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Strategies of Engagement: How Racialized Faculty Negotiate the University System

Abstract

The demands of the academic profession and the ways that universities are increasingly shaped by the neoliberal ideologies of competitiveness, individualism, and conformity, influence how racialized faculty perceive their experiences within universities and position themselves to effectively navigate and/or resist the assimilating terrain. The findings from an analysis of approximately eighty-nine interviews with racialized faculty members in universities across Canada indicate that racialized faculty members employ three strategic tendencies—compliance, pragmatism, and critical participation—to maintain their presence in their universities and assert their role as professors, and, in so doing, conform to, resist, and/or transform the institution.

Résumé

Les exigences de la carrière universitaire et l'orientation des universités de plus en plus marquée par les idéologies libérales de compétitivité, d'individualisme et de conformité, influencent la manière dont le corps professoral racialisé perçoit son expérience au sein de son institution et se positionne afin de louvoyer avec quelque efficacité et/ou de résister à ce terrain assimilateur. Les résultats de l'analyse d'environ quatre-vingt-neuf entrevues avec ses membres partout au Canada indiquent qu'ils suivent stratégiquement trois tendances – soumission, pragmatisme et participation critique – pour maintenir leur présence dans leurs établissements et affirmer leur rôle de professeurs ainsi que, ce faisant, se conformer à l'institution, y résister et/ou la transformer.

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INTRODUCTION

If the equity statements on job postings are any indication, diversity in faculty membership is something that is increasingly sought by Canadian universities. In this regard, racialized faculty members, with their various approaches to scholarship, should be a welcome addition. But while universities are purportedly open to "diversity," the culture and routines of academic work remain persistently—and in some cases, become increasingly—individualistic, competitive, retributive, alienating, routinized, and subject to actuarial measures of performance rather than allowing for dialogue, support, and transformation (see Dace 2012; Iverson 2012; Jackson and Johnson 2011; James 2009). It is in this context that racialized faculty members who manage to gain access to university positions are expected to fit in and work. This

article explores the various strategies that these racial minority faculty members employ in negotiating their presence in universities. This article also examines the role that race and racism play in individuals' lives, motivations and actions, given the ahistorical and "colourblind" or race neutral notions and practices of neoliberalism (such as individualism, merit, and academic freedom) which govern the institution's logic (see Gillborn 2008; Henry and Tator 2009; Milner 2008; Smith and Stovall 2008).

Noting that the term "diversity" is used instead of more critical terms such as "equity" and "social justice," Sara Ahmed (2012), in her book, *On being included,* argues that the language of diversity is predominantly understood within institutions in marketing terms and as a "feel good" politics in its "cultural enrichment discourse" (69). Diversity, she points out, is used not only as a way "of marketing the university but of making the university into a marketplace" (52-53). And while the people who contribute to the diversification of the university are seen as people to be "valued as a human resource," they are also "to be managed" (53). Hence, contrary to universities' job advertisements, websites, and policies, diversity tends not to be something that is valued for the different knowledge and experiences it brings to institutions. Indeed, as Ahmed suggests, the language of diversity in academic institutions is often more about changing only the perception of whiteness than it is about changing the culture and organization of the institution (34).

DIVERSITY, NEOLIBERALISM AND TOKENISM

Diversity in faculty membership seems to be more for marketing purposes and not as recognition of the additional strengths and values—in terms of the different skills, viewpoints and practices—that faculty members bring to the institutions. In fact, scholarship on the experiences of racialized faculty members indicate that they are often expected to conform to and comply with the existing culture of the university—a culture shaped by neoliberalism, or what Janine Brodie (2012) refers to as "an unrelenting anti-social doctrine." In their article, "Bullying as intra-active process in neoliberal universities," Zabrodska et al. (2011) write that "Neoliberalism is a discourse that works on and through desire, making each individual want to accomplish in its terms, despite its negative effects on health, and its capacity to undermine collegiality and open debate" (710). They suggest that "workplace bullying" evident in the "ever-intensifying workload, short-term contracts, job insecurity, funding pressures, excessive competitiveness, the power imbalance between managers and academics, and weakened union power" (710), are some of the characteristic features of neoliberal universities. And as Shore (2008) adds, at a time when government funding for universities has been declining, universities have embraced a neoliberal "audit culture" that has "transformed the traditional liberal and

Enlightenment idea of the university as a place of higher learning into the modern idea of the university as corporate enterprise whose primary concern is with market share, servicing the needs of commerce, maximizing economic return and investment, and gaining competitive advantage in the 'Global Knowledge Economy'" (282).

Davies (2005) also writes in "The (im)possibility of intellectual work in neoliberal regimes" that through neoliberalism, academic work is "no longer the life of the intellect and of the imagination" (1). He goes on to say that

> to critique is risky work, not just because it might alienate those who are deeply attached to, or personally implicated in, the discourses to be placed under scrutiny but also because to draw attention to the very terms through which existence is made possible, to begin to dismantle those very terms while still depending on them for shared meaning making—even for survival—requires a kind of daring, a willingness to envisage the not yet known and to make visible the faults, the effects of the already known (2).

It is into this neoliberal context that racialized faculty members are expected to fit with little to no attempts made to accommodate, respect or encourage their presence and differences in interests, scholarships, ways of knowing and understanding the world. Nor is the context one which values the community-informed work that these professors often bring to the academy. In such instances, the presence of racialized faculty members in the academy might be considered tokenistic, or as Kanter (1993) puts it, "as symbols rather than individuals" (208). Kanter's conceptual framework is useful here. Writing about the place of women in a male-dominated corporation, she points out that numerically dominant members of a corporation dictate a group's culture. Subsequently, minorities (numerically speaking) are so few that their presence positions them as representatives of a category. Referring to the women in the corporation as "tokens," Kanter notes that their rarity creates three perceptual tendencies: visibility, contrast and assimilation. These three tendencies generate what Kanter calls "token responses" by which the women adopt specific strategies that variously highlight or minimize their visibility within the corporation (212).

According to Kanter's tokenism framework, minorities face a number of performance pressures due to the fact that what they do and say will be watched, known and discussed. Typically, they perform "their jobs under public and symbolic conditions different from those of dominants" (212). In addition to feeling more known by virtue of their "visibility," minorities—in this case, racialized faculty members—are likely to be occasionally showcased to highlight the institution's public image (213). In this regard, minorities will become hyper-visible in any organization that purports to value diversity; and such visibility, as well as their status, tends to generate a higher degree of self-consciousness about their presence and the decisions they make (Kanter 1993, 215). Ultimately, as Laden and Hagedorn

(2000) suggest, racialized faculty members are often expected to adapt to the dominant culture of the university while simultaneously experiencing a lack of full membership (64-65). On this point, Ahmed (2012) writes:

> People of color in white organizations are treated as guests, temporary residents in someone else's home. People of color are welcomed *on condition* they return that hospitality by integrating into a common organizational culture, or by 'being' diverse, and allowing institutions to celebrate their diversity (43).

A major mark of individuals' worth to university is being granted tenure, and with this, the material and psychological benefit of job security and affirmation of their membership in the scholarly community (de Montigny 2011). But while everyone does "navigate the perilous waters of promotion and tenure," as Knight (2010) writes, underrepresented faculty members "experience the water differently than their White counterparts and, as a result, face a number of obstacles in the promotion and tenure process" (84). Some of these obstacles are related to what Joseph and Hirschfield (2011) refer to as "cultural taxation" which is defined as "the increased expectations that faculty of color should address diversity-related departmental and institutional affairs" (123). Hence, perceived as "experts" on "diversity" (read, minority) issues, racialized faculty members—on their own initiative or by assignment— are often expected to undertake additional responsibilities such as speak on minority issues, serve on "diversity committees, mentor and advise racialized students," and/or handle minority-related problems—all of which, according to Laden and Hagedorn (2000), "are frequently undervalued when evaluating faculty for promotion and tenure" (60). Furthermore, racialized faculty members who are determined or feel obligated to address issues of diversity in their teaching and scholarly work will often struggle to conform to the demands of the job (see Knight 2010).

The inequitable and alienating university context is often quite difficult for racialized faculty members, especially for those committed to working on issues of equity and social justice. On the one hand, if and when they speak up against the barrier to their inclusion or full participation in the institution, they are likely to be silenced. As Essien (2003) puts it, "the tyranny of silence is real and one who attempts to rock the boat is promptly and firmly sanctioned" (69). On the other hand, remaining silent in a context that values competition and self-promotion often means that they are "perceived as vulnerable and susceptible to attack," and, as a consequence, fewer benefits will flow to them, since others will perceive them as "institutionally vulnerable" (Essien 2003, 70). Having to navigate this neoliberal terrain requires racialized faculty members to adopt specific strategies, such as forming "an exchange relationship with the organizational culture that results in their acceptance or overlooking of discriminatory institutional practices" in order not to jeop-

ardize their careers (Aguirre 2011, 770). This approach to working within the institutional culture is part of what Aguirre refers to as the "institutional self." He writes:

> We all have stories to tell about the institutional self one performs in academia. For some, their institutional selves are cloaking devices for rationalizing how the dominant group privileges itself in faculty hiring, the allocation of office space, or participation in academic senate committees. For others, their institutional selves are tools for uncovering the abuse of privilege practiced by the dominant group. I suspect minority faculty often perform institutional selves focused on chronicling dominant group practices that seek to silence them. Perhaps this is why minority faculty tell their stories. It may be the only way minority faculty have of cleansing their soul, and redeeming their sense of who they are (771-772).

In what follows, I present the data-gathering process and follow with a discussion of the findings.

GETTING THE STORIES

This article draws on interviews of about eighty-nine racialized faculty members (see Table 1) working in universities across Canada. As the Table indicates, most of the participants were in Social Sciences, and in the ranks of Associate and Assistant Professor. They come from a wide range of universities in different provinces and in large and small institutions. In-person interviews were conducted with participants and were transcribed and then coded using NVivo software to help with the search for words and themes.

TABLE 1. Research Participants by Selected Characteristics

Race/Ethnicity	#	Gender	#	Rank	#	Discipline	#
South Asian	20	Female	45	Full	26	Social Sciences	24
East Asian	21	Male	44	Associate	17	Education	11
Black	19			Assistant	16	Engineering	10
Indigenous	16			Other/Unknown	30[1]	Medicine/Health	6
Middle Eastern	6					Science	6
White	6					Indigenous Studies	4
Mixed	1					Law	3
						Other/Unknown	25[2]
Total	89		89		89		89

In keeping with the tradition of Critical Race Theory and its emphasis on experiential knowledge and stories (Charles 2011, 63), I use the stories of the respondents to construct how they made sense of their engagement with the university, and "cast themselves as protagonists in the stories they tell to explain their lives and make meaning of their own thoughts, feelings, desires, and behaviors extended over time" (McAdams 2006, 114). Attention was paid to both the context in which the faculty members presented themselves as working, the strategies they purported to employ in order to navigate the context, and their descriptions of the different ways they responded to similar experiences. How participants rationalized their unique experience and acted upon the experience is important to this discussion. Based on their stories, I identified three strategies—Compliance, Pragmatism, and Critical Participation—which participants tended to employ to establish themselves as part of their university faculty, and the academic community generally. The strategies are certainly not exhaustive, mutually exclusive or representative—in terms of race, ethnicity, birthplace, rank, discipline or gender—of a particular group of faculty members. Nevertheless, participants talked of using different strategies based on a combination of institutional contexts, circumstances, and career stage.

STRATEGIES OF ENGAGEMENT

The faculty members who participated in this study varied in their understandings of the extent to which race, and, concomitantly, racism, had an impact on their experiences in the academy. Some asserted that their race had nothing to do with their experiences, motivations and achievements, while others suggested that although race might operate in the academy to affect individuals' lives, they had no experience of it affecting them. As a result, these faculty members employ *compliant* strategies. Those who saw racism as operating within the university structure typically employed *pragmatic* and *critical participation* strategies placing themselves in the role of change agents. In the following section, I discuss these faculty members' experiences, their perceptions of the expectations that are held of them, and the strategies they employ.

Compliance
"…It doesn't make things easy for you but you have to adapt to it."

A number of faculty members did not feel race and racism influenced their existence in or progression through the university. These tended to be individuals who tended to subscribe to the ideological principles and practices of their institutions and who insisted that the university hires and promotes on merit. They saw what was

expected of them as fair, reasonable, and applied equally to everyone. Hence, any "problems" or "difficulties" that they experienced in the university were seen as "similar" to those of their white colleagues. For this reason, they were, at times, intolerant of those who criticized or questioned the policies and practices of the universities. As one participant said: "These people that want these jobs, [should know] what they have to do to acquire them and then keep them." Another said that his department hires "the best applicants, but the best to date have been white." So to the extent that their university faculty members might be a homogenous group, these faculty members attributed that homogeneity to the quality of the applicants for the job. One faculty member admitted to not having given race identification much thought, since "we talk about these things only when we hire, but after that, it's assumed that we're doing the right thing and that there is no discrimination"—a practice with which she seemed to agree. And on the question of tenure and promotion, one participant insisted, "We are encouraged to publish in certain kinds of journals. That is expected. I was told that the journals have to be top and other criteria were told to me from the very beginning. It applies to everyone then."

When asked about the lack of diversity in course offerings with a diverse faculty whose scholarship and interests would suggest that this would be the case, one sociology professor claimed that the lack of diversity in courses is related to the unwillingness of faculty members to follow appropriate or established protocol in proposing and justifying the creation of new courses. In saying this, he challenged his racialized colleagues' claims that racism in his faculty was at the root of the lack of courses in his faculty.

But not all of the participants who claimed that race had no bearing on their experiences in the university, admitted that it was absent from the academy altogether. As one professor said, "Race surely may play a role, I am not always aware because I tend to forget these things in the academic environment." And there were also those who perceived that racism might indeed have something to do with other people's experiences: "I can believe it might play a role in cases where these people in authority would have these kinds of prejudices, I just haven't heard of them." For these faculty members, racism and, by extension, discrimination, were constructed as individual acts of prejudice—something they have heard about from others; not something they have experienced. "I have never personally experienced racism. I do not think that it is pervasive," said one participant. Another claimed: "I am quite sure that [discrimination] goes on in the university, but in my department, we are a pretty inclusive bunch."

The perception is that the university is operating just as it should. This sentiment was more prevalent, although by no means exclusive, in disciplines like economics, sciences and engineering. In large part, this was based on the perception that

these fields have more transparent and objective criteria for evaluating people. One economics professor observed that racial discrimination existed in other departments, but not in his—his department was colour-blind. "When we deliberate on new faculty appointments, they're purely based on merit, and discussions based on gender and race are not raised." He made the case that the type of discrimination that existed in economics is due to the nature of the discipline: "There are different kinds of exclusion. I would be more worried if there were qualified Marxists or feminists: their applications would not be taken seriously." According to this associate professor, disciplines like economics do not lend themselves to discrimination as easily as the humanities and the other social sciences because there is less scope to disagree about the merits of someone's work. Academic qualification is more clearly defined. So, while economics may exclude what he called "heterodox disciplinary approaches," it is not the same as the exclusionary practices in other disciplines which are based on gender, ethnicity and race. But generally, for many of the respondents who "do not experience" racism or discrimination, there is often a sense that academia is different. "Higher education gives you the space to do what you want," said one faculty member, and proffered, "We have been trained to argue and criticize. You have to understand that and move on."

There was also the notion that racism is something of the past and universities, like other institutions, are trying in earnest to correct this historic problem but it takes time (James 2009). Pointing out that the lack of diversity in universities is due to historical inequality, one professor explained that with time things will improve. "There was someone standing in the way of that for a long time," she said, but considering that it takes "about twenty years" to "create a university professor," you will now start to see an increase in the number of Black professors. She claimed that "there are lots of changes but for those changes to catch up to the general population, it will take a lot of time and a lot of proactivity." The implication here is that universities are not standing in the way of the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Black professors, but because of historical practices, there is a limited pool of qualified racialized people from which to draw. Another professor similarly commented that "[T]here is still room for improvement, but I think this university has gone a long way…. It's a work in progress."

Where race and racism were acknowledged, participants tended to minimize their impact, saying, "You get treated differently because your language or culture is different. I mean, it's fine. People don't say, you are different, they will look down on you…. This is based on abilities. It is not racism to me." Others attributed lack of experience with racism to cultural adaptability, claiming, "I haven't really experienced any racism, probably because I have adopted most Canadian customs and so forth." Still others attributed the extent to which they were able to "fit in" to the acad-

emy to their own abilities or inabilities to handle cultural differences, disclosing, "I am too shy to go to conferences—which I feel is a cultural thing." This idea of their culture being a weakness was explained in the following way:

> I have had jobs that I didn't get, not because I was a minority, but because I didn't perform as well in interviews. I think this is our weakness…. We don't answer the questions the way they want us to answer…. Our emotional intelligence is less developed and we don't know how to sell ourselves. We have never learned this. Maybe now that I am more Canadian, I am better at it. I am hoping that my kids will be more Canadian and not have these weaknesses.

For a number of these faculty members, their personal characteristics, such as shyness[3] and accents, were things that they believed they must work to overcome if they are to succeed in the academy. One participant said it this way: "What I did have to overcome personally is my culture…. I just thought I didn't do well and have to work harder." This suggests that the pressure to conform to the culture of the institution tends to render irrelevant different culturally informed knowledge and experiences that racialized faculty members bring to the academy (Delgado Bernal and Villalpando 2002; Jawitz 2012).

Faculty members who argued that race had nothing to do with their experiences in accessing or working in the academy tended to adopt strategies that would minimize their visibility, downplaying any perceived differences between them and their colleagues, and in cases where racialization might be an issue, their strategy was to "suck it up." When asked whether race was ever a factor in her career, one assistant professor answered, "Truthfully I don't know. I try not to make it. If someone has an issue with me, I don't care. I look at myself as a scientist." Ironically, in explaining why she chose to become a scientist, she said: "I think subconsciously I wanted to show people that I could do it no matter what…. If you're not competitive you fall into complacency." So while this participant claimed not to have experienced racism in her university career, she did acknowledge that stereotyping or racialized assumptions were, in part, responsible for her career choice. Despite her claims to the contrary, this shows that racialized faculty experience the institution differently than their white peers (Laden and Hagedorn 2000).

The research participants who saw race and racism as not related to their experiences seem to have concluded that living with the status quo—that is, complying with the policies, practices and expectations of their universities, were their best option. The idea is not to raise issues or cause problems. According to one participant, "If you have issues, being a racialized teacher, and raise them, it may reflect poorly on your evaluation. If you have issues and keep them to yourself and go along with the mainstream, your teaching evaluation will not suffer in the same way." But

this is not to say that participants were always in compliance with what was expected of them, and at times, they suffered the consequences. For example, one faculty member hypothesized that being "seen as someone who wouldn't complain" made it easy for her to be "turned down" for tenure and promotion. And contrary to her chair's expectation, she complained—something she preferred not to have done, for doing so left her with questions such as: "Is it better to not draw attention to yourself and expel so much energy and effort? Is it better just to be satisfied with what you have and not demand more? Is it worth the personal sacrifices?" She noted that standing up for yourself often makes people "even angrier." Another faculty member told us that his actions related to taking up issues with his administration and union left him "feeling alienated in this department," something which drove him to "talk[ing] to a therapist." He continued to say: "It's not so much the aloneness, it's the feeling that people don't understand. I used to be sociable." (Laden and Hagedorn 2000).

Besides these faculty members who took a complaint approach to negotiating the academy, a far greater proportion of those we interviewed saw racism and discrimination as part of the hypocrisy of the institution. On this basis, they often adopted strategies that were consistent with their desires to bring about changes in the institution where their scholarship, identities and community connections are recognized. In the words of one professor: "…because if I do not, nothing is going to change. This work takes courage." These faculty members were satisfied with, and, in some cases, promoted the visibility and difference that they brought to institutions. They spoke deliberately about the systemic barriers in institutions: referencing the hegemonic culture of whiteness, the persistence of the neoliberal agenda, the absence of efforts to address marginalization, stereotyping, colonialism, racism and discrimination, and the lack of respect for communities and the community-affiliations of faculty members. These change agents employed pragmatic and critical participation strategies.

Pragmatism
"…understand how to navigate this very complex maze."

For the most part, faculty members who adopt pragmatic and critical participation strategies did so based on their structural critique of the technologies of inequity that operate to maintain, among others, racism, colonialism and discrimination in universities. Their strategies for navigating their universities were informed by their similar reading of the cultural contexts they had to navigate, as well as the prevailing assumptions and related expectations universities have of them; in the words of one professor: "They see me as a racialized professor who is pursuing my own interests."

That interest, according to one associate professor, is thought to be informed by race. "When you are a Black person like I am, the assumption is that [diversity] is all you care about…. I feel a sense of pressure that as the only non-white person, people may see me as pushing my agenda. It's uncomfortable." An Aboriginal professor similarly stated:

> I am not sure how I feel about the declarative nature of being an Aboriginal. I think there are a lot of assumptions made about someone like me in this position… I would hate to be judged adversely. I am tenure track. This is something that is on my mind. If I care about this job, there are hoops I have to jump through."

And noting how the stereotypes tended to operate for Asians like herself, one participant scrutinized how Asian faculty tend to be perceived as "good at producing academic work but they're not really good administrators, decision makers, or leaders."

Other faculty members talked of becoming "preoccupied with questions" related to how well they fit "their stereotype and image," which in turn contribute to their marginalization. In relating how the stereotype plays out in how and when she is expected, or might choose, to take up issues of race and gender, one participant observed:

> Your voice becomes immediately marginalized in those [academic] sorts of conversations. You become both the person who is a visible minority and a woman who has a bone to pick. Or you become the person who they see as the voice of some bureaucrat who's trying to dictate how to act. You feel like you are the voice who has to say these things because no one else is at all.

In reflecting on the "subtle things" with which they have had to contend in their attempts to make their voice heard and recognized, another female faculty member revealed:

> When I am in a room and am the only woman and the only one of colour who speaks English with an accent, I am assumed not to know much. It is difficult to get a chance to speak. I try to survive and voice my opinion but it took time to get where I am at now. It still happens frequently—little subtle things. It is not always coming from the opposite sex, it can come from fellow females.

One participant talked of making attempts, while difficult, to "ignore" the marginalizing processes, electing instead to "have my work recognized as a valuable thing." For this professor, pragmatically employing a strategy of avoidance enabled her to escape the stress that would be experienced if she "subscribed to the identity of a marginalized person"—an identity that influenced interactions with her colleagues,

who in "daily conversations" with her tended to become "overly defensive." Saying "I would call my strategy a strategic indifference," this assistant professor went on to say, "When I hear negative comments from students I immediately think: is it my race or my accent? I try to suck it up and not think about it." And in jest stating: "I wish I could behave more like my colleagues," she admitted, "even if I act like them, I don't look like them. If I act like an old white male, that's going to confuse my students and they would see me as an Asian bitch.[4] I would consider myself a shy person. In this North American context, that doesn't pay off very well." Concluding this point, she said "I really don't care how they perceive me…. Even if they don't see me as how I think I am, as long as it doesn't hinder the progress of my work…, then that's fine with me" (see also Laden and Hagedorn 2000).

The stories that these racialized faculty members tell about their experiences in universities represent struggles, discomfort, isolation and silencing. And as Kanter (1993) notes, they often feel self-conscious over questions of when and how to exert themselves (215). For instance, one faculty member recalled being "the only racialized person" on a Committee and saying that there was a need to incorporate African studies into their program. "You could hear a pin drop, because," she said, "of course, I wasn't supposed to mention Africa…. To me, that is an example of racism. It's not in what they said; it's in the discomfort and the silence." This faculty member went on to explain that when the minutes of the meeting were reported, her "words were not included." Other research participants agreed that diversity for their institutions did not mean having programs geared to the realities of particular groups. The experience of an Aboriginal professor can be referenced here. It was expected that his approach to Indigenous education would be to highlight culture rather than inequality or colonialism. In commenting, he said, "I thought I was going there to do justice, but when I arrived they were like: 'No you're doing knowledge'."

A recurring theme among research participants was the stress of being "the only" racialized faculty member raising issues of representation and/or challenging the essentialization of them, their students, and minority communities. As one person noted, "Every time I bring up something [related to race] here, they tell me to join the committees and do the work." But many participants agreed that they had a responsibility to take up the issues. Some faculty members, who were schooled and worked in the United States, indicated that the absence of "reliable data" made it difficult for them to make their case about diversity. They saw this as a necessary component of "an accountability system—they have to keep numbers and data." Talking about her "surprise" that she was unable to get data (from the website or colleagues) about the racial diversity of the university, this faculty member approached the equity office asking for information. And as she said: "I received an email telling me that we're not like the States; we don't collect this data because it's too controversial." This practice

helps to explain why we repeatedly heard comments like the following: "I was the only person around the table who was not of European descent. Not even Chinese; which is really interesting, given the number of Chinese people in this university."

Taking into consideration their understanding of how institutions operate, their experiences with racism within the institutions, and their commitment to engaging with the institutions in ways that will bring about equity, the faculty members who employed pragmatic strategies did so in ways that would minimize the personal risks and stresses associated with confronting the system (see Kanter 1993, 217). Their strategies were primarily aimed at two interrelated goals: ensuring their work was beyond reproach, and engaging with the informal power structures of the university in their efforts to bring about changes that would benefit current and future racialized faculty and students—in the words of one participant: "I want to give back" (see also Jawitz 2012). Their strategy involved combining an institutional critique with what one professor described as a "survival strategy."

The professors who employed pragmatic strategies were the most explicit about the strategies they were employing to engage and navigate the university. One of these strategies involved recognizing that they would only be taken seriously if they could demonstrate that they were able to succeed, or even excel, in the current structural and cultural milieu of the university. Hence, like those who used compliant strategies, they emphasized their need to work harder, not to compensate for any perceived shortcomings, but to advantageously position themselves in ways to command respect by demonstrating their high intellectual abilities and capacity to work within the existing structure. Speaking of this need to work harder, one professor commented: "I'm conscious of it all the time. I have to work harder." Another concurred: "Minority faculty need to work ten times harder to get where they need to be."

One engineering faculty member spoke of being hindered by the many racism-related "issues" he encountered in his career. A full professor, he concluded that "the reason they are non-issues is because I work twice as hard as my other colleagues." He spoke with some satisfaction about feeling safe because he had made sure to insulate himself from criticism through hard work, saying, "I have made my life such that I can do what I like to do. But for that I had to work my rear end off and there are a lot of people who would not like to see me in the position that I am." Similarly, reflecting on how she prepared for tenure and the promotion process, one associate professor said that she made sure that her profile was unassailable. "I knew I hit those benchmarks and exceeded them. I didn't want to be the marginal case." It was noted that scholars who work on issues of race and racism tend to be more scrutinized and, as such, experience pressure to meet expectations. Commenting on this practice, one participant talked of how she deliberately protected herself from claims that her work was not sufficiently academic by ensuring that all of her publications

were in well-recognized journals. She proffered: "I responded to it by finding mainstream outlets that were accepting and open.... I looked very hard for journals that were both respected, and could accommodate my work without me having to make compromises." What distinguished these professors' strategies was their insistence on establishing themselves as legitimate under the gaze of the institution and, at the same time, making every effort to maintain their ideological stance. Ironically, despite their increased visibility within white organizations, as Kanter (1993) notes, minority members have to work harder to be noticed—specifically in terms of their knowledge, abilities, potentials and achievements.

The engineering professor mentioned earlier also alluded to how hard work combined with a pragmatic strategy could bring about needed change. He cited his time as an administrator in his department when he managed to bring about diversity in his faculty. As he stated: "The only reason we have had these minority hires is because when I was head, I hired them." But he ultimately found the work frustrating in the face of much resistance; and left the position because "[T]he reality is I do not believe in pushing an agenda for the sake of the agenda itself.... I decided to change my strategy." This idea of engaging in advocacy that is effective and would yield the desired outcomes speaks to these faculty members' active and continuous assessment of structural factors and possibilities for change—sometimes getting into positions that enabled them to carry out their objectives.

Some professors advocated strategies that engaged the informal networks of power, believing such networks to be more influential and therefore potentially effective in transforming the institution. This is consistent with Aguirre's (2011) notion of the "exchange relationships" which faculty members form (770). As one faculty member said, "The more and more I think about these issues, the more I see it is about the existing friendship networks.... It's about how you break into those corners of power. It's not about formalizing the system—it's the informal networks—go golfing with the right people." This professor emphasized getting to know the right people—specifically, forming relationships with older colleagues who have influence, but are sufficiently established that they are not threatened by junior scholars. She maintained that these types of social and influential relationships could be mutually beneficial. Her words were: "There is a reverse mentoring process where they [older colleagues] are learning something new about issues of diversity from a young faculty of colour. It benefits them." On the same point, another faculty member mentioned that there is a need to be both strategic and open, saying, "You find allies in unexpected places and this is for me the argument against forms of ghettoisation."

Critical Participation

"…trying to get people to care."

While the faculty members who employed pragmatic and critical participation strategies had similar understandings of the principles and assumptions upon which universities operate, those who subscribed to critical participation strategies tended to be somewhat more steadfast in their commitment to challenge and address issues of inequity within the institution which they regarded as an unfriendly and hazardous place (see Henry and Tator 2009). They tried to avoid the risks of getting caught in the clutches of neoliberalism, thereby losing their commitment to working on needed institutional changes. Interestingly, they seemed to remain optimistic that, ultimately, their efforts would yield the changes they sought; for otherwise it would be pointless to engage in the activities which they did. What they sought then, as one participant put it with reference to the diversity that one sees on universities' websites, is that one day, "What you see on the website might become the norm."

Talk of the pernicious effects of racism was a recurring part of our conversations with faculty members for whom critical participation was their strategy of engaging with their universities. According to one faculty member:

> When we are talking about racism in institutions, it is important to recognize that the biggest worry is not the individual rabidly racist person. The biggest problem is inertia. It is a historically racist system and so you don't have to do any bad thing for racism to perpetuate itself. All you have to do is do nothing. That is the problem with 'colour-blindness.' The idea [should not be] that we can just not pay attention to race, and then the problem goes away.

One faculty member spoke at length about how engaging with issues of racism and discrimination entailed significant career risks:

> …I see the ways in which my colleagues have been told to sit on this committee, go after this and do this. I see that they have been hand-picked. I call it hand-picked…. I believe it has to do, not so much with the fact that I'm racialized—although I think it's a part of it—but it has to do with my political orientation, and it has to do with the fact that I'm unwilling to forgo these issues…. I feel that again my research is the reason why I kept being discounted…. And I feel that there are so many ways in which the informal aspects of race are justified using formal policies and formal procedures. And it's that hidden piece that I feel is so insidious…; it's so menacing. It's hard actually even for someone like myself to point a finger and say I know one hundred percent that that was because of race. I can't do it.

Another participant claimed that her experience, compared to that of a colleague

who did not talk about racism, demonstrated that it is far more advantageous to resist speaking up:

> I have a colleague who is Black who does have a PhD, and we speak about our experiences and I can see that because she is more willing to say that race plays no part in what she does and how she experiences the university, it seems that we have a completely different experience at the university…. I feel that I paid a personal price in the academy for actually making a political stand (see also Jawitz 2012).

A key component of many faculty members' discussion was how the persuasive liberal multicultural notion of colour-blindness functioned to maintain the status quo within universities, even as racialized people join the academy (see Gillborn 2008). And as one faculty member theorized, the expectation is that racialized individuals too would become colour-blind. But as he argued, it is important for people like him to resist becoming assimilated into such thinking.

> Being colour-blind means that I have to stop being who I am or I don't have the right to expect other people to have to interact with me in terms of who I actually am. I have to pretend I am like them…. It does a disservice to my parents—I am who they were and are. I occupy a position now because of sacrifices they [parents] made. Because of silent and petty injustices and indignities they had to endure for my benefit. If I accede to a will of colour-blindness, it's like they [parents] never did any of that. I am in a position now, because of my job, to tell some of their stories. Why would I agree not to do that? Just so somebody else can feel more comfortable in the space they occupy? Colour-blindness sanctions laziness. Universities should be places where new knowledge is fostered and exchanged. If universities can't figure out how to deal constructively with our differences then you just have to give up hope generally. If we can't do it in universities, then what hope does the rest of our society have?

For the most part, faculty members simultaneously emphasized strategies of working within the system and challenging the system. "If you don't change from inside, there will never be change," said one professor, claiming that "[W]e have found ways to work with some deans who are ready and keen to do something." Similarly, another professor who was involved in issues of equity contended: "I thought this would be a nice way, instead of working on the outside, I could work on the inside of the system and change a large segment of it in the right way." Yet another claimed that, despite many frustrations, she "stayed so I could make institutional change and transformation. That is my goal and I can find allies to help me… you have to be in some positions to be able to influence change… to have people on the inside who know what the processes are." While working within the university, however, many of these professors also expressed a willingness to challenge the dominant structures both formally and informally. One situation where this approach

was mentioned was with reference to tenure and promotion. A number of faculty members spoke of being granted tenure and/or promotion after filing grievances with their union. One professor related this very directly to the position of racialized scholars, saying, "I got my tenure after a grievance. As minority professors in this white world…, it is our duty to make sure that our colleagues respect us."

One of the dominant themes in the interviews of the faculty members who employ these types of strategies, however, was the potential negative consequences—personally, professionally, and psychologically—of trying to engage an often resistant university in matters of inequity, racism and discrimination (Jackson and Johnson 2011). One faculty member recalled reporting to administration an incident in which a colleague made a disparaging remark to a racialized student. Putting aside the outcome of the investigation of the incident and the actions taken by the faculty association and administration, this faculty member noted that the appropriateness of their intervention was called into question because of their presumed similarity in cultural background with the student. Other participants spoke of issues they raised that were being constantly minimized or ignored. There was a sense that while the university was eager to pay lip-service to initiatives organized around the language of diversity, there was resistance to real institutional change. And becoming too vocal an advocate for these issues engendered potential career consequences. As a faculty member explained, "I was recently told by a more senior faculty member who acts as a sort of mentor to me… that I spoke up too much about Indigenous issues and that it's hurting me."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Racialized faculty members are navigating a difficult terrain when they enter the academy (Jackson and Johnson 2011). The demands of the academic profession, and the ways universities are increasingly shaped by neoliberal ideologies have created a context in which they are expected to conform to a system that marginalizes them (Ahmed 2012, 53). While some complied, others resisted conforming to institutional and disciplinary expectations, and in pragmatic and critical ways resisted and/or sidestepped the pressures that they experience as racialized professors. Critical Race Theory indicates that supposedly race-neutral or colourblind institutional practices can really perpetuate racialization and marginalization (Gillborn 2008). And as Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism suggests, racialized faculty's rear presence in the academy positions them as tokens which mediate and structure their experiences and occupational identities as minority faculty. Indeed, as Ahmed (2012) argues, diversity in institutions represents an opportunity for institutions to symbolically celebrate their supposed commitment to representing the changing population.

As discussed, some racialized faculty members did not see race as influencing their experiences in their universities. This likely has to do with a fear of disclosing that they were indeed having problems fitting in, and the fact that they were engaging in a form of self-preservation whereby denying that race, and not their stellar academic record, intellectual abilities, and disciplinary qualification, has something to do with their place in the academy (Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). Foreign-born faculty members, particularly those recently immigrated, were more likely to perceive cultural differences as contributing to their difficulties in the institution. They were more hesitant to name racism, and tended to focus on how they were not yet able to fully adapt to so-called Canadian culture. Academics trained in Canada and the U.S. tended to be far more forthright about identifying racism and a culture of whiteness in universities as something to be challenged and as something that must be changed.

The tenure and promotion process was of much concern to faculty members; and many at the pre-tenure stage simply did not want to "rock the boat." So where a faculty member was located in the tenure and promotion process or was ranked in the hierarchy of the professorate had something to do with the strategies he or she employed in navigating the academy (de Montigny 2011). Some of those who agreed that the institution's expectations of them were reasonable (compliant strategy) attributed the struggles they had in accessing their positions in the academy, or the difficulties they experienced in the tenure and promotion process, to their cultural shortcomings that they must overcome in order to be successful. Others, taking a pragmatic or critical participatory approach, deliberately calculated how and how much they could critique the system, while still ensuring that their work and conduct would be considered acceptable within it.

Academic discipline also had an effect on the strategies that faculty members employed. It is the case that a professor's discipline influences their identification and status within the academy. It may not be surprising that faculty members in the social sciences and humanities were more likely—although not exclusively—to adopt and advance critical perspectives with respect to diversity and equity within the institution. Comparatively, professors in sciences and engineering were more likely to emphasize a pre-known consensus on what constitutes good scholarship. While this trend was strong in our findings, it is significant to note that it was not absolute. Some of the most knowledgeable critiques of the university came from individuals who were in the sciences and engineering, while some social scientists adopted strategies that were quite conformist and/or compliant with the dominant logic and culture of the institution.

Ultimately, faculty members, particularly those committed to being change agents, had to decide upon a course of action that could accommodate their varying

desires for institutional change while protecting their often vulnerable positions (Aguirre 2011). This means that racialized faculty members were influenced both by their subjective assessments of the culture and structures of the academy and by their assessments of how to best work within the institutions to affect change, if they so desire (Knight 2010).

The idea that faculty members adopt specific strategies of survival draws attention not only to the racialized experiences of professors, but recognizes the agency these individuals exert. Giving attention to the experiences, interpretations, and strategies of racialized faculty members in different faculties and disciplines in academic institutions across Canada, can facilitate further discussion on effective ways to achieve the type of institutional transformation in which diversity becomes more than a brand, but something that can prove meaningful through the diverse and enriching discourses, scholarship, and experience it brings to Canadian universities.

NOTES

1. Unfortunately, this information was either not provided, incorrectly coded, or represents those respondents who were in long-term contact positions.

2. The category represents cases where the disciplines were unclear, not provided by respondents, or less common.

3. One participant told us that a committee was formed to help internationalize the university, but "as a female minority" who was too shy to speak on committees, she did not join.

4. With reference to Asian women in the academy, Lin et al (2006) claim that this navigation is made all the more difficult by the fact that speaking up can result in being perceived as being angry or "incessantly narrating your own suffering" (75).

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