienced when teaching her students about the impact of islamophobia on Muslims in the West:

So, I was talking about the specific way of the impact of the narrative around terrorism and how it was impacting folks... When I started to have experiences where students were more vocal at verbal violence towards me. As a black prof, saying things, saying something that was very racist and violent, and it was interesting like I hadn't had that experience before, so it was a painful experience and it is painful to talk about because it sent me a very clear message that, and now that I have the language from you, the language of like it sent a clear message to me of what it meant to have my work surveilled... to be surveilled... (7)

Participant #7's experience is an example of how surveillance and racial violence is used by a student as a mechanism of policing and control. In this instance, the student attempts to police the professor and ultimately control her discourse by exerting racial violence. This is done in an attempt to dissuade and silence her from speaking on narratives surrounding racialized

people. Specifically, this professor was aiming to disrupt discourses of white supremacy that positioned Muslims as a threat to the West. As this directly goes against the narrative that academia pushes out, the student in this case seeks to silence her.

Lastly, participant #2 highlights an instance with a white male student who constantly challenged her grades, refused to talk to her and only answered to the white professor.

So, I really felt he was undermining my authority and not taking my teaching seriously compared to this white prof... he only wanted to talk to the white prof, not me who was his TA or the other racialized prof, it was only the white prof... Like he would just email her, even if the other prof was doing the lecture, he would email her (the white prof), he would go above me to speak to her. (2)

In the discussions above, I have illustrated instances in which white male students challenge the authority of racialized female academics. In this example, I want to highlight not the students' actions but the professors' complicity in validating whiteness in this instance. Specifically, in this instance, the white male student goes out of his way to challenge the authority of the PhD student and further undermines her authority by only speaking to the white professor. This very act seeks to delegitimize the racialized professor and PhD student whom he does not see as a legitimate authority figure. The white professor, in accommodating this student, inadvertently validates this assumption and reinforces the notion that whiteness carries authority.

4.1.3 Outsiders Within

BIPOC students and faculty experience a cultural disjuncture upon entering academia. The norms and values that are deeply embedded within academia contrast with those held by BIPOC students and faculty. This cultural disconnect manifests in BIPOC faculty and students being relegated to outsiders or strangers in the academy (Settles et al., 2021, p.494). In this

section, I illustrate participants' outsider status by exploring their lack of institutional knowledge and resources that insiders possess.

Participant #7, during her master's, recalls observing white students in her cohort apply for scholarships. These students were applying for scholarships such as the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding opportunity. She remembers being one of many black students who were never made aware of these scholarships:

It was hard too like... all these white students around me were getting like these scholarships, like OGS and SSHRC, and there was a bunch of us, other black students... a few of us were like... "how are these people... like what is happening for them?" right, and a lot of the support that they like getting from their, you know professors were supporting their work and professors were publishing with them, and we didn't have that opportunity. (7)

Scholarships such as the OGS and SSHRC are funding opportunities for graduate students. Access to these funding opportunities lightens the financial burden on graduate students and grants them access to networking, conferences, and prestige. Most importantly, these opportunities allow students to finish their graduate studies in a timely and efficient manner due to the lack of financial burden. All in all, the OGS and SSHRC offer financial and symbolic value to graduate students who have knowledge and access to these opportunities. Ultimately, these funding opportunities open doors and increase the likelihood of students gaining recognition as legitimate scholars. Exclusion from this form of institutional knowledge, as experienced by the participant and her Black colleagues, signifies their outsider status within the academy. Specifically, her experience suggests that she and her colleagues are not privy to knowledge about opportunities in academia that can further their chances at succeeding. In other words, although racialized researchers and students are physically in academia, they are

systematically excluded from accessing resources that can facilitate their success and advancement in the institution.

This lack of institutional knowledge may be explained due to an absence of cultural capital. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, cultural capital refers to a set of tools that help with social mobility in a field. However, what is considered capital in one field may not be capital in another. In the context of academia, a family history in higher education serves as a form of capital. For instance, students whose family members have previously attended university in Canada can benefit from knowledge that may be passed down by their family members. This includes knowledge on institutional processes, timetabling, financial requirements, university language, and protocols that are part of the unspoken rules in academia (O'Shea, 2016). Students equipped with this knowledge are less likely to experience feelings of isolation and bewilderment upon first entering academia (O'Shea, 2016). Moreover, family members who have navigated the institution before may serve as pillars of support as they are in a better position to understand and guide the student who is entering academia for the first time. All in all, students whose families have experience in academia arguably enter the institution with a pre-assembled toolkit that makes navigation and transition into academia much more seamless.

Participant #8 shares the struggles of lacking such capital and the work required to navigate academia without it:

I had friends whose parents were professors and so they knew how to navigate scholarships, which scholarships, how to apply, how to talk to professors, how to be involved in publication before getting into PhD programs, how to get jobs on the side over the summer, how to become an adjunct professor you know with just emailing someone and so there is certainly a difference between the hidden curriculum which isn't so hidden for certain people. So, would it be nice to know the hidden curriculum and not have to search a little harder for community... it's easier for

me now as a PhD student to do these things but at the undergrad and masters level it was difficult, you are fresh out of high school and into undergrad... the hidden curriculum is not knowing how to go to profs, how to do research, you are working multiple jobs etc. .. I didn't know that you can go to a prof with questions during office hours... I thought you had to make an appointment and do all that ... and that was my first gen experience. (8)

4.1.4 Conclusion

To summarize, this section demonstrates how whiteness manifests in the everyday experiences of BIPOC faculty and students in academia. Through a curriculum that centres whiteness and an underrepresentation of faculty of colour, academia's white doxa continues to be reproduced and protected structurally through evaluation standards that centre Eurocentric ways of knowing that marginalize the contributions of BIPOC faculty and students. Similarly, the participants' experiences demonstrate that whiteness is also protected through white students and faculty whose habitus aligns with that of academia's doxa. These elements together contribute to the systemic marginalization experienced by BIPOC faculty and students, who struggle to navigate academia as outsiders within.

4.2 Strategies of Survival

While systemic marginalization excludes BIPOC faculty and students from accessing and accumulating various forms of capital (i.e., institutional knowledge and informal networks), they also experience exclusion and alienation from within the institution. This manifests through racism and microaggressions that send a clear message to them about their precarious belonging in academia. The subtle but clear messaging places racialized researchers and students in a weary position as they try to navigate this inhospitable environment. To maintain their spot in academia, racialized researchers and students develop strategies of self-surveillance and self-censorship to minimize, neutralize, and eventually conform aspects of their identity, behaviours, and scholarship into one that better aligns with academia's norms and expectations.

4.2.1 Academia's Chilly Climate

All participants of this study experienced academia as an inhospitable space, unwilling to accommodate their presence. This was felt by them over time, in subliminal ways, as they navigated this space. For instance, participant #2 shares that this feeling of exclusion and alienation was felt by her “insidiously or unconsciously”, suggestive of the subtle yet pervasive ways in which exclusion operates in academia. To counteract these feelings, she worked hard to prove she belonged:

It's almost like this added pressure to like to prove like no, look I'm actually good, that I do belong like look at how great I can be... I have to overachieve or go the extra mile to prove that I am actually intelligent, I have a space in this institution. (2)

As a white space, academia affords those who are perceived as representing the values, characteristics, and practices consistent with academia's white culture the right of belonging (Henry & Tator, 2009, p.136). Conversely, those who do not fit this mould are seen as trespassers whose presence warrants high levels of scrutiny and skepticism. For this reason, racialized students and faculty remain stuck in a perpetual cycle of having to prove their legitimacy and worth in the academy. This calls into question their right to belong, and in response, racialized researchers have to work twice as hard as their white counterparts and must navigate this space in a constant state of hypervigilance (Rollock, 2023).

The participants' hypervigilance stemmed from being aware that they were a minority in this institution. As a result, all participants reported paying extra attention to their actions, decisions, and the reasons behind their actions. Essentially, they felt they had to be ready to go the extra mile to justify everything they did. For participant #9, this served as a defence mechanism as it averted possible singling out and sanctions by the university. She stated:

Being a racialized person, there aren't that many people that look like us in this space so you have to over-explain your work or what you're doing or where you spent your money, because we are not of the norm here and because of that our actions will be noticed. (9)

Since racialized bodies in academia are underrepresented in faculty positions, their presence when they do occupy these positions remains particularly distinctive and visible, attracting disproportionate attention towards their behaviours (Niemann, 2011). This is evident in participant #9's narration as she points to the marginalization of racialized bodies as a contributing factor to her hyper-visibility in the academy. Furthermore, her account suggests that racialized bodies in the academy are treated with a level of mistrust by the institution, whereby they must constantly justify, overexplain and over-detail all aspects of their work. The lack of trust and need to over-explain fosters a hostile environment as it questions their right to belong, but also sends the message that their belonging in this space is conditional.

There are several negative consequences for the emotional well-being of racialized researchers and students who are having to operate from a constant state of alertness. Primarily, racialized faculty and students may run the risk of exhaustion, burnout, and eventual departure from the academy very early on in their academic careers (Griffin et al., 2011, p.519). Additionally, it reinforces their precariousness in the academy as they are judged against unrealistic and higher expectations that make them feel like they cannot afford to make any mistakes. This is captured in participant #2's experience:

I can't afford to make mistakes in the same way my white colleagues or people exploring academia, they have the freedom to make more mistakes because they are protected by the institution, this is a place they belong, if this is a space where [people of colour] don't belong, any ruffling of the feather, you are cut. (2)

Participants of this study also experienced everyday racism and microaggressions that contributed to academia's hostile environment. For instance, participant #6 recalls an instance during her master's degree where a non-racialized student openly used the n-word in her presence. She recalls how this experience made her question her sense of belonging as she grappled with the reality of what had just happened:

I just remember sitting there and I could feel my heartbeat in my throat in my hands, and I was like I just started here at this program and I'm coming from [a different province] where things are a lot smaller, I'm in Toronto, is this what my graduate programs going to be like? (6)

Participant #2 had a similar encounter with a white male student who, in telling her about the racist neighbourhood he grew up in, repeatedly said the n-word as part of the story. The participant described this as an act of violence towards her, but felt she could not do anything about it due to fear of repercussions from the university. She described:

The fact that I don't feel secure in my position with the university to be like what the hell was that get out...feeling like I am walking on eggshells, so those small experiences feel like there is this added labour as a racialized person to not make yourself vulnerable to sanctions by the university. (2)

In this moment of racial violence and microaggression experienced by the participant, she felt an expectation to turn this incident into a "teaching moment" for the student. She used this moment to explain to the student why using the n-word was an act of violence. She describes her frustration in not feeling confident enough to act against a student who very clearly made her feel unsafe. Although it was a conscious choice not to act against the student, this choice stemmed from a feeling of insecurity and marginality in this space, particularly out of fear that any action would cause her greater harm by the institution. The participant showcases a lack of mistrust towards the institution to protect her and suggests that racialized researchers and students are responsible for safeguarding their own personal and emotional safety in this space. This

interaction highlights how racism manifests in the lives of BIPOC scholars, particularly through the ease with which the student uses offensive language in the presence of the participant. These experiences of microaggressions are commonplace for BIPOC faculty who must navigate these instances alone, as their grievances are often dismissed and ignored by the institution (Pizarro, 2017).

Participants of this study also described feeling vulnerable to physical acts of violence in their respective institutions because of the implicit and explicit forms of racism, microaggression, and hostility they experienced every day in these spaces. Specifically, concerns around their physical safety were felt in their roles as educators in the classroom. For instance, participant #7 described her presence in the classroom as a “risk” due to an incident of racial violence she had experienced in the classroom. Although the participant did not feel comfortable discussing what took place, she did describe how this experience left her feeling unsafe, uncomfortable, and vulnerable to further acts of violence. Participant #9 similarly described having a heightened sense of fear in the classroom, particularly towards students who disagree with the content of her courses:

Because you realize for some folk if you talk about something and their backs go up, it can turn into a very unsafe place for you... so you have your strategies making sure you are not in your classroom too long, if students want to speak you say let's go outside, stay close to the door, I don't think I'm exaggerating, it's a genuine fear that there could be someone who will want to get aggressive with you. (9)

Participant #9 details the risks that come with teaching as a racialized scholar. In both instances, participants' fear around their physical safety is rooted in the acknowledgement that the courses they teach make them vulnerable to physical acts of violence. In this way, the classroom is no longer a site of knowledge exchange for BIPOC bodies but rather is a site of hostility, violence, scrutiny, and surveillance. Walking into a classroom means BIPOC faculty

must negotiate their sense of safety with the desire to be part of an institution where their authority, legitimacy, and safety is under constant attack.

The examples above illustrate the push and pull dynamic between racialized bodies and academia. Specifically, academia responds to the presence of racialized bodies by subtly attempting to push them out. This occurs covertly, through the everyday racism and microaggressions that foster an inhospitable environment for racialized researchers and students. As they navigated this environment, many participants shared becoming hyperaware of their racialized identity in these spaces. This was attributed to their everyday experiences in academia that give rise to conflict between their identities and academia's perception and expectations of them. To resolve this tension while remaining in this space, BIPOC faculty and students develop strategies of self-surveillance and self-censorship – a tool necessary for survival under the gaze of whiteness.

4.2.2 Self-Surveillance

For all participants, self-surveillance served as a defence mechanism against making mistakes that could jeopardize their place in the institution. As illustrated in the above discussion, racialized researchers and students experience higher levels of scrutiny simply because they are not of the norm in this space. Higher levels of scrutiny underscore their precariousness as it places them in a position where they must prove their intellectual legitimacy and worth in this place. Additionally, because racialized researchers and students operate in an environment that places higher expectations on them, self-surveillance acts as a safety net that allows them to remain cognizant of their behaviour and can catch themselves should they deviate from academia's expectations of them. This was the case for participant #4, who describes self-surveillance as a way to avoid being caught making a mistake:

You feel hyper-vigilant like you have to monitor yourself... I just feel like when I am writing I have to be like reading twice, three, four times just to make sure I don't get any mistakes... like... yeah so I have to make sure, yeah it has to be almost fool proof and of course perfection belongs to god you know but yeah there's this ultra like, yeah people are just watching you slip any second. (4)

It is true that all students in academia face pressures to work hard; however, racialized students face the additional burden of having to prove their legitimacy in this place. This is because they are not afforded the rights of belonging as their white counterparts. This translates into having to work harder and demonstrate their intellectual capabilities at a higher standard. This is done while subconsciously feeling that they do not belong in these institutions. As a result, the need to perform at a high level is particularly more burdensome for racialized students. In this instance, the constant monitoring of her work is a form of self-policing her identity as a scholar and serves to mitigate the risk of being presumed incompetent and, on the contrary, can provide her with a sense of safety if she believes she is meeting the expectations placed on her.

Self-surveillance as a defence mechanism was similarly discussed by participant #9. In her experience, remaining hyper-vigilant and monitoring her behaviour protected her from being scapegoated by the institution. She felt she was vulnerable to this due to her precarious position in academia and therefore had to maintain mindfulness of her actions. In this instance, self-surveillance is done in anticipation of scrutiny from the institution:

Even if you feel like you're not being watched you navigate in a way you are, and it's a form of self-protection because you recognize if anyone's getting thrown under the bus it will be you as the racialized scholar, you just know it, so you have to act like you are always being watched to protect yourself. (9)

The participant reveals a deep level of mistrust towards her institution and its commitment to protect BIPOC faculty. Specifically, the participant describes navigating the institution as if she is being watched as a protective mechanism, demonstrating an understanding of how her racial identity makes her vulnerable to scrutiny by the institution. More importantly, recognizing that it is racialized scholars who will be thrown under the bus sheds light on how BIPOC faculty are seen as expendable outsiders rather than integral members of the institution. For this reason, BIPOC faculty are responsible for their safety and survival in these spaces. Thus, in this instance, she engages in self-surveillance to protect herself from the institution and to give herself a sense of safety, recognizing that she cannot find that sense of safety from the institution.

In the above instances, we can see how participants engaged in self-surveillance to shield themselves from potential scrutiny rather than a reaction to overt surveillance. For instance, Participants 9 and 4 monitor and regulate their behaviour not because they are being watched but because they *anticipate* being watched. This anticipation leads to self-censorship and self-surveillance strategies. To this end, we can see how academia's hostile environment creates a cumulative effect where the unspoken norms and expectations continue to subtly shape participants' behaviour.

Participant #2 speaks to the subtle but covert way that academia regulates the behaviour of racialized researchers and students. Speaking of her academic environment, she describes "it's like this intrinsic feeling... or at least triggers some sort of response within you, that is like, okay I need to kind of self-surveil or modify my behaviours in this place". She further explained that she came across this feeling, particularly when she began teaching and interacting with students more:

I felt that especially when I started TA'ing or teaching more and more, you know, just interacting with students and realizing sort of how... how my teaching style or abilities was being maybe more heavily scrutinized or watched compared to my white colleagues. (2)

As noted previously, racialized bodies occupy a peculiar space in the academy, where they are hypervisible by way of their identity; however, they remain invisible across positions of power and institutional discourse (Griffen et al., 2011, p.519). This duality positions them as being both conspicuous and marginalized in the academy. In this instance, the participant's role as a teaching assistant places her in a state of hypervisibility and surveillance by students who feel entitled to scrutinize and judge her teaching abilities, demonstrating the shifting power dynamics in the classroom. However, she remains marginalized in the sense that she is experiencing this scrutiny disproportionately compared to her white counterparts and responds to this marginalization by modifying her behaviours.

Self-surveillance extended to the participants' physical appearances as well. The expectation of racialized researchers and students in academia is often to assimilate within the dominant culture of academia (James, 2012). This involves assimilating aspects of their identity and appearance to remain and appear in harmony with whiteness (García-Peña, 2022). As racialized researchers and students experience hypervisibility in white institutions, they will engage in behaviours that seek to minimize that visibility and perceived differences (James, 2012, p.141). This was seen in the experience of participant #6, who often finds herself at a crossroads between her physical appearance and academia's expectation of her:

Like I'm worried about how I'm presenting myself as well and am I wearing my hair out where I obviously look more racialized, versus if I wear my hair back because I'm light skin. Like I'm conscious, like is my hair out, is my hair in... like how black do I go in terms of things... like just hair. (6)

The participant faces the dilemma of whether to neutralize aspects of her identity that position her as visibly different amongst her white peers. In this instance, it is her hair that signifies her otherness. Her dilemma, therefore, suggests an internalization of a norm that positions her as different and in response, we see the negotiation between expressing her natural self or modifying her appearance in a way that would make her stand out less. This negotiation underscores the pressure that racialized researchers and students navigate to conform to academia's standards of professionalism, which implicitly exclude and marginalize racialized identities.

In a similar vein, participant #2 recounts a “jarring experience” she had as an undergraduate student, where her racialized friend experienced a microaggression by a professor. The professor had commented on her friend's long curly hair, saying that it needs to be tamed and that it is not viewed as professional. The professor's comment reinforced racist notions of professionalism that position Eurocentric aesthetics as professional and all other aesthetics as unprofessional. These discourses are rooted in white supremacy and are especially harmful for Black female students who are automatically positioned outside of the standards of professionalism.

Speaking of this instance, participant #2 describes the unsettling impact this had on her as it instilled in her the belief that the way she naturally presents herself is not considered professional. She describes in detail the reverberative effect it had on her:

Through that experience, I was like oh maybe I need to pay attention to how I'm doing my hair, and that is still something I think about all the time... I'm trying to like assert authority in these spaces, but I'm appeasing to the white gaze or this really racist conception of what being a professional is ... and all of these experiences operate in the back of my mind unconsciously. To the point of I would stop and be like okay, how am I going to wear my hair today, what kind of clothes will I wear today, to kind of show that I am a professional, you know. (2)

The professor's comment about professionalism reinforces the notion that racialized peoples do not fit in the mould of what is considered a professional in academia. The reverberative effect on the participant can be seen in how it shapes how she polices her physical appearance and extends to her desire to "assert authority in these places". This suggests that self-surveillance of her physical appearance goes beyond just how she looks, but is also about how she may be perceived by others in the academy. Since racialized faculty members often struggle to be perceived as authority figures in academia, the participant's concerted efforts to appease the white gaze is a strategic way to garner some legitimacy within academia while maintaining her place in it.

Similarly, dynamics in academia are often reflective of the social world. To this end, racialized faculty and students in the academy are not immune to the stereotypes associated with their identities and often take on the additional labour of countering those stereotypes (Henry & Tator, 2012). This is touched on by participant #6, who spoke about the need to "soften" her appearance as a researcher:

You know, the need to perform friendly, because if I'm just walking into the world with my black face... I am going to look aggressive because of the body that I inhabit because I am 5'10... like I'm a taller woman as well, so like it's... I'm already like okay; you need to be like 'are you smiling when people look at you... Are you making that old lady feel threatened when you're not smiling at her... so like just existing. (6)

Racialized and gendered stereotypes follow racialized researchers and students into the academy and shape their experiences within it. This is especially true for BIPOC women who occupy multiple minority statuses by way of gender and race. As such, their presence in the academy is often marked by stereotypes and biases that position them as inherently suspect, aggressive, and threatening in white spaces (Ahmed, 2012). While these stereotypes follow all

racialized bodies in white spaces, they are particularly harmful for Black women, as a history of racism and sexism has positioned them as threatening, angry, and aggressive.

4.2.3 Self-Censorship

Strategies of self-censorship allowed participants to censor and conform their physical appearances to academia's expectations of them. For instance, participant #2 discussed avoiding specific colours when doing her nails to avoid triggering racial stereotypes associated with her identity:

I can't do my nails the way I want because how will that be interpreted by, like through the lens of my race right, like I've seen some of my white women colleagues who have like hot pink nails but I would never do that in the institution because I think, kind of well... yea self-monitor, and self-censor myself in that way to not draw those racial stereotypes or trigger those. (2)

In this instance, we can understand her act of self-censorship as a means to adapt and conform to academia's expectations of professionalism. Although these expectations are implicit, they govern the behaviour of racialized researchers and students. For instance, in her capacity as a teaching assistant, the participant does not feel comfortable in having "hot pink nails" because of perceived racial stereotypes associated with her identity and those nails. Conversely, her white colleague is able to express herself freely. This reveals the double standards by which racialized researchers and students are judged in academia and the additional layer of scrutiny they face.

Apart from censoring their physical appearances, participants also engaged in self-censorship through their research interests. For instance, participant #7 recalls the moment she steered away from her research interests when applying to her doctoral program. Having experienced a lack of support and hostility towards her research interests in her master's, she was aware that her interest in studying the experiences of Black women in correctional facilities

would not be supported. As such, she adjusted her research interest to increase her chances of being accepted:

I had a very clear idea that I wanted to study Black women who were incarcerated and I knew with my experiences that I had at my masters level that I didn't think it would be supported in applications so I didn't write about that... what I wrote about was furthering my research around what I had done in my masters, which I thought was a safer application choice... Just the fact that I need to do that, I think, speaks to the nature of the academy and racialized researchers, like sometimes we have to, like at that time, anyhow play it safer. (7)

By censoring her research interests, the participant showcases how she has adapted to academia's expectations of her. Specifically, making this change was a "safer" option for her as it would increase her chances of getting into her doctoral program. However, this reflects the broader power dynamics in academia in which racialized researchers and students are compelled to adjust their research interests to those that are prioritized in academia. This is also reflective of how academia gatekeeps the type of knowledges that enter it and how it limits racialized researchers and students' ability to pursue their intellectual interests.

Participants also described moments where they felt they had to censor their writing. Specifically, participant #6 spoke about moments where she tried to neutralize her scholarship to avoid being labeled as the angry black woman:

But yea softening my writing...you know recognizing I can't be an angry black woman in words either... or like it's not just my physical showing up but it's how I'm writing, how I'm being perceived, all things I'm conscious of when I'm writing. (6)

The participant's deliberate act of "softening her writing" is a form of censorship influenced by racial and gendered stereotypes associated with her identity. Specifically, Black women in academia are often stereotyped as being "angry" and "emotional" in their research, an act that seeks to dismiss their research as it deviates from academia's standards of objectivity (Doharty, 2020). Thus, the phrase "I can't be an angry Black woman in words" showcases how

the participant feels expected to manage her tone to ensure she is not perceived as being angry in her research. This was a common experience amongst all participants who talked about “dulling down” their work to evade stereotypes that position racialized people as lacking objectivity and dismiss their work as lacking rigour. These acts of self-censorship, specifically the dulling down of work, are an embodiment of academia’s habitus and suggestive of the doxa that demands conformity from BIPOC bodies in academia. This learned response becomes a way for BIPOC faculty and students to remain within academia while also engaging in their work.

To end this section, I want to highlight two instances that speak to the many subtle ways self-censorship manifests in academia. While I expected, to some extent, that self-censorship would manifest amongst participants through their research and physical appearances, I was surprised to learn about the quieter forms of censorship that participants engaged in. For some participants, self-censorship played out in how they showed up—or chose not to—in academic spaces. For instance, participant #1 explains how she chose not to advocate for herself in academic spaces out of fear of how her advocacy would be received as a racialized woman.

Reflecting on moments where she held back as a student, she explains:

I do think it could have been because of my racialized identity I didn’t always feel comfortable in pushing the boundaries where I feel like I should have, because again, I’m new to academia, I am a racialized woman, I don’t have a lot of family in academia to show me the ropes so I think... I can say there were moments where I could have advocated more in spaces but I didn’t feel equipped to do so because of my racialized identity and out of fear people will undermine my research and attribute it to “well you’re just a brown woman, this is obviously coming from your bias or radicalness”. (1)

Similarly, participant #8 shared that while she did engage in self-censorship through her scholarship, she explained that the most significant form of censorship was done in her capacity as an expert in her research area:

It means not participating on particular projects, it means potentially declining some opportunities, maybe not engaging in public discourse, it might mean not engaging on social media in something I am an expert in, it might mean not speaking in particular settings depending on the topic, audience. (8)

She further explained that this form of censorship “probably afforded me more opportunities to work on certain projects and to work with particular scholars that I align with”. Her experience highlights the professional constraints imposed by the need to engage in self-censorship in academia. By declining opportunities, refraining from public discourse, and not participating in projects, her censorship actively limits her involvement in spaces that could benefit, recognize, and value her expertise. Nevertheless, as stated by the participant, this act of censorship allows her to maintain her spot in the academy and further progress as a researcher.

The shared experiences of both participants highlight the internal negotiations that racialized researchers and students must engage in to exist and take up space in academic spaces. Beyond levels of appearances, self-censorship operates in the emotional and intellectual terrain of racialized researchers and students. From refraining from advocating for oneself to holding back as an expert in one’s field, self-censorship is an act of negotiation between their desire to belong and the risks associated with showing up as their authentic self. As I reflect on these experiences, I understand that self-censorship and self-surveillance in these contexts are not done out of fear but rather are mobilized as strategic acts of survival.

4.2.4 Conclusion

To summarize, the findings above demonstrate the tension between academia’s white culture and the presence of BIPOC faculty and students. This tension stems from the misalignment that occurs between racialized researchers and students’ habitus with academia’s doxa. This misalignment creates friction between the research participants and academia, who

must balance their identities and research interests with academia's expectations of them. To mediate this tension, participants develop strategies of self-censorship and self-surveillance. Strategies of self-censorship and self-surveillance enable participants to adapt, conform, and ultimately survive academia's attempts at excluding them. By remaining in academia, participants leverage their presence to resist and transform academia into a more inclusive space.

4.3 Transformation and Resilience: Resistance Rooted in Cultural Wealth

In this section, I demonstrate how racialized researchers and students leverage their navigational, resistant, and social capital to transform academia into a more inclusive environment. Racialized researchers and students do so by challenging the dominant narratives that centre whiteness in knowledge production. In addition, they also challenge the dominant norms and practices in academia that reinforce and perpetuate whiteness. Lastly, they challenge the traditional and accepted forms of capital that are considered worthy and of value in academia. By challenging the dominant norms, narratives, and accepted forms of capital in academia, racialized researchers and students demonstrate resilience as they attempt to transform academia into a place where their knowledge, perspectives, and identities are valued.

4.3.1 Centering Marginalized Perspectives

One way that the participants actively tried to transform academia was by bringing in marginalized perspectives that were otherwise excluded from the academic discourse. For instance, participant #7 recalled the limited exposure she had to discourses of race in her classes as an undergraduate student. Although this initially left her feeling disconnected from her class material, she chose to counter these feelings by actively seeking out classes that discussed race and by incorporating race analysis in her assignments. She explains:

That's when I started taking more race classes, like classes with... well, whatever you could find... like around race and if the course was not there then I would bring it in right... I took the risk... I would bring in race analysis into my courses as much as I could, and I was a little concerned about the way it would be received and if it would be received at all. (7)

The participant's use of navigational capital enabled her to create a sense of belonging in a space that excluded her. By bringing in race analysis in her courses and actively seeking courses that discuss race, she brought to light perspectives that were otherwise excluded. In this way, her actions underscore the importance, validity, and legitimacy of race-based discourse in academia and challenge the status quo that seeks to legitimize Eurocentric perspectives over all other perspectives in academia. Though she was concerned about how this would be perceived, her persistence demonstrates her resilience and commitment to creating a more inclusive space for herself and other racialized peoples in the academy.

Similarly, participant #9 leverages her resistance capital in a moment when she is ostracized by a senior scholar who disapproves of her research interest. As discussed in section 1, the participant was eager to highlight the experiences of racialized people in her area of study; however, she was met with criticism and rejection by a prominent scholar. Rather than allowing the scholar's opinion to influence her decision, the participant leveraged her resistance capital the moment she decided to continue pursuing her research, despite the challenges that came with it.

The participant described this pivotal moment in detail:

And it was at the point where I made it very clear that I was going to continue in this space... Did I start considering doing something else, for sure, but I thought maybe if I want to be considered a good scholar I needed to start thinking of other areas, and I remember going to the library to see what I could possibly think of and I kind of sent myself down a rabbit hole of trying to find something else but I realized I couldn't steer away from it as a black woman.. and that there was so little about this topic, and that in essence could have kept the status quo by telling people to not do this work that maintains that status quo. (9)

The participant demonstrates resistance capital by resisting the professor's effort to censor her research and maintain academia's social order. Specifically, this moment demonstrated her defiance against academia's doxa that renders unimportant the experiences of racialized peoples. Her act of defiance creates a space for the perspectives and experiences of racialized peoples to be shared, furthering their inclusion in knowledge production. In this way, she is not only creating space for that knowledge but simultaneously challenges the assumption that these experiences are not legitimate and worthy scholarship.

4.3.2 Defying Established Norms

Participant #6's act of resistance is demonstrated in her pushback against her ethics department and senior scholars who attempted to influence the way she was conducting her research. As a member of the community she was doing research on, she felt she was in a better position to know which decisions would benefit the community, and which may inadvertently cause harm. For instance, the participant, to minimize power dynamics that inherently exist between a researcher and research participant, fought to give her participants a choice of location for their interviews. This was done to allow the participants to feel comfortable. She explained:

Me choosing a location already enforces a power dynamic when there already is one, like I am a fairly educated lighter skin woman going into community asking folks who do not have maybe the same education or privileges economically that like we have just inherently being part of university... Who am I to say what is best, so I pushed back, and I think I ended up fighting a citation... or two... I argued that like you know participants comfortability can sometimes be very very important, with particularly with like racialized communities that have experienced research deceit, and research skepticism where research hasn't historically benefitted them, it's been about them and extractive, so why would I then try to... throw these power dynamics in their face...it ended up being accepted with my additional justification.. I just knew it didn't make sense... for my community... or I knew it wouldn't be right... And so, sort of being grounded in the thought that yes you are learning but you are also an expert in a lot of ways... especially if it's a community you're from. (6)

She further stated that although she was continuously offered advice by senior scholars, she reminded herself that she was, in many ways, an expert in her research as a person of the community. By standing her ground and refusing the unsolicited advice, the participant challenges the assumption that racialized researchers cannot be the lead authority in research. In addition, the participant asserts her dual identity as a scholar and as a member of the community to help guide her work and make decisions that she best knew would benefit her community. Her dual identity enabled her to be more sensitive to the inherent power dynamics present between herself and her research participants. She leveraged this insider knowledge to create a more comfortable experience for her participants and demonstrated resistance capital as she prioritized the needs and comfort of her participants over academia's traditional way of doing research. This act challenges the doxa that assumes experiential knowledge is better than community knowledge.

4.3.3 Cultivating Spaces of Belonging

In addition to resisting established norms, participants also highlighted their efforts in building networks and cultivating safe spaces for themselves and other racialized peers. For instance, participant #1 shared how she “naturally gravitated towards racialized professors” when seeking a thesis supervisor for her master's. She explained:

I specifically sought out racialized women as my thesis supervisors, so I think that played a big part in making sure I felt supported while doing my research...I think that because I had two racialized women as my thesis supervisors, like it was beneficial to my success. (1)

Similarly, participant #2 shared that she “actively sought out racialized women” during her master's as she felt she would benefit most from working under them. In this way, participants leveraged their navigational capital to find networks of support in an institution where they felt isolated. Moreso, this example highlights how the participant strategically chose

her networks of support; by seeking out racialized women, this became an act of resistance against the predominance white faculty and student body. Thus, this allowed the participant to engage in meaningful community building at a time when she may have felt isolated.

The importance of building community was similarly shared by participant #8, who built her community and network of support when she lacked it within her institution:

I've made community outside in the broader academy, so I've actively sought out communities where there's mentorship opportunities for other racialized scholars to create and cultivate places of belonging... So, I think I've kind of counteracted the challenges of belonging by actively seeking out and searching for those moments or those areas where people are either doing similar type of work or are interested in similar issues or just racialized people doing cool things in the academy and research areas don't have to overlap but its helped that sense of belonging for me.
(8)

The participant demonstrates navigational capital as she builds a safe space for herself and other racialized students who may feel excluded in this space. Likewise, she demonstrates resilience and leverages her resistant capital as she resists the norms in academia that implicitly exclude and isolate racialized researchers and students. Though the participant initially entered academia with no social networks, she explained that she was now in a space where she did feel supported and seen because of the community that she built for herself. In this way, she demonstrates the power of social capital, specifically, those networks that are built through one's own effort amongst those who share similar values, experiences, and interests as you.

In further conversation, the participant emphasized the importance of her self-cultivated network in her academic journey, stating that it was a key factor in allowing her to thrive, flourish, and ultimately continue as a scholar and student in this space. In this way, the participant redefines what constitutes social capital in academia, as her success challenges the assumption that only informal social networks premised on institutional knowledge are forms of

capital. In this instance, social capital is a network of racialized peers who share similar experiences, values, and history as each other. As such, she redefines traditional notions of social capital in academia as her social network is rooted in shared lived experiences rather than the exchange of institutional knowledge.

4.3.4 Claiming Space Against All Odds

Perhaps the greatest act of resistance and transformation demonstrated by all participants is the fact that they continue to exist in this space despite the challenges they have faced. Their continued presence in academia as racialized bodies disrupts the assumption that white bodies are the norm in academia. Moreover, the classroom, through their class material and research projects, becomes a space inclusive of the perspectives, knowledge, and lived realities of racialized peoples. In this way, they continue to build space for perspectives that are otherwise excluded. The most profound impact, however, may be that their continued presence in the classroom inspires racialized students who see a visual representation of themselves in the classroom. Participant #2 describes her interactions with her racialized students who share this sentiment:

I really feel like I stepped into my shoes as a teacher and its now when I'm speaking to my racialized students who tell me these things, its "nice to see someone who looks like me" and it's like at [my institution] most of the students are low income, racialized, often times are supporting immigrant parents who don't speak English or French, that is the demographic, so I get a lot of feedback from my students who say "and it makes me think it's possible". (2)

Participant #7 shared a similar experience, where she recalls how her lack of belonging in her early years as a student motivated her to become a professor. She hoped to create a sense of belonging for students who similarly feel a sense of isolation upon entering academia. She explained:

That was one of the main reasons I wanted to be a prof and to this day where my students say to me, like when I talk about race relations in Canada I see my students nodding and they come to me and they say things like ‘ I feel validated’ because finally I’m talking about things that they relate to, things that they can understand.. I never had that. (7)

4.3.5 Conclusion

As a racialized student myself and one of the few racialized students in my cohort, I have directly benefited from the networks of support and communities the participants have built. Through writing workshops, mentorship, and guidance, I have found a sense of community and have met similar racialized students from other institutions through these networks. In this way, the participants’ efforts to transform academia go beyond themselves as they build a safe space for themselves and other racialized students.

4.4 Institutional Pushback: How Academia Preserves Whiteness

Racialized researchers and students’ efforts to transform the academy into a more inclusive space is resisted by the institution. This resistance manifests through counterstrategies that seek to maintain academia’s social order. In this section, I frame my argument against Joan Acker’s (2006) seminal work on inequality regimes to shed light on the formal and informal practices entrenched in academia’s institutional processes. By highlighting these informal and formal practices, this section demonstrates how these processes reproduce inequalities that continue to marginalize racialized researchers and students.

This section begins with a discussion of tokenism, an institutional practice that singles out participants as representatives of diversity and overburdens them with additional labour *because* of their racial identity. Tokenism shifts their identity from being scholars, faculty members, and peers to simply being the racialized faculty member or student (Niemann, 2020, p.327). Accordingly, they are perceived primarily through their racial identity, leading to racial

bias and prejudice that undermines their capacity as scholars. This section will end with a discussion that highlights how these practices contribute to the epistemic exclusion experienced by racialized researchers and students.

4.4.1 Doing the Work, Bearing the Cost – The Tokenization of BIPOC Faculty and Students

The participants of this study reflected on experiences that left them feeling like tokens in their respective institutions. As tokens, their presence in the institution was used to give the symbolic appearance of inclusion from the institution (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019, p.343). This involved being part of and often leading committees that focused on bettering and increasing inclusivity at the institution, being asked to represent and speak on behalf of all racial groups, and ultimately spearheading the institution's efforts to address racism (Melaku & Beeman, 2023). While it may seem like these efforts were done in good faith, later discussion will showcase how tokenism as a practice reinforces inequities that continue to marginalize racialized researchers and students, while upholding the status quo.

4.4.1.2 Burden of Invisible Work. The literature highlights a consistent underrepresentation of racialized faculty across academic institutions. Underrepresentation places racialized faculty in a perpetual hypervisibility and invisibility conundrum - where they are highly visible as the racialized faculty in a predominantly White space, but remain invisible in the everyday, broader academic environment (Settles et al., 2021, p.494). One such instance can be seen in the fact that BIPOC faculty are often asked to join diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committees and take on diversity-related projects within the institution because of their racial identities (Melaku & Beeman, 2023, p.1160). In these instances, racialized faculty members remain visible as symbols who are tasked with fulfilling institutional diversity despite continuing to remain invisible as knowers within these same institutions. While there is no

formal expectation to join these committees or partake in this work, this invisible labour becomes a way for BIPOC faculty to negotiate their belonging in white spaces (Melaku & Beeman, 2023, p.1161).

This hypervisibility and invisibility conundrum is captured in participant #5's experience, where she shares how she is often tasked with leading DEI initiatives on behalf of her department. As only one of two racialized members in a department of 50+, she remains hypervisible and simultaneously invisible in this regard. Her hypervisibility has led to her being tasked with taking on the additional labour of partaking in these committees, irrespective of her academic interests and capacity for more work. Through the process of interest convergence, institutions promote the illusion of diversity and inclusion by prompting faculty members to join committees, sometimes for the sole reason of being the symbolic representation of committees (Bhopal, 2024). In this way, the participation by the faculty member signifies outwardly that racial injustice is being dealt with, which ultimately benefits the institution while the racialized member takes the brunt of the work. Participant #5 shares her frustration with her department in this regard:

I get asked you know like 'we need you to be on this search committee because we need diversity'...In a department of 50+ when there's only two racialized members you become the diversity and there's sometimes where you feel like it's unfair because like I can't do all the diversity work but like, or I shouldn't have to disproportionately have to do the diversity work you know based on my skin colour. (5)

In addition to leading diversity committees, participants also discussed their roles as mentors to younger racialized students. As discussed earlier, participants engaged in and took on mentorship roles to build community and make academia a more inclusive space. Having once been a student looking for guidance, many racialized faculty and doctoral students feel a professional obligation towards mentoring racialized students, because they understand

intimately the challenges with navigating a predominantly white space (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019, p.349). However, this does not take away from the fact that this work is done in addition to their duties as professors and doctoral students, thus making them vulnerable to exhaustion. Moreover, this work is not recognized by the institution, making it even more difficult for racialized faculty and students to continue engaging in this work:

Racialized scholars take on a lot of more like care work in ways towards students like mentoring and stuff, and it's not necessarily recognized in the same way... like will not only my work be recognized in the same way but also like my community contributions or the way I'm taking part in academia may not be recognized... in a way that would actually benefit me... mentorship is so important to me, but I know some universities don't prioritize it anymore or don't consider it important. (6)

Joining diversity committees and mentoring racialized students is part of the invisible labour that racialized faculty and graduate students find themselves involved in. Despite the time and effort devoted to these activities, there is no recognition for this work, nor is it seen as being valuable (Mugo & Puplampu, 2022). Despite academia's proclamations and commitment to diversity and equity, the diversity work done by racialized faculty holds little weight and is given little consideration for tenure (Henry & Tator, 2012, p.92; Mohamed & Beagan, 2019, p.349). To this end, racialized faculty continue to be held to higher expectations than their white colleagues, as they are having to balance their commitment to their institution's diversity efforts alongside their duties towards publications and teaching (Henry et al., 2017). Therefore, this additional labour, in the name of promoting diversity and inclusion, can negatively affect them as it may take their time away from their research and ability to work towards tenure (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017, p.231).

In addition, participants of this study also described instances in which they were singled out during class discussions centred around race. Perceived as tokens that represent diversity,

participants were often called on to speak on behalf of, or for, racial groups. Participant #8 recalls the frustration she felt when this would happen, as it felt like she was having to take on additional labour:

When you're the only racialized person in a cohort you're seen as having to speak on behalf of racial groups or the racial groups that you represent and that's not possible so that expectation of well this is a race issue so and so will speak to it, the increased workload is present.... Feeling like you have to educate other people...and it can be very alienating and isolating. (8)

Racialized communities, despite their differences, are often presumed to share the same perspectives, histories, and experiences (Henry & Tator, 2012, p.90). Members of racialized communities in predominantly white institutions are often tasked with speaking on behalf of, or for, racial groups that they may not necessarily be part of. In this case, it was not only exhausting for participant #8, who had to take on the added labour of educating her peers, but it continued to amplify her racial identity, fostering feelings of isolation and alienation as she was continuously reminded of her 'otherness' in this space.

In this way, while tokenism may seem like the institution's honest effort towards creating a more inclusive place for BIPOC faculty and students, it continues to marginalize them while maintaining the status quo. For instance, rather than addressing hiring practices that continue to render BIPOC faculty as underrepresented, it instead tokenizes racialized scholars, placing the burden of diversity work on them while also failing to recognize their contributions with respect to tenure. Without addressing these practices and the failure to recognize the efforts put forth by BIPOC faculty, the responsibility to address diversity-related issues is seemingly shifted from the institution and placed on the BIPOC faculty member, who is often singled out and made to dedicate time and efforts that remain unrecognized by the institution. Overburdened with work and with little recognition, tokenism creates difficult conditions for racialized faculty to continue

in, as they are often exhausted and experience burnout before they can even attain tenure (Social Sciences Feminist Network, 2017, p.229).

Diversity work is, therefore, a practice that reinforces the systemic inequities that it purports to address. It becomes a way for the institution to uphold the illusion of its commitment to change without *actually* making change (Ahmed, 2012). Instead, diversity efforts are symbolic and performative, and the institution often has very little commitment to enacting change. This was reflected in the experience of participant #5, who recalls an instance at her institution where a white professor had used the n-word as part of their lecture. This controversy and the way it was handled by the institution is symbolic of academia's empty promises and performative efforts towards creating and enacting change.

Speaking to this incident and the aftermath, participant #5 recalls how members of her department sought to release a symbolic anti-racism statement to reassure current students of the institution's commitment towards its racialized students and the community. However, this was met with resistance by a small number of faculty members who were able to delay the release of this statement. While the statement was eventually released, the initial delay and resistance exemplify the lack of commitment her institution has to diversity and anti-racism:

It's like well-known when this controversy happened, my department tried to... certain members of the department brought it forward in statement and said you know at the very least in the midst of all of this we want students to kind of feel comfortable as students and lets just pass a symbolic anti-racism statement that comes from this school. And we couldn't pass it initially... it was a small, very small minority, but a vocal one that kind of stalled the ability for us to pass this... and that became really tense... So that was a very stressful time because you're just kind of like why am I here... You know if we can't even pass an anti-racism statement which doesn't involve any commitment on the part of the department... and it was, like I said a small minority right... But it was a small minority that used a bunch of procedural rules ... and I was like that's systemic racism right there right... the use of procedural rules to prevent this from happening.. Now after that, the procedures were studied by everyone that was in support and we found a way

to pass it... But that was a particularly stressful time, when you're like okay... I was just post-tenure at that point, but literally just post-tenure. On like months, so you're like woah why are we having this argument like this is embarrassing more than anything. (5)

4.4.2 The Systemic Devaluation of Racialized Scholars

As illustrated in section 4.3, participants of this study sought to make academia a more inclusive space for all racialized people. One approach to achieving this was creating space for racialized perspectives by pursuing research centered around race. In response to this transformative effort, academia deployed counterstrategies aimed at devaluing their positions as scholars and their scholarship, and upholding whiteness at the center of knowledge production. The devaluation of their capacity as scholars and their scholarship is done through practices informed by racial bias and prejudice that question the credibility and legitimacy of racialized researchers in academia. These practices are embedded in the institution and are rooted in a white supremacist ideology that seeks to delegitimize nonwhite bodies and scholarship in the academy.

4.4.2.1 Pre-defined Roles: Studying Race as a Racialized Scholar. Participants of this study shared experiences wherein they felt their scholarship was devalued by their institution. Settles et al. (2021) explain that this devaluation is rooted in biases that view non-mainstream scholarship as illegitimate due to their departure from academia's established disciplinary norms that value objectivity over experiential knowledge (p.495). Since racialized researchers are more likely to engage in nonmainstream scholarship, their credibility as scholars and ability to produce intellectually rigorous work is questioned (Settles et al., 2021). This devaluation not only undermines the contributions of racialized researchers but also makes it so that only the contributions of white researchers are recognized. This is reflected in the experience of participant #7, who recalls feeling dismissed for engaging in research that she was 'expected' to do, while witnessing her white peers being celebrated for the same work:

There were white, young white grad students writing about race and it was just like ‘oh my gosh this is so critical’ and when we, being Black folks or other racialized folks were writing and applying for like OGS and writing about race based work, it was diminished because it was expected, it wasn’t critical because we are racialized, but when white women did it, it was critical because they stepped outside of themselves into this... like, this other paradigm of thinking and it was seen as so critical because they were white.. but for us, it wasn’t valid, it was an everyday. (7)

The participant’s experience highlights how testimonial injustice functions in academia, specifically through the contradictory ways in which race-related work is perceived and evaluated. In this instance, racial bias operates dually and acts as the marker of legitimacy and credibility for both racialized and white scholars. While the racial identity of racialized scholars becomes the basis for the dismissal of their work, the same marker serves as a form of capital for white researchers, enhancing their credibility, authority, and legitimacy. More notably, racial bias operates in both the informal and formal processes that determine how scholarship is assessed. Formally, racial bias is reflected in the type of scholarship considered of value in academia, whereas informally, this racial bias is reflected in the credibility judgments towards racialized researchers. To this end, racial bias and testimonial injustice are both deeply woven into institutional structures that govern academic life.

Furthermore, racial bias is also reflected in the implicit expectation that racialized researchers will study race-based topics. These expectations limit their ability as scholars to define their own research interests and instead confine them to predefined roles. She details that these expectations shape the way her work is perceived in academia. Specifically, she is labeled as an activist, despite never having identified as an activist scholar:

I am perceived often as an activist scholar for example, despite the fact that I am still in academia and doing rigorous research, the perspective is activist leaning, when other scholars, that are white, don’t get that same label depending on their type of research or its less often used...When I see from my experience, when I hear conversations about other racialized

scholars work on race they are seen as less objective because they are a racialized person, and people will outwardly say “well how do we know this is accurate they are too close to the community, they are protesting alongside these people and groups” ... So those comments and questions about credibility and objectivity are not in my conversations with people and academic settings and rarely if ever brought up when its white scholars. (8)

The labelling of her work as “activism” implies that the research produced by her is inherently subjective or political, taking away from the fact that she is doing rigorous work and upholding academic standards. This label also creates a binary distinction between the “scholar” and “activist”, where one is either a scholar or an activist; with both labels not being mutually exclusive. Where a scholar produces objective and neutral work, an activist’s work is regarded as being opinion-driven and inherently political. This form of devaluation, rooted in racial biases, has several implications for the hiring, retention, and professional advancement of racialized scholars, where norms such as objectivity and neutrality are valued (Settles et al., 2021).

The devaluation and dismissal of racialized researchers and students, and their work, can be understood against broader discussions of white supremacy. Given that academia is a white space, whiteness is deeply embedded in its processes, structures, and practices. These practices uphold whiteness as the standard by which knowledge and knowledge producers are evaluated. Whiteness sets parameters around which type of scholarship has value, and which type of scholar is a legitimate scholar (Settles et al., 2021). Under this framework, racialized researchers are inherently placed outside these parameters by way of their identity and scholarship, resulting in their epistemic exclusion.

4.4.2.2 Epistemic Exclusion. The devaluation of racialized researchers through their work and capacity as scholars ultimately seeks to limit their ability to make theoretical contributions. Specifically, by labelling their work as activism and dismissing their work as lacking rigour, this may lead to their work being published in less prestigious, lower-impact

journals. When published in lower-impact journals, their work is less likely to be seen in comparison to work that was published in mainstream journals, thus leading them to experience epistemic exclusion. Participant #9, having experienced this form of exclusion, explains:

It seems like the work that we want to do is like a specialized niche, and you realize that that's not something considered that's good enough for the mainstream journals or it might become a special topic or special issue when racism is a social problem and issue and shouldn't be a special topic or a specialized journal ... My first article, first peer review piece, I was advised to put it in race and justice and that's where it went, I don't regret it and I think that was important but when it was published it wasn't one of the high impact journals, so the fact that it wasn't even suggested to me to go into criminology or one of the bigger journals, it was first like maybe that should go into the other journals, that specifically look at ethnicity and race and such, as opposed to this is something we should be studying in general. (9)

The participant's experience demonstrates how racialized researchers and scholars studying race in academia experience hermeneutical injustice. Specifically, having their work published in lower-impact journals hinders their ability to influence broader discourse and confines their work to journals that are considered niche and specialized. This has several implications for the professional advancement of racialized researchers, as it may limit their ability to secure grants and funding and negatively impact their ability to get tenure. This practice, informed by whiteness, seeks to privilege white knowledge, and to this end, racialized researchers remain systemically disadvantaged from gaining tenure as their work is published in journals deemed without merit (Settles et al., 2021).

4.4.3 Conclusion

In summary, this section highlights the formal and informal structural practices that continue to reinforce the outsider status of BIPOC faculty and students, despite their attempts to transform academia into a more inclusive space. While tokenistic practices burden BIPOC faculty and staff with additional labour and responsibility under the guise of diversity and

inclusion, they do so without addressing the harms and racial disparities that arise from these practices. In this way, this practice maintains the marginality of BIPOC bodies while parading institutional diversity. Similarly, the systemic devaluation of BIPOC faculty and students' research interests and knowledge continues to impede their ability to contribute to knowledge production in academia and, therefore, accumulate capital. By dismissing their theoretical perspectives under evaluation standards rooted in Eurocentrism, academia continues to gatekeep what form of knowledge is considered of value and legitimate. This, in turn, continues to be replicated at a structural level, maintaining academia's doxa that delegitimizes the perspectives, research interests, and theoretical contributions of BIPOC faculty and students. All in all, the practices discussed in this section are mechanisms through which academia preserves and upholds its doxa and the forms of capital it values.

Conclusion

Overview

This thesis situates the ongoing exclusion and racial injustice experienced by racialized bodies in academia within settler colonial logics, highlighting how knowledge production remains a crucial apparatus through which the needs and interests of settler colonialism are maintained (Douglas, 2022, p.250). Canadian institutions as a special site of settler relations can be seen in the longstanding occupation of unsundered and unceded Indigenous territory that has played a role in the ongoing dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples (Thobani, 2022). In parallel to the occupation of land, settler colonialism is (re)produced within academic institutions through the ongoing erasure, silencing, and disavowal of Indigenous knowledge, pedagogy, and methodologies. It is within this context that racialized bodies continue to experience academia as sites of colonial encounter, despite the ongoing commitment to equity and diversity (Bunjun, 2022). My research project questions academia's commitment to diversity and inclusion by centring the lived realities of racialized researchers and students as they navigate academia. Specifically, this research project explored how whiteness materializes in the everyday experiences and interactions of racialized faculty and students, and how this whiteness contributes to their exclusion by bringing light to the practices, institutional dynamics, and norms that continue to replicate whiteness.

Situated within a Critical Race Theory framework, my thesis contextualizes the participants' experiences of racism and exclusion within the broader historical context of race relations. In parallel, I use Bourdieu's analytical tools – *habitus*, *capital*, and *doxa* – to understand how this exclusion operates in academia. Specifically, Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory reveals how academia's practices, processes, and norms, informed by whiteness,

structurally position racialized researchers and students as perpetual outsiders in the academy. My analysis situates their outsider status through academia's white doxa that privileges whiteness as the normative standard. The entry of racialized bodies gives rise to conflict as they enter with a habitus distinct from that of academia (Pizarro, 2017). This misalignment creates friction between the dominant power structures and the racialized researcher and student. To maintain academia's social order, various mechanisms are used to contain racialized bodies.

My thesis identifies censorship and surveillance as a consequence of the misalignment experienced by BIPOC faculty and students. The everyday experiences of participants demonstrate that practices of censorship and surveillance occur in subtle and covert ways and are enacted through institutional policies and norms that dictate what form of knowledge is acceptable and who is an acceptable knowledge producer. Likewise, my analysis highlights that colleagues, students, and professors become vehicles through which academia's white doxa is enacted, unconsciously reinforcing academia's social order. These practices work to ensure that academia's social order is protected and continues to maintain the complete exclusion of racialized researchers and students. One form of exclusion experienced by participants of this study is systemic exclusion, where their ability to make theoretical contributions is denied. I situate their experiences of exclusion through epistemic injustice – a concept that illuminates how racial biases, stereotypes, and prejudice unfairly disadvantage them in academia. Through my analysis, I highlight instances of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice experienced by participants, which manifest in the devaluation of their epistemic legitimacy.

While Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory was formative in the understanding of my participants' experiences, it provided limited use in understanding the shifting power dynamics between white students and racialized professors and doctoral students. According to his

framework, power in a field is dictated through capital – the more capital one has, the more power one holds. In the context of academia, what should follow is that professors, by having more capital, hold more power than students. However, my findings demonstrate that this explanation is insufficient in explaining instances in which white students, despite possessing less capital, reinforce power structures that contribute to the marginalization of racialized professors. Using CRT in tandem with Bourdieu's notion of capital demonstrates that power is rather fluid and shifting, depending on racial positioning. Moreover, while useful for understanding how exclusion operates in academia, it does not shed light on the everyday experiences of racialized researchers and students. To counter this, I used Collins' (1986) outsider-within theory to capture the lived realities of racialized researchers and students as they navigate academia. My analysis demonstrates that while BIPOC faculty and students are formally within academia, they remain within the margins as they are not recognized as integral members of the institution.

Through Acker's (2006) inequality regime, I demonstrate that racialized researchers and students' structural exclusion can be understood through the organizational practices and processes, deeply embedded in academia, that sustain their marginalization. In this discussion, I showcase their exclusion as not isolated events or due to a lack of capital and misalignment of their habitus. Further, while my thesis uncovers the various forms of exclusion faced by racialized researchers and students, it also sheds light on their acts of resistance. Using Yosso's (2005) framework of Community Cultural Wealth allowed me to highlight the ways participants continue to resist and actively reimagine academic spaces through their commitment to their knowledge, community, and their continued presence. My thesis highlights that in spaces where

white supremacy and settler relations seek to exclude racialized bodies and knowledge, their continued presence within academia remains the greatest form of resistance (Bunjun, 2022).

By centring the voices of racialized researchers and students through semi-structured interviews, my research contributes to a growing body of literature that seeks to amplify the voices of BIPOC faculty and students in academia while also highlighting their strength and resilience. Likewise, while most literature situates the exclusion of BIPOC faculty and students in academia within a CRT framework, my thesis demonstrates that using Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory offers a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of this exclusion. Specifically, while CRT contextualizes the participant's experiences of microaggression and hostility against everyday racism, my use of habitus, capital, and doxa showcases that these experiences are the result of academia's white doxa that is reinforced and reproduced through academia's practices, norms, and unspoken rules. Furthermore, while existing literature situates the experiences of self-censorship and self-surveillance amongst BIPOC faculty and students because of the microaggressions and hostility they experienced, my thesis suggests that these strategies are in response to a clash between their habitus and academia's doxa and are an embodiment of the internalized norms. I believe this shifts the narrative from viewing BIPOC faculty and staff as passive agents who are experiencing academia's oppressive structures to individuals who are navigating, internalizing, and adapting to academia's implicit norms and structures.

While I initially set out to explore blatant forms of censorship and surveillance of academics, both within and outside of academia, my findings suggest that the reproduction of whiteness in the academy was a more pressing issue in the lives of racialized researchers and students. While not a pressing issue, my findings demonstrate that censorship and surveillance

are mechanisms through which the academy maintains its social order. The participants' experiences suggest that this mechanism is deployed in covert and subtle ways, masked through institutional norms, evaluation standards, and policies that ensure the production of knowledge that inadvertently upholds whiteness. It may be worthwhile for future research to explore more blatant and overt forms of censorship and surveillance experienced by racialized researchers and students, both within academia and outside of it. Likewise, it may be interesting to explore whether external forces such as government institutions, policies, and the political climate influence the likelihood of censorship and surveillance amongst racialized researchers and students. Given Canada's colonial history, it would be worthwhile to explore whether the influence of external forces contributes to the production and reproduction of knowledge that serves and protects the interests of whiteness.

Though my thesis provides valuable insight into the experiences of racialized researchers and students navigating academia, it is important to note that the findings may not be reflective of all racialized researchers' and students' experiences. Given the difficulty in recruitment, my research focuses on the experiences of female faculty. It may be beneficial to capture the experiences of men, as it may be worthwhile to examine how racialized and gendered dynamics unfold in the experiences of racialized male faculty members.

Closing Remarks: Final Thoughts

To conclude this project, I return to the questions of belonging and legitimacy that guided my research project, and that I found myself reflecting on throughout the research process: Who gets to produce knowledge? Who gets to belong in academia? The answer to these questions lies in the stories shared by participants, but also in my own experiences as a racialized researcher. This project compelled me to reflect on my own sense of belonging in the academy. I thought

about my academic journey, reflecting on the absence of racialized faculty and students in my institution, and sat with just how normal their absence had felt. Likewise, conversations about microaggressions with participants brought me back to the first time I truly felt out of place in academia as a racialized graduate student in a predominantly white institution.

My research project showcases that my feelings are not isolated, but part of a broader pattern of exclusion that is felt by many racialized folks but is often rendered invisible in the academy. The experiences of exclusion, marginalization, censorship, and surveillance highlighted in my research project serve as a reminder that the academy continues to remain a contested space for the racialized body. And while institutions across Canada continue to roll out DEI initiatives and amplify their commitment to building a diverse campus, my research project raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: How do we create spaces of belonging in institutions built on the erasure, silencing, and disavowal of BIPOC bodies, knowledge, and history? While my research project does not directly address this question, it showcases that through resilience and resistance, BIPOC faculty and students will continue to claim, create, and carve out spaces of belonging in the academy.

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