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Activist Scholars: Faculty of Color Navigating Institutional Rewards and Punishments

Mai H. Vang

ACTIVIST SCHOLARS: FACULTY OF COLOR NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONAL

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

MAI H. VANG

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ABSTRACT

ACTIVIST SCHOLARS: FACULTY OF COLOR NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONAL

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

August 2024

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Faculty of color (FoC) often engage in social justice scholarship that focuses on the needs of minoritized communities. Yet, FoC often are subjected to suspicion and scrutiny over concerns of objectivity and academic rigor. Despite these barriers, FoC have demonstrated *successfully* navigating traditional institutional reward systems while making significant contributions to social justice knowledge and knowledge production at research-intensive higher education institutions. Exploring how tenured FoC at research intensive higher education institutions have earned academic success while engaging non-traditional approaches to knowledge production is important to higher education's mission to broaden scholarship to be practical, political, and beneficial to society.

This dissertation applied a narrative research approach involving in-depth interviews with 15 participants to capture stories of how FoC who engage in scholarship with social justice goals navigated institutional reward systems at R1 and R2 universities. The conceptual framework that guided the design of this study included critical agency, outsiders within, and Critical Race Theory. The interview questions sought insight into how FoC navigated both traditional reward systems such as promotion and tenure as well as masked cultural standards that often resulted in punishment for engaging non-traditional approaches to scholarship.

The findings of this dissertation closely align with existing literature on how the academy remains a chilly environment for FoC despite their important contributions to scholarship. Higher education institutions continue to privilege basic research as high regard for a faculty members contribution to their discipline and institution. From recruitment to advancement to full professor status, participants reported experiencing barriers such as racism, sexism, and scrutiny of academic ability. Punishment remains a constant factor of institutional life for FoC.

This study emphasizes the need to expand the concept of scholarship to recognize and reward FoC's experiential knowledge as members of minoritized communities. This study also provides insight into how institutions can eliminate punishment by developing a critical consciousness of how intersectional racism and sexism are embedded from recruitment to organizational socialization to authentically reward social justice scholarship. Finally, this study offers *10 Characteristics* for academic leaders and faculty to use as guidelines for incorporating activist scholarship into evaluations, rewards, and scholarship.

DEDICATION

To Maddie and Jamie

This dissertation is dedicated to you because you are my pride and purpose in life. You will

always be the light that guide me Home.

To my parents, Mai Vu Cha Vang and Zoov Liag Vang

Daim ntawv no yog muab rau neb ua niam ua txiv kom tsim nyog nej lub zog thiab kev hlub

ua tu kuv hlob.

This dissertation is a manifestation of your hopes and dreams that you carried across rivers

and oceans to the lakes of the Midwest. It is my honor to be your daughter.

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I write these acknowledgments as a new grandmother with renewed hope and purpose. My world slowed down for the first time in ten years with the arrival of my two grandchildren. I spent countless hours holding them and speaking my hopes and love to them so they would know their own value and strength from the start. As I spoke these loving and encouraging words to them, I was reminded I too have received so much love and encouragement from many people in my life. This dissertation would not have been possible without the people listed below.

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To Teng Vang, you are my heart, little brother. I am grateful that you stepped in to care for my kiddos while I was away chasing dreams. Liz Kelley Vang, thank you for being my Christmas tree decorating buddy.

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To my grandmother, kuv pog Ntxawm Tshab, you gave me the world as far as you could see by making space for me to speak loudly and fearlessly in your presence. I send this accomplishment to you wherever you are in the universe because it is your legacy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Faculty of color (FoC) often report greater service and teaching loads than white faculty (Griffin, 2020; Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). In addition to service tasks that all faculty engage in, the university service of FoC can include advising and supporting students of color, adding to diversity committees, and providing guidance related to equitable and inclusive practices and policies (Griffin, 2020; Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020). Furthermore, FoC frequently teach diversity- and inclusion - related courses or pursue academic agendas focused on race, ethnicity, and social justice (Dunlap, 2018; Fries-Britt et al., 2011; Quaye et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2011). Yet, commitment to this strand of academic work has led to FoC experiencing "cultural taxation" or a sense of obligation to demonstrate citizenship to the institution by serving racially and ethnically minoritized groups (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Padilla, 1994; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Moreover, FoC who engage in academic work that includes social justice goals are often challenged about the rigor and value of their research when going through the tenure and promotion process (Antonio, 2002; Stanley, 2006; Griffin, 2020; McGhee & Kazembe, 2016). The outcomes of these majoritarian standards have contributed to these faculty members, aggregated within overall FoC demographics, being underrepresented in higher education (Antonio, 2002; Garrison, 2020). In 2022, just 32% of all full-time faculty

in higher education identified as people of color (PoC) or underrepresented scholars who are Black/African American, Latin/a/o/x, Asian American, Native American/American Indian, or Two or more races (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023).

FoC have often responded to these inequities through activist scholarship, an integrated approach to research, service, and teaching that includes partnerships with marginalized groups to advance an explicit social change agenda (Davis et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2014). I define an explicit social change agenda to include goals and actions that develop and exercise power to change the political landscape for social justice (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017). It is important to clarify that social justice discussed in this study refers specifically to racial justice scholarship through an intersectionality lens. By applying an intersectionality lens to their scholarship, activist scholar FoC are illuminating how systemic oppression operates along multifaceted experiences associated with the intersection of social identities (Crenshaw, 1991).

Activist scholarship can be observed in various forms, including but not limited to the following: participatory research in which community members are researchers and agents of change (Dyrness, 2008; Fine, 2017), community research through ethnic studies programs that connect students to their communities (Kiang, 2008), critical participatory action research in which methods are grounded in critical race, feminist, postcolonial, queer, and Marxist theory in order to make visible and interrogate histories and structures of injustice and resistance (Fine & Ruglis, 2009) as well as practice based scholarship aimed to develop critical consciousness (Kim et al., 2022).

Activist scholarship has received growing support in recent years, fueled by student activism on college campuses that has called for a more heightened level of social

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consciousness (Davis et al., 2019). Furthermore, activism in higher education defined through this contemporary lens connects political activities and work on campuses to society (Morgan & Davis, 2019). FoC engaged in activist scholarship have applied the knowledge and tools they have gained as researchers to develop scholarship that is conducted in partnership with a collective struggle for equity in society (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Gilmore, 2008; Tang, 2008).

Despite the growing support for activist scholarship in critically minded circles in higher education (Torres, 2019), activist scholarship has been regarded as threatening to institutional power structures that privilege traditional social science research (Hale, 2008). These power structures are manifested as the expectations for apolitical classrooms in which the faculty leave politics outside and practice neutrality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kiang, 2008), the segregation of academic disciplines which discourages collaborative or communal research (Greenwood, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017), and the split of theory and practice in which preference for the former has been limited in regards to who is permitted to participate in knowledge production (Nabudere, 2008; Smith, 2012). These dominant academic norms have resulted in suspicion toward activist scholarship as an approach, manifesting as the regulation and subjugation of knowledge from communities of color and other minoritized groups (Kelly & McCann, 2014).

FoC also work against and within conflicting and often oppressive institutional reward systems defined as the systems and structures that communicate the many ways institutions and disciplines regard faculty throughout their careers (O'Meara, 2011, pp. 162–163). The word "regard" is intentionally placed within the definition to acknowledge the complexities of the faculty experience, which is widely seen as a privileged position. The

tension of holding these presumably privileged positions within whiteness and navigating with agency are core issues explored in this dissertation.

Importantly, FoC have developed relationships with their institutions that have resulted in tensions formed from years of feeling exploited through assignments of diversity-related tasks while seeing their diversity-focused research being relegated to being perceived as simply passion projects (Baez, 2000; Garrison-Wade et al., 2012; Padilla, 1994). In fact, the contributions of FoC have been found to be disproportionately under-valued and under-recognized according to traditional reward systems, leaving these faculty members in academic and social isolation (Hassouneh et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2013). The traditional reward mechanisms used to legitimize academic work include seven key parts (Ward, 2010): (1) research is core to academic life, (2) peer review and professional autonomy regulate academic quality, (3) the pursuit of knowledge is a clear principle in the profession, (4) each discipline determines their own pursuit of knowledge, (5) national and international professional associations influence academic reputation, (6) individual expertise and specialization are rewarded, and (7) the pursuit of cognitive truth is the overall goal. Within this frame, FoC who use non-traditional methods have experienced marginalization by traditional reward systems (Jackson et al., 2017; Turner, 2003). This ingrained system of marginalization in reward systems constitutes the central educational problem addressed in my dissertation.

Philosophy of Activist Scholarship

Prior to articulating the purpose and research questions guiding my study, it is essential that I define my philosophy of activist scholarship in this dissertation. My philosophical position of activist scholarship includes academic work that is developed in

collaboration with and informed by people working for sociopolitical change (Davis et al., 2019; Fine, 2017; Hale, 2008). In centering my dissertation on tenured FoC whose work is focused on the sociopolitical struggles of communities beyond higher education, I am inviting scholars to reimagine academic work beyond the ivory walls of academia. The aim of my dissertation is therefore to awaken scholars to a paradigm shift that looks beyond our constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques currently employed in the academic community, which has resulted in the marginalization of FoC.

As reflected in Figure 1, my philosophy of activist scholarship is situated within the ontology of multiple realities in which there is a real world that exists independently outside of our own (Maxwell, 2012). In doing so, I embrace each of the participant's realities as unique and important rather than impose defined characteristics upon them (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Next, I designate the work of activist scholarship as including transformative frameworks that recognize how knowledge is not neutral and reflects power and social relationships (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, 2015). As such, I argue that activist scholarship reveals actions and strategies that lead to change and reform in racially marginalized communities (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Third, activist scholarship applies critical theories to acknowledge the power imbalance imposed upon racially marginalized communities to create knowledge that can transcend systemic constraints (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In essence, I share with other respected critical theorists that activist scholarship is an approach meant to disrupt normative beliefs, norms, and practices in higher education (hooks, 1994; Patel, 2014; Patel, 2016; Smith, 2012; Stewart, 2022). As such, FoC in this study comprised individuals whose scholarship critiques the impact that

dominant structures have on the daily lives of minoritized communities as well as offers
actions for advancing social change.

Figure 1

Philosophy of Activist Scholarship
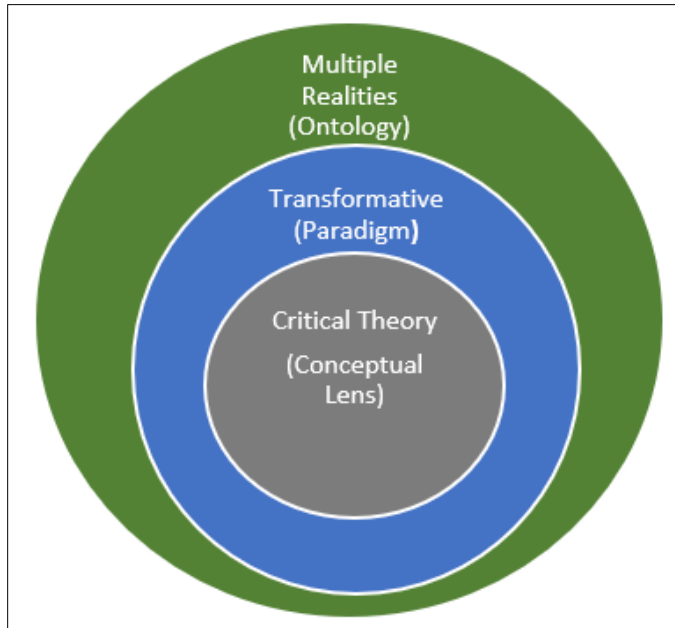
FoC engage in methods that critique dominant academic structures as ways to
advance social justice within academia and society. They resist dominant academic norms
such as the apolitical classroom (Kiang, 2008) and the separation of theory and practice that
confers upon academia the titles of owner and producer of knowledge (Nabudere, 2008). FoC
honor the existence of multiple realities (Maxwell, 2012) and their scholarship reflects a
spectrum of methodologies and forms. Thus, academics who consider themselves activist
scholars are as diverse in perspective and approaches as they are in lived realities. On the one
hand, there are SCHOLAR-activists whose scholarship centers activist methods and, on the

other hand, there are scholar-ACTIVISTS who work within the parameters of their profession to advance an activist agenda (Quaye et al., 2017). To capture the full potential of FoC, this dissertation examined FoC whose scholarship was conducted with a collective in the struggle for change and produced counterhegemonic knowledge for the advancement of social justice (Davis et al., 2019).

Study Purpose and Research Questions

Despite extensive challenges experienced by FoC in academia, they have found agency and empowerment as "outsiders within" (Collins, 1986; 2012) scholars who come from historically excluded communities and now have access to the resources and opportunities in the academy (Collins, 2013). For these FoC, the academy has become an institution in which they are able to take refuge and "steal" its resources to be used in the interest of communities in struggle without fully becoming collaborators of the institution (Moten & Harney, 2004). These resources have included grants, technology, space, and time away for tasks like mentoring students and committee work (Smith et al., 2013). FoC engaged in activist scholarship understand that this "stolen" time away from routine tasks are reminders of the ways in which agency is controlled by organizational processes and practices regarding the usage of time (Ray, 2019).

In many ways, activist scholar FoC, or activist scholars of color (ASoC) have developed methods and strategies to succeed among the tensions associated with navigating traditional reward systems, access to social capital associated with academia, and punishment from the institution. The methods and strategies ASoC employ are critical to addressing the persistent barrier faced by ASoC—the lack of alignment between personal values to serve their communities and the academy's value of high research productivity (Griffin, 2020).

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Because tenure is central in the reward systems of higher education institutions, this study focused on ASoC who have received tenure and their reflections on going through the tenure and promotion process and the wide range of reward systems, including equitable pay (Perna, 2001), recognition in one's field (Chism, 2006; Ward, 2018), retention and satisfaction (Daly & Dee, 2006), opportunities for professional growth (O'Meara, 2005a), and impact on institutional mission and goals (Baez, 2000; Dunlap, 2018; Moule, 2005; O'Meara, 2005b). The guiding questions for this dissertation included the following:

1. In what ways do tenured ASoC engage in activist scholarship?

2. How do tenured ASoC experience institutional reward systems and structures in higher education throughout their careers, as they practice activist scholarship?

    a. How have tenured ASoC accomplished their agendas in the context of institutional reward systems?

3. How do tenured ASoC enact their espoused social justice values and principles as they engage in scholarship?

    a. What factors or motivations inspire tenured ASoC to bring their work into academia?

Study Significance

This dissertation contributes to the field by (1) addressing the paucity of literature on the contributions of FoC activist scholarship (Antonio, 2002), (2) examining how ASoC have navigated their obligations to their institutions and their responsibilities to community partners, and (3) gaining insight into how ASoC have progressed through the contradictions of traditional institutional reward systems which question the value and rigor of non-traditional methods (Griffin, 2020). Despite the existing challenges created by the legacy of

Eurocentric objectivity and scientific methods in academia, FoC are often at the forefront of efforts to broaden the concept of scholarship to respond to contemporary pressures of a diverse society (Antonio, 2002).

FoC have often been at the forefront of advancing Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* by engaging in academic work that is politics-focused and strongly advocates for social change (Antonio, 2002; Baez, 2000; Kelly & McCann, 2014). In the 1990s, Boyer (1990) developed the *Scholarship Reconsidered* framework, which has become a heavily cited model for broadening the concept of scholarship to include academic work that is practical, political, and beneficial to society. In doing so, Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* laid a groundwork for universities to encourage and reward applied scholarship based on discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Shaker, 2015; Saltmarsh et al., 2015). Boyer (1990) outlined four forms of scholarship for the application of academic research: *scholarship of discovery* to expand the boundaries of knowledge, *scholarship of integration* to bring disciplines together, *scholarship of shared knowledge* to encourage teaching, and *application of knowledge* to make scholarship useful and practical to society.

However, Boyer's (1990) framework does not explicitly focus on the ways in which an expanded conceptualization of scholarship would impact systemic racial oppression. Instead, the *Scholarship Reconsidered* framework argues that broadening scholarship to include teaching and engagement methods would alter academic norms to value multiple forms of scholarship and improve the faculty experience (O'Meara, 2005b). Yet, it remains unclear if an expanded definition of scholarship based on Boyer's framework has yielded the benefits of increased faculty involvement in non-traditional forms of scholarship, faculty satisfaction, and retention (O'Meara, 2005b). This dissertation significantly adds to and

reconsiders Boyer's (1990) work by examining the impact that ASoC have on their departments' reward systems as they advance a race-centered interpretation of Boyer's (1990) framework for expanded scholarship.

Furthermore, this dissertation benefits key organizations such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) that are working to influence the future direction of U.S. academia following the COVID-19 pandemic by providing strategies on how to address the demographic trends of the contemporary faculty: an aging tenured white faculty, a faculty where the representation of women is growing, and an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse faculty (Finkelstein et al., 2016). And importantly, this dissertation provides insights from FoC who have progressed through institutional reward systems and demonstrated how resistance of systemic oppression leads to a rewarding faculty life (Kelly & McCann, 2014). Additionally, these experiences are examples of how academia could successfully shift from the outdated traditional prototype of the faculty dominated by white men (Finkelstein et al., 2016) by rewarding activist scholarship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides an overview of three major areas of research that informed this study, including (1) frameworks that address institutional reward systems, (2) FoC's contributions to scholarship, and (3) the philosophical and epistemological foundations that FoC themselves have written as motivators for engaging in activist scholarship. In this dissertation, Boyer's (1990) framework served as a foundation to examine how the realities of many FoC include academic functions that go beyond traditional research to advance scholarship that informs how institutions could develop unique missions and modes of success to be of service to a diverse society, produce academic work that is responsive to the needs of an increasingly diverse student demographic, and how a restrictive concept of scholarship often constrains the academic agenda of FoC. Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* framework argued for universities to revise their reward systems to match the full range of academic functions that faculty perform.

Next, I discuss how the modest set of existing literature on FoC scholarship reveals that FoC are making significant contributions to frameworks related to broadening the concept of scholarship. However, the literature on FoC scholarship also revealed that their work is often done in subversive spaces or requires strategic navigation of institutional reward systems. These three areas provided a foundation for this dissertation of how FoC

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have applied activist scholarship methods as resistance strategies to hegemonic systems within academia.

Institutional Rewards

The first area of literature provides an overview of how researchers and academic leaders have made sense of evaluating and rewarding scholarship with respect to rigor and quality. This discussion begins with the definition of institutional reward systems for this dissertation, then follows with a deeper discussion of Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered*, the most often-cited document on expanding the concept of scholarship to include teaching and engagement (O'Meara, 2005b). Boyer's (1990) framework refocused the faculty role to one of its original intentions of developing and preparing individuals for civic responsibilities (Antonio, 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2016). Yet, higher education has experienced marketization in which external pressures from the marketplace have increased the entrepreneurial potential of research, making research, publications, and grants as measures of success for pre-tenured faculty (Antonio, 2002; Fairweather, 1993; Finkelstein et al., 2016; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). As such, this dissertation aims to expose the varied ways in which scholarship has advanced social change by advancing Boyer's framework.

Defining Institutional Reward Systems

In this dissertation, institutional reward systems are broadly defined as the many ways in which an institution and/or field regard how faculty are recruited, sustained, assessed, and advanced throughout their careers (O'Meara, 2011, pp. 162–163). Institutional reward systems are mechanisms that academic leaders use to encourage, assess, and reward forms of scholarship (O'Meara, 2005b) and indicate to faculty what counts for successfully securing promotion and tenure (O'Meara & Rice, 2005). Reward systems in U.S. academia have been

compared to the panopticon prison in Foucault's (1977) *Discipline and Punish* to convey an imagery of a structure that disciplines or socializes faculty to behave in certain ways through rewards or recognition (O'Meara, 2011). This imagery of control and indoctrination aligns with research on how rewards are used to socialize faculty into engaging in particular academic work over others. In fact, critical scholars have written that the singular worldview of U.S. higher education is also embedded within faculty professionalization or the process of reproducing faculty (Moten & Harney, 2004). For example, FoC have often found their scholarship with communities of color or topics related to advancing equity such as affirmative action, culture, and diversity to be unrewarded during the tenure and promotion process (Griffin, 2020; Stanley, 2006). As a result, many FoC who are committed to doing academic work that broadens the concept of scholarship to involve communities outside of academia have to develop and advance two agendas—one for themselves and another to earn tenure (Couture, 2017; DeMeulenaere & Cann, 2013; Dunlap, 2018).

Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* as Most Cited Framework

As noted previously, Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* framework, one of the most cited frameworks for expanding scholarship to include a public mission, put forth the notion that broadening the concept of scholarship requires rewarding teaching and engagement as forms of valuable academic work. Academic leaders have argued that Boyer's (1990) four forms of scholarship, *scholarship of discovery*, *scholarship of integration*, *scholarship of shared knowledge*, and *application of knowledge*, can serve as levers for increasing faculty involvement in broader forms of scholarship (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999), improve satisfaction and retention of faculty, expand reward systems, and increase institutional effectiveness (O'Meara, 2005b).

Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* provided the groundwork for universities to encourage and reward applied scholarship based on discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Shaker, 2015; Saltmarsh et al., 2015). Boyer (1990) outlined four forms of scholarship for the application of academic research: *scholarship of discovery* to expand the boundaries of knowledge, *scholarship of integration* to bring disciplines together, *scholarship of shared knowledge* to encourage teaching, and *application of knowledge* to make scholarship useful and practical to society. By the end of the1990's, higher education had embraced Boyer's vision by creating institutional mechanisms such as the Campus Compact and its set of engagement indicators and the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification, which provided standards on process and purpose for engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh et al., 2015).

Research on the impact of Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* revealed that while all four forms of scholarship have achieved structural institutionalization and become regular parts of faculty workload, only the scholarship of discovery (traditional research) has been consistently incorporated into the values and assumptions for faculty success (Braxton et al., 2002; O'Meara, 2005b; Renwick et al., 2020; Starr-Glass, 2016; Twait, 2014). The scholarship of discovery, the most traditional of the four and foundational for graduate student socialization, remains the privileged form of scholarship for faculty success (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Walker, 2005). Moreover, research revealed that policy reform at four-year institutions using Boyer's (1990) framework saw just minimal increase in the amount of favorable tenure and promotion cases than at traditional four-year institutions (O'Meara, 2005b). For example, chief academic officers (CAO) at reform institutions reported a 58% success rate while CAOs at traditional institutions who did not implement a policy to

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encourage scholarship of engagement reported a 36% success rate (O'Meara, 2005b).

Overall, commitment to engaged scholarship was weak among individual faculty members at

prestigious or selective institutions where research is valued (Antonio et al., 2000;

Voglegesang et al., 2005; Wade & Demb, 2009).

Traditional Reward Systems

Traditional academic reward systems have been shown to be enormously challenging

for scholars who engage non-traditional methods, such as activism, to gain legitimacy within

higher education (Gonzales & Nunez, 2014; He & Wilkins, 2018). As noted above, Boyer's

(1990, 1996) frameworks encouraged universities to revise their reward systems to recognize

the broadened concept of scholarship through discovery, integration, application, and

teaching. However, scholars have pointed out that the academic culture of privileging the

more traditional scholarship of discovery has remained largely in place (Gonzales, 2018;

hooks, 1994; O'Meara, 2005b; Renwick et al., 2020). An analysis of existing literature on

organizational change and faculty rewards systems revealed that barriers to progressing

toward a more multifaceted form of scholarship were dependent on each institution's

structural, political, and human resource organization. A study involving chief academic

officers (CAOs) revealed that while Boyer's (1990) framework was a major influence,

institutional factors such as the institution's commitment to teaching, interaction of its

leadership dynamics, and cultural elements regarding service must align for successful

reform (O'Meara & Rice, 2005, pp. 262–263). Thus, the research revealed that adopting new

frameworks for institutional reward systems must be coupled with multilevel change around

institutional mission and faculty member' priorities (O'Meara & Rice, 2005).

The root of academic research in U.S. higher education can be traced back to the Germanic model of the research university (Altbach, 2016). The German research university model, developed in the early nineteenth century, was built on the provision of significant resources by the state to create research that would further national development and industrialize the nation (Altbach, 2016). These universities advanced their goals by creating graduate education that valued the study of scientific research (Altbach, 2016). Higher education in the United States solidified this model during the pre-Civil War era with the emergence of the academic ranks in which expertise in basic scientific research would earn advancement in the permanent faculty ranks (Finkelstein et al., 2016; Rice, 2005). The seven key parts to scientific research were defined as meeting the following requirements: (1) research is the focus of academic life, (2) the quality of academic work is determined by peers, (3) creating new knowledge is the focus, (4) knowledge is separated by disciplines, (5) reputation is made through involvement in international and national organizations, (6) specialized expertise results in advancement, and (7) the work of a scholar is to pursue truth through research (Rice, 2005; Ward, 2010). It is this framing of the specialized, discipline-based scholar that has taken over the ways in which faculty are assessed and rewarded (Finkelstein et al. 2016; O'Meara, 2005b).

Academic leaders reported the following examples as potential barriers to the adoption of Boyer's work: faculty concerned over unrealistic expectations to simultaneously excel in all areas of their work; confusion and ambiguity over what counts for promotion and tenure and definitions of teaching, service, and scholarship; resistance from faculty maintaining traditional approaches to scholarship; challenges in expanding a consistent definition of scholarship across departments; and the persistent privileging of traditional

research methods in graduate training programs (O'Meara & Rice, 2005, p. 262–263). In summary, institutional context and type influence the degree of adoption and weight that Boyer's (1990) frameworks hold for expanding scholarship.

Existing literature revealed that many universities continue to judge faculty success based on research productivity (Griffin, 2020; Kiyama et al., 2012; Perna, 2001). Academic reward systems convey a lack of acknowledgement and support for engaged and interdisciplinary methods like activist scholarship (Hale, 2008; Umbach, 2006). Instead, academic reward systems across institutions have been shown to include embedded biases for traditional research and cosmopolitan, rather than locally focused roles (O'Meara & Rice, 2005; Rhoades et al., 2008). As a result, competitive individualism, and elite institutional status by way of traditional faculty productivity (publications, citations, and fellowships) remained the overwhelming basis of rewards (O'Meara & Rice, 2005).

Institutional reward systems in the academy have long been perceived as mechanisms for socializing faculty to the values required for successful tenure and promotion. Critical scholars have critiqued institutional rewards for reinforcing a singular, discipline-bound approach to developing knowledge (Gonzales, 2018) that contradicts Boyer's (1990) framework that called for a broadened concept of scholarship. Research on institutions that have engaged in institutional rewards reform revealed that while all four forms of scholarship have achieved institutionalization in formal policies, the scholarship of discovery (basic research) was consistently the gold standard of intellectual work (Gonzales, 2018).

The persistence of traditional academic reward systems has resulted in underrepresentation and undervaluing of faculty who engage in alternative forms of scholarship, such as activist scholarship. Furthermore, studies have shown that privileging

traditional research approaches to scholarship results in muting the more interdisciplinary and inclusive scholarship of women and FoC and well as lead to an unwelcoming climate for these scholars (O'Meara, 2002; Gonzales, 2018; Griffin, 2020). In fact, women and FoC reported being most disillusioned with the tenure and promotion process (O'Meara & Rice, 2005). Therefore, efforts to reform reward systems should include an alignment of leadership from academic leaders as they implement formal policies and make available opportunities for faculty to engage in different processes aimed to shape faculty opinion on the benefits of an expanded definition of scholarship.

Faculty of Color Contribution to Scholarship

As of 2022, FoC make up 32% of full-time faculty in the nation (NCES, 2023). In an increasingly part-time and temporary higher education workforce, the division among ranks has created a hierarchy of older, white, and men faculty over women faculty and FoC (Finkelstein et al., 2016). The former have acquired tenure privileges and are making key decisions that impact the careers of the latter (Finkelstein et al., 2016; Paganelli & Cangemi, 2019). The decisions being made under this order will impact the experiences of FoC and their work in the increasingly diverse modern university. As such, it is critical that higher education leaders examine the experiences of FoC who have successfully navigated these challenges by producing scholarship.

As noted above, research on the contributions of FoC scholarship has been far and few in the literature on faculty equity (Antonio, 2002; Fu, 2011; Umbach, 2006; Vogelgesang et al., 2010). With that gap in mind, Antonio's (2002) findings remain a significant study on the contributions of FoC scholarship. The study revealed that despite experiencing multiple forms of academic and professional challenges, FoC are leading in academic work that

advances the framework in higher education on broadening the concept of scholarship—

Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered*. Perhaps most importantly, findings of Antonio's

(2002) study revealed that FoC more often are agents of Boyer's (1990) framework than

white peers. Other studies have shown that scholars of color often have a research agenda

that addresses their community (Baez, 2000; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Núñez et

al., 2010). First, the *Scholarship of Discovery*, the traditional processes of research and

writing are key valences in FoC's decision to pursue an academic career. Second, FoC are

much more likely than white faculty to prioritize the *Scholarship of Teaching* seen as the

development of moral and civic awareness of students. In fact, FoC more often cite that the

importance of the emotional and moral development of students gained through experiential

knowledge is a critical reason for teaching. Third, the research revealed that FoC are more

often involved in the *Scholarship of Integration* and often teach interdisciplinary courses.

Lastly, FoC strongly identified their work as *Scholarship of Application* completed through

various forms of academic work that ranges from service with minoritized groups, working

to improve society, and teaching through student-centered pedagogy such as student-led

presentations.

The Influences of FoC Perspectives on Scholarship

Other studies have also found that FoC bring different knowledge, experiences, and

worldviews to colleges and universities, helping them to be able to offer a richer learning

environment (Smith, 2012; Turner; 2003; Umbach, 2006). In addition, through their lived

experiences, FoC are able to develop an understanding of the unique challenges regarding

race and ethnicity and provide Students of Color with the encouragement and mentoring they

need to succeed (Umbach, 2006). Scholars have noted that a racially diverse faculty often

results in higher incorporation of varied pedagogical practices as well as stronger contributions to the development of future scholarship (Antonio, 2002; Hurtado, 2001; Turner, 2003).

However, scholarship produced by FoC is often subjected to academic devaluation and suspicion of self-interest and lack of rigor (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2013). The lengthy list of common challenges that FoC in higher education encounter include colorblindness, classroom hostility, isolation, double and/or unequal standards, exclusion from opportunities and social networks, hyper invisibility and visibility, marginalization of scholarship, and racial stereotypes (Antonio, 2002; Baez, 2000; Griffin, 2020; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008; Turner et al., 2011). For example, research findings from a study by Hassouneh et al. (2012) revealed that white nursing faculty often engaged in "Good Old Girls" behavior in which they controlled and excluded nursing FoC through exclusionary behaviors such as invalidating the FoC's sense of personhood—one's identity, selfhood, autonomy, and individuality. Furthermore, FoC continue to report being "the only one" in their departments, often carrying responsibilities that are not assumed by white faculty (Griffin, 2020; Kelly & Winkle-Wagner, 2017; Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 30; Stanley, 2006; Tuitt et al., 2009). On the other hand, studies have shown that FoC must also navigate the tension in which they seek visibility to gain recognition without becoming hyper-visible and being scrutinized for their perceived differences from the majority (Settles et al., 2019).

Critical scholars have long argued that these disparate experiences are grounded in the dominance of the white racial frame in which whiteness is privileged and accepted as the academic norm (Arnold et al., 2016). Whiteness is a social concept that marginalizes people

of color and privileges white people (Cabrera et al., 2016; Omi &Winant, 2014) by shaping every interaction in the following ways: (a) unwillingness to name systemic racism as the root cause of marginalization, (b) avoidance of identifying with the experiences of people of color, and (c) minimizing the U.S. history of racism (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 18). Scholars have argued that advancement and promotion are controlled by the dominant group in the academy (Griffin et al., 2013; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). With FoC continuing to be underrepresented in composition and concentrated in pre-tenure academic ranks (NCES, 2017), it is not surprising that white ethnocentrism or the perception that academic scholarship involving minoritized groups or related topics is incongruent with rigorous academic standards is prevalent in higher education (Griffin et al., 2013; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). This dominant worldview has been shown to impact FoC scholarship by practices of "imperial scholarship" in which mainstream scholars have minimized FoC by citing only each other (Griffin et al., 2013). Such a practice is an example of how a dominant racial frame can be a tool of exclusion and intense scrutiny that often regulates FoC scholarship to the periphery of academia (Griffin et al., 2013).

The unequal expectations and perceptions placed upon FoC have resulted in a stressful and oppressive environment due to having to frequently prove themselves (Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011; Settles et al., 2019; Settles et al., 2020). Researchers have found that FoC are burdened with careful management of their racial identities and emotions in the classroom (Stanley, 2006). They also must attain higher standards to be perceived as equal to white peers (Turner et al., 1999) and engage in extra labor to be perceived as credible in the eyes of students, especially white students (Stanley, 2006). In a study on FoC in education, the findings revealed that FoC often had to contend

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with perceptions of being the "affirmative action" choice and/or having to defend their academic work as intellectual inquiry rather than a passion project (Garrison-Wade et al., 2012). Research also reveals that there is further gendered marginalization for women of color faculty in which they struggle more than their peers who are men to say no to students and decline competing priorities (Griffin et al., 2013). As such, FoC's frequent encounters with maltreatment from peers and students has been shown to ultimately have adverse impacts on important areas of the bid for tenure, including research productivity, teaching, and service (Stanley, 2006).

FoC Growing the Body of Scholarship

As shown in higher education history, FoC have been critical in developing new knowledge and pedagogical approaches to engaging issues of civic engagement, intercultural competence (Madyun et al., 2013), and race (Turner, 2003 Umbach, 2006). From critical social theories such as Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), and Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 1986), FoC have authored key intellectual work that has been used in the advancement of the social justice knowledge of the last half century (Gonzales, 2018; Griffin, 2020). CRT emerged from analyzing gaps within legal studies that failed to expose the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Though CRT is understood as both a theoretical lens and a movement of scholars committed to racial justice, there are five agreed-upon tenets (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Garrison-Wade et al., 2012), including (1) counterstorytelling to highlight experiences of minoritized individuals, (2) permanence of racism explaining the on-going social (re)construction of race, (3) whiteness as property revealing the economic and political goals of racism, (4) interest convergence demonstrating

the political agenda of the dominant group, and (5) critiques of liberalism as a caveat for liberal policies that appear to address the needs of subordinated groups.

FoC have also led a multitude of new programming focused on racial equity such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) research project titled the "Short Course on Racial and Ethnic Minorities as Research Subjects: Challenges for Research Ethics" and scholarly journals such as the *Hispanic Journal of the Behavioral Sciences*, the *Amerasia Journal*, the *Journal of American Indian Education*, and the *Journal of Black Studies* (Turner et al., 2008). Furthermore, it is evident from national diversity scholarship awards like the Lynton Award and national databases on faculty such as the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey at UCLA, that the shift toward engaged scholarship writ large is being led by a younger generation of faculty, mostly women and people of color (Antonio, 2002; Ward, 2018).

Researchers have also argued that a diverse faculty composition contributes to student preparation for citizenship in a pluralistic society (Hurtado, 2001; Umbach, 2006). In addition to intellectual diversity, FoC facilitate student development through mentoring and scholarship that connect academic work with the larger society (Stanley, 2006; Umbach, 2006; Smith, 2012). Scholars have learned that FoC often choose the academy as a space to engage in race-related academic work despite a lack of institutional support (Han & Leonard, 2017). FoC do so because they are committed to their teaching philosophies and personal convictions around racial justice (Antonio, 2002; Han & Leonard, 2017). For example, a study on FoC contributions to undergraduate teaching revealed that FoC were more likely to engage in teaching that included active learning and collaboration to create diverse perspectives and interactions (Umbach, 2006). The need to make a difference serves as

intrinsic motivation for FoC, which can result in heightened feelings of external pressure to participate in social justice efforts (Moule, 2005). Some FoC have framed this sense of commitment to race-related academic work as "volunteerism" in which a focus on social injustice is "just what we do" as persons of color (Dunlap, 2018, p. 61). For many FoC, to be a critical academic is to receive recognition for improving the profession while pushing against the universities' willingness to neglect the marginalized and its detachment from problems in society (Moten & Harney, 2004).

FoC navigate the tension of service as a distraction from research while engaging these spaces as sites of critical agency to redefine oppressive institutional structures (Baez, 2000). As noted above, FoC often report service activities as having negatively impacted their bid for tenure or other forms of employment security (Baez, 2000; Fries-Britt et al., 2011; Stanley, 2006). The often-cited concern is that service loads are higher for FoC, particularly women of color, who are overwhelmingly called upon to mentor students of color as well (Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011; Stanley, 2006). Service loads for FoC include participating in personnel committees and hiring committees, educating white peers on diversity, and supporting local and national communities, among other forms of service (Stanley, 2006). Yet, FoC also expressed having mixed feelings about engaging in community praxis as these faculty often share that giving back to their communities was a part of their academic work (Baez, 2000; Dunlap, 2018). For example, studies have revealed the many Native American scholars view the survival of Indigenous communities a preeminent goal in life, connecting their academic work with their communities (Turner et al., 2011). Additionally, Latinx faculty also report a strong desire to maintain affiliations with

their communities in the interest of advancing the status of their communities (Delgado, 2009).

Although too large of a service load could result in cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994), in which increased diversity-related expectations are placed upon FoC (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), service and various other forms of race-focused academic work could be an effective retention strategy when rewarded equitably (Baez, 2000; Fries-Britt et al., 2011). In one study, FoC who were able to engage in service activities meaningful to them found critical agency that resisted and redefined the academic structures that hindered them (Baez, 2000). Research has also revealed that if supported and rewarded appropriately, FoC could engage in service to gain access to additional funding dollars or serving on decision-making committees (Baez, 2000; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011). Pre-tenure FoC have reported that race-related service, despite presenting the most challenges, provides opportunities to find political benefits through connecting with communities of color and personal benefits of interpersonal relationships, reduced isolation, and supportive professional networks (Baez, 2000; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007;). Even tenured FoC acknowledged that race-related service work can lead to important local and national networks that add to their research and establish important political relationships helpful in navigating a chilly academic climate (Baez, 2000).

It is evident that the contemporary university has become increasingly demographically diverse, creating varied needs that call for new praxis. Yet, the experiences of FoC remain tainted with marginalization and underrepresentation as discussed above. Research and national awards on engaged scholarship have shown that the growth in engaged scholarship with new praxis focused on equity and race has been led by a younger, more

diverse faculty (Antonio, 2002; Ward, 2018). Yet, a major barrier for FoC has been the need to frequently navigate academic devaluation in which institutional norms and rewards question their academic agendas (Fries-Britt et al., 2011; Stanley, 2006).

Despite institutional challenges, FoC have expressed that engaging in scholarship with equity and political agendas, or activist scholarship in the case of this dissertation, is a part of their intellectual work as academics (Baez, 2000; Dunlap, 2018;). In fact, FoC have expressed that if rewarded equitably, supporting race-focused academic work is effective in retaining a diverse faculty and ensuring epistemic justice by ensuring that voices of FoC leave an impression of knowledge development in higher education (Gonzales, 2018; Settles et al., 2020). However, there is a paucity of research on the contributions of FoC on scholarship, making this dissertation study on the experiences of FoC engaging in activist scholarship important to higher education leaders.

Activist Scholarship

Higher education institutions have historically been critical sites of organized action to fight racial injustice, gender inequity, class disparities, and other social injustices (Davis et al., 2019; Kelley, 2016). From DuBois' study groups in the 1900s (Fine, 2017) to engaging in critical community engagement scholarship at contemporary urban universities (Mitchell & Soria, 2018; Simpson, 2014), activist scholars have rallied to confront abuse of power by the majority. A critical juncture was the U.S. Civil Rights movement and student unrest in the 1960's that catalyzed higher education institutions to establish civic engagement programs (Post et al., 2016) and ethnic studies departments to provide more education to counter racism across university campuses (Bowels et al., 1979). The 1960's social uprising of the U.S. Civil Rights movement inspired students of color to organize and demand greater equity

on college campuses (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019). However, students eventually became frustrated by the inaction of university leadership by the 1970's and shifted to coalition-building on campuses instead (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019). Black student unions (BSU) and other racially minoritized student groups were established as spaces for student unity and survival (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019). However, it was the Black student union at San Francisco State University in 1966 (a first of its kind) that provided a model for student organizing across the country to organize and confront racism on predominantly white campuses (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019). Soon after, other minoritized student groups appeared across campus and followed the Black student union and employed activist strategies such as sit-ins and making collective demands to improve conditions for students of color on campus (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019).

The BSU at San Francisco State University followed in the steps of the Black Panthers and issued 10 demands to university leadership which included the hiring of Black faculty and recruitment of students of color (Broadhurst & Velex, 2019, pp. 3–20). Many non-Black students of color student unions followed suit and put forth similar demands, which resulted in the emergence of ethnic studies programs across the country (Broadhurst & Velez, 2019). These demands led to the emergence of critical scholars in institutions who responded to social injustice with new definitions, white papers, and professional organizations around university-community partnerships and democratizing knowledge (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015). Many of these newly developed programs became incubation grounds for activist scholarship. Importantly, their academic work arguably served as preambles of Boyer's (1990) argument for scholarship that provided solutions for broader societal injustices and resisted traditional canons of the scholar identity itself.

Foundations of an Activist Scholar

Activist scholars in this dissertation are FoC who engage in academic work that includes partnerships with marginalized groups to advance an explicit social change agenda (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017; Warren et al., 2014). Activist scholars of color (ASoC) produce scholarship that is empirically grounded and theoretically valuable toward the interests of minoritized communities (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Kiang, 2008; Speed, 2006). As noted earlier, the academic work of activist scholars fall within a broad range rather than one definition (Collins, 2012; Quaye et al., 2017). Often, activist scholars are drawn into activist scholarship through their own experiences that highlight how individuals from particular social locations are silenced (Quaye et al., 2017; Gonzales, 2018; Tang, 2008); in this way, exposing unique experiences reveals the realism of multiple realities (Maxwell, 2012.

Forms of activist scholarship vary depending on the scholar's preferences about how to position their political action. Research has revealed that activist scholarship can range from academic work that centers on activist methods by incorporating techniques such as organizing or demonstrating to advance a political goal (Quaye et al., 2017). Other activist scholars work within the parameters of the profession to enact an activist (political and organizing) agenda (Quaye et al., 2017; Speed, 2006). When pulled together effectively, both forms of activist scholarship resemble the work of "[B]lack digital intelligencia," a new crop of Black public scholars who use social media to advance scholarship and activism (Dyson, 2015; Quaye et al., 2017).

Subversive Intellects and Strategy

For activist scholars who come from communities that were historically excluded from higher education, the academy represents institutions from which they strategically "steal" resources such as time and status to advance social justice while knowing they must never fully become collaborators with the institution (Moten & Harney, 2004). For activist scholars to distance themselves from the institution in this way requires that they work from the *Undercommons*—a counter-surgency space for scholars who arrived at the university without proper documentation (credentials) and for only their labor (teaching and service) (Moten & Harney, 2004). As a result, they become "subversive intellectuals" who engage strategically and minimally with the institution (Moten & Harney, 2004) with a glance toward the needs of unloved communities like their own communities.

Outsiders Within Perspective

Scholars have also written about activist scholars as "outsiders within" who occupy the edges between groups with unequal power (Collins, 1986; Collins, 2012, p. 66). These scholars hold dual identities of inclusion and exclusion (Collins, 2013) and develop alternative perspectives to analyze inequities that can only be gained from existing in a "nepantla" or border space (Anzaldúa, 2002; Collins, 2013). Activist scholars have applied this framework of "outsiders within" with an intersectional lens to examine and call for action on issues related to immigration, sexuality, and religion, among others (Collins, 2012). For example, Kwon (2015) applied this concept of "outsiders within" to argue that Korean and Mexican immigrant students navigate multiple inequalities while they serve as translators and cultural brokers between parents and social institutions. In addition, McCoy (2015) extended the "outsiders within" concept to teach undergraduate students the impact of

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accepting U.S.-centered constructs of human rights to navigate race in the United States. As these examples reveal, the academic work of activist scholars includes accountability in how knowledge is produced through critical reflections on the domains of power and social locations of scholars and communities (Collins, 2012).

Answerability to Minoritized Communities

Activist scholars engage in collective knowledge development, sharing responsibilities for advancing knowledge, and centering their academic work on the political goals of community partners (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Kiang, 2008). As such, the commitment to social responsibility, accountability, and engaging in an exchange is embedded within activist scholarship rather than the extraction of knowledge by the researcher (Smith, 2012). Activist scholars are determined to ensure that their academic work is answerable to the process of *learning* by acknowledging its influence of how and why research is conducted, the construction of *knowledge* for discovery over exploitation, and the influence of *context* or location of the community in which the knowledge is produced (Davis et al., 2019; Patel, 2016). For activist scholars, scholarship is an activist mechanism for change by taking on responsibilities for research findings and legitimizing community members as research partners who can produce valuable knowledge (Greenwood, 2008; Torres, 2019). Answerability becomes a foundation of how academic work is accomplished with the knowledge and philosophies of those marginalized by the academy's traditional process of knowledge development (Davis et al., 2019). With maintaining responsibility to the communities as a foundation, activist scholars speak against deeply embedded colonial structures in higher education that often result in the erasure minoritized communities from educational research (Patel, 2014; Stewart, 2022).

Activist Scholarship Methods of Resistance

In this section, I discuss the methods or tactics that activist scholars have written about how they conduct activist scholarship. A foundational component of activist scholarship is the border-crossing nature of how activist scholars share knowledge. This practice of making knowledge available in such a widespread way has resulted in invitations for more collaboration with other communities and professional organizations. Activist scholars have resisted institutionalized policies that exclude marginalized groups by generating knowledge that situates their work in the claimed spaces and experiences of communities rather than the academy (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Jacquez, 2018; Lipsitz, 2008). For these reasons, activist scholarship is perceived by activist scholars as more rigorous than conventional social science research as it considers all forms of knowledge about the phenomenon under examination.

Under the umbrella of engaged scholarship, activist scholars have been able to advance community-centered research agendas (Dunlap, 2018; Smith et al., 2013). Simpson (2014) noted that this partnership with the community offers opportunities for reciprocity, a recognition of and respect for the knowledge and resources that each contributes to the partnership. Given that power and privilege must be considered in scholarship involving the community (Simpson, 2014), reciprocity is a necessary dynamic to prevent exploitation (Davis et al., 2019.

Through years of navigating against traditional forms of rewards, activist scholars have established alternative praxis on how to engage the diverse student population with the community in theoretical innovation and shared political challenges (Hale, 2008). While research is inherently extractive and colonial in the way that it has commodified the

knowledge of the oppressed for the advancement of elite academics, activist scholars have

insisted on producing subversive scholarship to interrupt this injustice (Fine, 2017). To resist

oppressive educational research, activist scholars have produced valuable scholarship that

includes a critical gaze toward re-imagining the "social arrangements, institutions,

distributions, ideologies, and social relations that reproduce and legitimate everyday

injustice" (Fine, 2017, p. 7). For example, activist scholars have produced knowledge in

partnership with community grassroots groups to contest the impact of charter school

expansion on people of color in Chicago (Gutierrez & Lipman, 2016; Warren & Goodman,

2018).

Other activist scholars have included Black scholars who created an affinity group on

campus for collective healing from racial trauma of police violence against African

Americans (Quaye et al., 2017), Asian American scholars who developed a pan-Asian think-

tank to examine missing data gaps for policy makers (Tang, 2008), and Native American

scholars who have developed language revitalization initiatives with local communities

(Smith et al., 2013). Activist scholars have built strong community partnerships by making

their scholarship accessible through alternative formats such as community reports (Tang,

2008), digital media (DeMeuleneare, 2018), or culturally affirming curriculum (Smith et al.,

2013).

<h3 style="text-align:center">Challenges Faced by Activist Scholars</h3>

Research on activist scholars revealed that they often experience devaluation on

personal and institutional levels as they engage in non-traditional academic work (Clennon,

2020; Osei-Kofi et al., 2010). Activist scholars have reported intense stress because of

misinterpretations by colleagues and suspicion of self-interest regarding their academic focus

on race, leading to Institutional Review Board investigations of their protocols (Dunlap, 2018) or questions regarding their commitment to the department (Smith et al., 2013). The stress that results from daily the navigation of subtle or unconscious insults directed at activist scholars caused them to experience racial battle fatigue or emotional, mental, and physical strain that result from experiencing daily racial slights or microaggressions (Smith et al., 2006). To achieve their goals while managing racial battle fatigue, activist scholars have developed strategies to effectively navigate different sets of rules—that of the systems and structures of the academy and those of the communities where research is taking place (Dunlap, 2018; Jacquez, 2018; Smith et al., 2013).

As previously noted, service-related academic work often receives less weight in reward systems (Baez, 2000; Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Vogelgesang et al., 2010). The process to reward "service" is further complicated by the lack of clarity around what encompasses such work, creating deep challenges to giving it proper weight (Vogelgesang et al., 2010). In fact, studies on scholarship that involves community engagement revealed that pursuing academic work with communities is generally viewed as nonconformist and harmful to early-career options for FoC (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). Some scholars lamented that until there are clearer ways to bridge traditional notions of service and scholarship, service remains defined by Boyer's concept of engaged scholarship (Vogelgesang et al., 2010).

Scholars have summarized challenges to rewarding activist scholarship around three major themes: the problem of the expertise, the problem of the genre, and the problems of focus (DeMeuleneare, 2018). The first problem questions whose expertise is represented in the knowledge created. For example, DeMeuleneare (2018) points out that despite

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coordinating and facilitating the research project, it is his community partners' knowledge—subject expertise—that is reflected in the completed research product. Patel (2014) alternatively critiqued this problem of expertise through the lens of *answerability* to knowledge and context that cautions activist scholars to take great care to advance knowledge in the interest of the community rather than pursue knowledge for their own professional advancement.

Next, there is the problem of the genre in that activist scholars often create scholarship that is not in the form of traditional peer-reviewed articles and books (DeMeuleneare, 2018). Activist scholarship often includes subversive tactics which are interdisciplinary and praxis-based, and recognizes subjectivity in scholarship (Gonzales, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As noted previously, an important marker for activist scholarship is sharing knowledge in accessible formats such as cultural revitalizing programs (Smith et al., 2013), reports and briefs (Fine, 2017; Tang, 2008), and social media (Dyson, 2015). The third problem involves the singular focus that institutional rewards use to determine expertise rather than an activist agenda that is transdisciplinary and anchored in a commitment to social justice (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Gonzales, 2018; Torres, 2019). This desire to maintain a singular focus all but ensured that the specialized, discipline-based scholar remains the marker for assessment and rewarding academic work (Finkelstein et al., 2016; O'Meara, 2005b). To maintain the traditional structure of the researcher as expert setting the agenda dismisses the value of collaborative reflection, contrasts, and integration of many kinds of knowledge systems (Greenwood, 2008).

Navigation Strategies Used by Activist Scholars

However, activist scholars who have successfully navigated traditional structures to earn tenure and promotion have learned that they must have the willingness to take measured risks and take pride in their work (Dunlap, 2018). They have countered institutional barriers with building institutional support through developing introductory courses for students and involving provosts prior to going out into the community (Kiang, 2008). Another illuminating example includes how activist scholars prepare doctoral students for community-engaged scholarship through classroom experience that includes unpacking the conventional understanding of research objectivity to honor the community's cultural knowledge and developing horizontal relationships to guarantee reciprocity (Warren et al., 2014.

This dual commitment to academia and community is how activist scholars have been able to navigate as subversive intellects who are *in*, but not *of* the university and its singular worldview (Moten & Harney, 2004). In activist scholarship, activist scholars have found tools to navigate the academy in ways that lessen the burden of cultural taxation through counterhegemonic methodologies (Hale, 2008), grounded in activism and organizing for change (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017).

To be supportive of activist scholars, higher education institutions must embrace the diversity of collaborations and networks within minoritized communities that are necessary for addressing systemic social problems (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Jacquez, 2018). In doing so, activist scholars would feel encouraged and respected for their work, making it less risky to share activist goals and free to bring their activist identities to their academic work (DeMeuleneare, 2018). This shift toward a more collaborative approach to solving social

problems would also be taking another step toward deeper implementation of Boyer's (1990) framework in expanding the concept of scholarship to include a more complete scope of faculty responsibilities and embracing the engagement knowledge/learning regime where scholarship is responsive to public needs (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2016).

Higher education institutions have historically navigated the paradox of being perceived as a tool of both social control and social change (Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 15). As the former, universities and colleges have been seen as institutions of white, masculine, capitalist hegemony (Gonzales, 2018; Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 15). In the context of the latter, universities and colleges have been perceived as opportunities for social mobility (Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 15) and spaces to practice collective learning of democracy and change (Kelley, 2016). Activist scholarship is work born out of this paradox and it aims to use the resources of the institution to advance the needs of historically excluded communities. Activist scholarship involves faculty using their status and resources to advance research with equity and political goals as partners with intellects from minoritized communities (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017).

Activist scholarship is often advanced by FoC who themselves are from historically excluded communities, thereby creating a sense of being an "outsider[s] within" (Collins, 2012) who must navigate the institution with a sense of both inclusion by degree and status yet remain excluded by social identities (Collins, 2013). These scholars have developed academic work that involves knowledge and tactics that challenge conventional disciplinary boundaries by navigating the institution as subversive intellects who engage strategically with the institution to serve the needs of minoritized communities (Moten & Harney, 2004). Furthermore, these scholars have navigated their academic work with answerability or

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responsibility in ensuring that any knowledge created is in the interest of the communities they serve (Patel, 2016). But activist scholarship remains in suspicion by colleagues and unrecognized by institutional reward systems. This dissertation gathered the insight of scholars who developed a better understanding of how higher education institutions can reform themselves to be more responsive to their university communities and address important challenges of society.

Summary

This literature review discussed how three bodies of work informed this dissertation on the experiences of ASoC and how they successfully navigated institutional reward systems. The scholarship on institutional reward systems, FoC contributions to scholarship, and activist scholarship reveals that activist scholars have transcended traditional academic boundaries from the *Undercommons* by producing academic work that comes *from* the university but not *of* its singular and exclusionary worldview (Moten & Harney, 2004).

In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology for this dissertation that takes a qualitative approach to develop a complex and holistic analysis of activist scholars and the philosophies that anchor their scholarship (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Narrative inquiry was applied as the methodological approach to collect and analyze the importance of events (Chase, 2005) to understand how the participants make meaning of their academic work in their own words (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). These narratives included four narratives that provide a collective identity for activist scholars and their reflections on consequential events that have informed how they engaged in activist scholarship (Polkinghorne, 1988).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

My study is a narrative inquiry situated within the transformative paradigm and is focused on FoC whose scholarship, in a form of activist scholarship, involves working against and within conflicting institutional reward systems. In this chapter, I begin with the goals of my study followed by a discussion of my positionality in relation to the topic. Next, I discuss the epistemological foundations that informed and shaped the methods of my study. I explain how my dissertation study is situated within the transformative paradigm with goals to provide practical recommendations for higher education leaders to re-imagine institutional reward systems in ways that support and value nontraditional academic work. Then, I discuss the conceptual framework and describe my research design, data collection, analysis, and re-storying. I conclude with a discussion on how I ensured trustworthiness in my study.

Study Goal

The goal of this dissertation was to understand how ASoC navigate institutional reward systems while engaging in scholarship that is perceived as challenging hegemonic epistemologies, practices, and policies in higher education. My study applied a multifaceted and holistic analysis of the participants' experiences to understand a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, a qualitative approach made visible the practices of each of the participants and how they experienced a variety of reward systems, including

tenure and promotion, pay, recognition in academic fields, advancement and satisfaction, professional development experiences, and impact on institutional mission and goals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017). The findings of my interviews were analyzed using my conceptual framework of critical agency (Baez, 2000), "outsiders within" scholars (Collins, 2012), and Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Milner, 2007), as outlined below. I documented the findings using a restorying framework to contextualize the participants' experiences within institutional reward systems (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In restorying the findings, I highlight important turning points in the participants' personal, social, and historical contexts that made up their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Researcher Reflexivity

As a first-generation, Hmong American woman with almost two decades in higher education, it is important to acknowledge my own sense-making of how traditional higher education systems and structures influence FoC's choices and experiences in academia. My professional work has included serving as a "diversity expert" and a Southeast Asian woman in senior leadership roles. I have experienced first-hand the tensions people of color report in the workplace arising from having to hold dual invisibility and hypervisibility. Therefore, it was essential that I engaged in continual reflexivity or self-conscious analytical scrutiny of how my experiences may shape interpretations of my data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By engaging in reflexivity, I am aware of how my social locations and lives experience shaped the approaches I took in my study and remained open to dissertation findings that challenged my perspective.

I am interested in the experiences of FoC because as a university administrator and a diversity practitioner, I observed FoC face the same institutional barriers in a predominantly white institution (PWI) in the Midwest and at an urban university in New England. Throughout my involvement in institutional diversity efforts to create equitable and inclusive practices and policies, I observed that race-focused academic work is often fraught with risks and the suspicion of pursuing a personal agenda when the practitioner-scholar is a person of color (Antonio, 2002; Dunlap, 2018; Smith et al., 2013). I also witnessed that transforming an institution requires change that engages constituents across organizational dimensions (American Society of Higher Education, 2006). These experiences legitimized my natural decision to center my study in relation to how FoC have successfully navigated institutional reward systems when their academic work questions dominant orders of power in higher education (Moten & Harney, 2004).

Epistemology

This study is situated within the transformative paradigm as it aimed to address the politics of research by confronting social oppression in scholarly work (Mertens, 2015). The transformative paradigm was developed as a framework to make visible the discrimination and oppression experienced by women; people of color; Indigenous and postcolonial people; people with dis/abilities; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, and queer communities; and others who have experienced systemic oppression (Mertens, 2015). The transformative paradigm also comprises a diverse range of conceptual lenses and theories, including critical theorists, participatory action researchers, Marxists, feminists, racially and ethnically minoritized people, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous scholars (Mertens, 2015). However, there are five central characteristics of the transformative paradigm,

including that (1) research explicitly addresses issues of power and justice using critical theories; (2) the voices of individuals and communities with historically marginalized identities are included in research design and creating solutions; (3) the teachings of scholars whose work focuses on institutional forms of domination and control are foundational; (4) the human rights and welfare of participants are a priority, thus transparency and reciprocity are fostered; and (5) methods allow for opportunities for individual and systemic transformation (Mertens, 2014). These characteristics were built upon the research of critical scholars whose position is that traditional research methods that privilege universal validity have often muted the experiences and voices of individuals from minoritized communities.

By focusing on power dynamics, researchers position themselves in relation to the participants (Mertens, 2015). Therefore, it is important that I discuss the philosophical paradigms that are foundational to my research design for this study. Although scholars remain divided on the importance of the researcher's philosophical paradigm or way of looking at the world in the research design process, some scholars believe the researcher's positionality to be a hindrance or handicap (Mertens, 2015; Patton, 2016). However, critical scholars argue that a scholar's epistemology or systems of knowing are inseparable from their thinking about research, practice, and theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mertens, 2015). My position held for this dissertation aligns with the latter group of scholars. Therefore, it was practical and necessary to engage in continual reflexivity throughout my study as I made decisions regarding research design, collection of data, and analysis of findings.

Conceptual Framework

This section outlines the conceptual framework or systems of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, and theories that informed my research (Maxwell, 2012). The three theories that grounded my study were drawn from two major themes found within the literature on FoC scholarship: a commitment to social justice and the tensions of working within a system that invalidate academic work that is race-focused (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, 2020). Figure 2 displays my conceptual framework.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework

I selected the following theories and concepts for my study: critical agency (Baez, 2000), the concept of faculty as "outsiders within" (Collins, 2012), and Critical Race Theory

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). First, research has revealed that FoC find race-related scholarship to be opportunities for critical agency, practices that work for social change and social justice by redefining institutional structures of which they are a part (Baez, 2000; Griffin, 2020; Kiyama et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2013). Critical agency refers to resistance actions that are taken within the context of disciplinary power, the hegemonic practices and structures that maintain the social dominance of some by others (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012). Through relationships and networks developed from professional activities, FoC develop new lines of research within oppressive structures while developing a support structure to cope with professional isolation (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012).

Research shows that FoC who are engaging in critical agency are also found in subversive spaces like the Undercommons, where there is collective agency and support for social justice-related academic work (Moten & Harney, 2004; Smith et al., 2013). Therefore, these FoC are revealing through critical agency that institutional structure is a cultural phenomenon and process of human actions (Sewell, 1992). As such, institutional structure is made temporarily durable through "habitus" or codes that serve dominant schemas or rules (Sewell, 1992). FoC using critical agency are demonstrating that structures are sustained through people's repeated actions and by choice.

Second, the literature revealed that FoC often view themselves as "outsiders within" scholars who engage in academic work from the margins of the academy where disciplinary practices and the needs of the community merge (Collins, 2013). Outsiders within scholars use the skills they have acquired as scholars to analyze and challenge power structures that have resulted in social hierarchy (Collins, 2012). FoC often use critical theory to examine the relationship between institutional structures and forms of oppression to debunk notions of a

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post-racial/gendered society (Collins, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Turner, 2015). The latter strategy recognizes how outsiders within scholars can speak to the community with reason, honesty, love, courage, and care because they have insight into the source of pain for the community (Collins, 2013). Research shows that FoC speak truth to the people by making scholarship accessible and in nontraditional forms, including community-based reports (Gutierrez & Lipman, 2016; Tang, 2008), policy papers (Couture, 2017), and social media projects (Dyson, 2015).

Third, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an appropriate lens to examine the experiences of FoC in this dissertation as they engage in nontraditional scholarship and practices. As noted above, FoC often experience academic devaluation (Clennon, 2020; Griffin, 2020; Osei-Kofi et al., 2010) and suspicion of their academic agendas as advancing self-interest (Dunlap, 2018). CRT is used by scholars to challenge the dominant discourse about race and racism in education and to examine the ways in which institutional policies subordinate certain racial groups over others (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I applied CRT as a component of my conceptual lens to provide a nuanced critique of the ways higher education privileges claims of neutrality and objectivity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT also reveals how FoC as individuals from racially marginalized communities offer important perspectives essential to advancing racial equity in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

CRT developed out of legal studies in the 1970's in response to the subtle forms of racism that emerged after the civil rights movement (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As the civil rights movement of the 1960s rolled out legislation that outlawed explicit acts of racism, the ways in which race creates racial stratification took on the forms of color-

blindness that include ideas of abstract liberalism or choice and individualism, objectivity or neutrality, culturally based arguments for racial inequity, and minimizing of racism in everyday life (Bell, 1995; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Cabrera, et al., 2016). CRT entered the field of education when critical scholars recognized that a more race-conscious lens was needed when conducting research with communities of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2007). Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado were amongst the early scholars to develop CRT as a framework to combat subtle forms of racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Scholars have since developed spinoffs of CRT to be responsive to how different racial and ethnic groups are racialized, making it difficult to narrow down an exact definition of the theory.

As noted previously, there are five basic tenets outlined by CRT scholars (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Garrison-Wade et al., 2012; Haynes, 2021): (1) counterstorytelling to highlight experiences of minoritized individuals, (2) permanence of racism to explain the on-going social (re)construction of race, (3) whiteness as property to reveal the economic and political goals of racism, (4) interest convergence to demonstrate the political agenda of the dominant group, and (5) critiques liberalism as a caveat for liberal policies that masks the needs of subordinated groups.

First, the stories of PoC offer counterstories that are insightful to challenging the master narrative regarding oppression and to uplifting the voices of historically silenced people. Second, race and racism are a part of normal occurrences, making racial discrimination difficult to address. As such, it is essential to acknowledge acts of discrimination. Third, racism advances the material and psychological interests of the dominant group—white people—resulting in minimal incentives for them to eradicate

racism. Fourth, the concept of interest convergence explains how whites will participate in social justice efforts if they believe it is a benefit for their interests. Finally, there is the case of interest convergence in which the Brown v. Board of Education, the 1954 landmark case that desegregated schools, is critiqued as a U.S. international political agenda rather than efforts to ensure educational equity for African Americans (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Bell (1980) argued that the Supreme Court's decision to desegregate schools was influenced by the U.S. political agenda to secure international support for the U.S. as the moral and political authority during the Cold War. These tenets can be applied together or individually to understand and present a fuller understanding of the lived realities of PoC.

This dissertation applied a focused CRT framework developed for educational research. To understand how ASoC navigate institutional reward systems in higher education, I applied the following three tenets of CRT (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002): (1) race and racism are endemic and pervasive in society broadly and in higher education more specifically, (2) counterstories demonstrate that personal and community experiences of people of color are sources of knowledge and offer insight into policy limitations, and (3) interest convergence reveals how FoC have found opportunities for change when their scholarship aligns with the institution's mission. By focusing on these three tenets, I contextualized the interplay of ASoC and institutional reward systems.

Research Questions

The research questions were developed with three concepts in mind and focused on description and meaning making. The interview questions are attached as Appendix C.

1. In what ways do tenured ASoC engage in activist scholarship?

2. How do tenured ASoC experience institutional reward systems and structures in higher education throughout their careers, as they practice activist scholarship?

   a. How have tenured ASoC accomplished their agendas in the context of institutional reward systems?

3. How do tenured ASoC enact their espoused social justice values and principles as they engage in scholarship?

   a. What factors or motivations inspire tenured ASoC to bring their work into academia?

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry was the methodological approach for my study as the goal was to understand how FoC made meaning of their experiences through retelling their own stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In narrative inquiry, the researcher and participant work collaboratively through dialogue and interactions to construct stories of the participant's life (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Scholars write that there are three basic claims of narrative research: (1) providing an organized retelling of meaningful experiences to the participant, (2) being influenced by participants' past and present experiences, values, and to whom they choose to tell their stories, and (3) making visible the multivoicedness of a participant's experience (Polkington, 1988, p. 1). All three claims allowed participants in my study to share their unique experiences as minoritized individuals in the academy. Narrative inquiry demonstrates how ordering events through language is helpful for understanding how humans assign meaning to their experiences (Polkington, 1988). Narratives also highlight how human knowledge and reality are continually constructed and revised based on the past and present (Polkington, 1988). In doing so, human reality is relative, making the process of

developing an authentic view of experiences dynamic (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In addition, narratives provide ways for a participant to claim their voice or their personal thoughts, feelings, desires, and politics (McKay, 2010).

The narrative approach I employed in my study is grounded in the three-pronged conceptual framework of critical agency (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012; Sewell, 1992), the concept of "outsiders within" (Collins, 2013), and the CRT tenets of racism is endemic in society, counter story-telling, and interest convergence (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). First, with a focus on institutional structure and agency (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012), participant narratives were recollections of how they engaged in critical agency to question, navigate, and confront various structures in higher education, focusing specifically on elements of the reward system, including hiring and promotion, grants, and awards. Second, the narrative approach focused on the various ways in which FoC acted as "outsiders within" scholars using their academic skills to create space on the borders of the academy and minoritized communities. By narrating their stories, participants shared memories of how they spoke truth to power by challenging hegemonic power using the resources and skills they have gained through the academy (Collins, 2013).

And third, as noted above, my conceptual lens includes three tenets of the CRT framework for higher education that I have adapted to activist scholarship and reward systems: (1) race and racism are endemic, (2) counter-storytelling, and (3) interest convergence (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The first tenet states that racism is endemic to higher education through ingrained norms and practices. Next, the second CRT tenet of counterstories highlights the knowledge of ASoC as sources of knowledge and possibilities for better understanding of policy and practice limitations. Importantly,

counterstories, when used as a method, challenge dominant thinking and propose alternative

ways of knowing (Patton & Catching, 2009). Third, interest convergence as a concept

explains how the participants found both dilemmas and opportunities when institutional

values matched FoC's personal and professional agendas. Interest convergence creates space

for critique of power dynamics between the institution and faculty of color when race,

capitalism, and labor converge (Davila, 2024). Therefore, the application of interest

convergence reveals that advancing social change at an institution bears both positive and

negative implications. It is through these specific, though oftentimes problematic, strands that

this dissertation revealed the mutual benefits of activist scholarship for ASoC and the

institution.

As narrative research includes the participant and researcher working to negotiate the

meaning of the stories (Creswell & Poth, 2017), it is important to address the tensions

between the interpretive nature of narrative research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and the

revisionist nature of CRT that aims to replace majoritarian interpretations of events with ones

that center on PoC experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In the interpretivist paradigm,

foundational in narrative research, there is an interplay between the researcher and

participant to make meaning of the important experiences within the narrative (Bishop,

2014). With CRT as an element of the framework and my lived experience as a Southeast

Asian woman, I applied CRT as the analytical lens while the design of the research questions

focused on FoC's meaning making (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, FoC hold multiple

identities of inclusion and exclusion (Collins, 2013), making their experiences into

counterstories that have the potential to illuminate inequity and transform oppressive systems

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Patton & Catching, 2009). By applying critical agency in the

conceptual framework, these narratives demonstrated how FoC took actions that questioned and confronted institutional reward systems. As FoC, they brought "outsiders within" knowledge to their academic work that allowed them to speak truth to power and legitimized their truths (Collins, 2013).

Research Design

In this section, I outline how I completed my study. The narrative research was a fluid inquiry process, not a set of linear steps (Clandinin, 2013). For example, I simultaneously interviewed and analyzed data once I had my initial five interviews transcribed. Furthermore, as the instrument of the research, I remained open and adjusted as necessary to identify and address any concerns regarding trustworthiness (Maxwell, 2012). For example, I scheduled additional phone calls and/or brief virtual check-ins to confirm details that were unclear to me.

I used a semi-structured approach to interviewing and allowed for the continual creation and recreation of trust, intimacy, and reciprocity through subsequent questions (Maxwell, 2012). I began my semi-structured interviews with general questions to establish trust and comfort then followed the participant's lead as they provided their responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). See Appendix C for the open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews. I conducted interviews using an interview guide approach that is typical in qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). I focused the interview questions on the participants' interpretation of activist scholarship and the institutional reward systems. The interview questions were organized into broad themes meant to uncover how the participant made meaning of activist scholarship, the context for their scholarship, and the approaches they used to accomplish their scholarship (Maxwell, 2012).

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Narrative research acknowledges that participants may re-tell their stories through multiple types of information (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Researchers may collect letters shared by the participant and gather memos or official correspondence about the participant as artifacts (Creswell & Poth, 2017). To access supporting documents, I applied the interpretive nature of narrative research by asking the participants for documents they perceived to be important to their experience. Therefore, I included two interview questions (#12 & 13) that request for supporting documents. Doing involved participants in a collective approach to gather artifacts and other forms of data that contextualize the participant's scholarship (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Sampling

My sampling approach was completed through a combination of email invitations and snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, the participants led me to subsequent participants because it is not known who identifies as a scholar who engages in activist scholarship (Creswell, 2013). The literature on activist scholarship suggests that activist scholarship includes a broad range of academic work (Collins, 2012; Quaye et al., 2017) as well as subversive strategies (Moten & Harney, 2004; Gonzales, 2018), which are rarely supported by the institution. Therefore, I relied on the participants to point me to others who are within their professional networks and/or are known within their discipline as FoC who conduct activist scholarship.

As defined earlier, the participants were tenured FoC whose academic work included political goals and was completed in partnership in collaboration with marginalized communities (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017). My goal was to understand how these tenured FoC navigated institutional reward systems. Specifically, I was interested

in understanding the experience of tenured FoC engaged in activist scholarship at academic institutions designated as "very high research activity" or "high research activity." I selected tenured FoC because the literature reveals that tenured faculty have successfully navigated one of the most central reward systems, which is tenure and promotion. Furthermore, I was interested in learning how tenured ASoC have experienced a range of reward systems associated with a successful tenure, established their academic prowess, and developed professional networks.

I decided to examine research-intensive institutions because (1) FoC are underrepresented at these types of institutions and (2) scholarship (above teaching and service) is given the most weight in tenure and promotion decisions. Therefore, it is essential to understand how FoC earned tenure at research institutions, and an even smaller portion having done so with non-traditional approaches like activist scholarship. In fact, doctoral degree-granting institutions, including universities that are research intensive (R1 & R2), are the least diverse at the tenure rank with FoC making up only 26% of fulltime faculty (AAUP, 2022). Second, research universities are where time spent on research matters most to successfully earning tenure and promotion (O'Meara et al., 2017). Third, research revealed that commitment to professional service that engage external communities are weaker amongst individual faculty at prestigious or more selective institutions (Antonio et al., 2000; Voglegesang et al., 2005).

I drew my sample from institutions classified by the Carnegie Classification, the leading framework describing institutional diversity with respect to research activity (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2020), as "very high research activity/ R1" or "high research activity/R2." The Carnegie Classification defines these two types of

institutions as those that award 20 or more doctoral degrees and have $5 million or more in total research expenditures reported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Higher Education Research & Development Survey (HERD) (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2020). The Carnegie Classification lists 266 institutions that fall into these two categories. The geographical parameters of the participants' institutions were limited to scholars employed and/or educated in North America.

Data Collection

I recruited through email and shared the purpose of my study and a definition of activist scholarship as stated throughout my dissertation proposal: academic work that includes explicit political goals and is conducted in partnership with intellects from minoritized communities as a tool for change (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017). I contacted a total of 58 FoC. A total of 15 agreed to participate in my study.

Once the scholar agreed to be a participant, I emailed them a link to a demographic survey to collect self-identified racial identity and other forms of social identities that are salient to the participant. I also posed two close-ended questions: (1) Did the scholars' work include political goals and (2) Did their work involve partnerships with minoritized communities? See Appendix B for the demographic survey. Afterwards, I followed up with instructions to schedule a Zoom interview through Calendly, a web-based scheduling platform.

The first round of interviews came via an activist scholar webinar and by way of a group of undergraduate students of color at my institution. The next round of interviews included a scholar whose work I was familiar with and who was also recommended by referrals by one of my former professors in my graduate studies. Other participants came by

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way of activist scholar podcasts, recommendation by dissertation committee members, colleagues from Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) colleagues, suggestions from my own community, and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. I also browsed the FoC's webpage, which often included CVs, to ensure these individuals were committed to social justice goals. Select participant data are below (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Data

Participant Pseudonym	Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity	Academic Discipline	Gender/Gender Identity	Institution Type
Logan	American Indian/ Indigenous	Languages and Literature	Man	R1
Maggie	Asian/ Asian American	Sociology	Woman	R1
Mya	Asian/ Asian American	Educational Foundations	Woman	R1
Abby	Latinx	Educational Administration	Woman	R1
Connor	Black/African American	Public Policy/Affairs	Man	R1
Rachel	Latinx	Teaching and Teacher Education	Woman	R1
Piper	Asian/ Asian American	Curriculum and Instruction	Woman	R1
Elsie	Asian/ Asian American	Leadership in Schooling	Woman	R2
Henry	Asian/ Asian American	Asian American Studies	Man	R2
Charles	Asian/ Asian American	Political Science	Man	R2
Luke	Black/African American	Urban Teacher Education	Man	R2
Jennifer	Asian/ Asian American	Psychology	Woman	R2
Charlotte	Latinx	Anthropology	Woman	R2
Nicole	Latinx	Urban Education	Woman	R2
Emily	Latinx	Women Studies	Woman	R2

My goal was to have broad representation from the following race and ethnicity groups: African American/ Black, Asian American, Latinx, Native American/Indigenous, and two or more races. The decision to interview scholars from these racial groups is

influenced by literature that reveals how FoC are often influenced by their own racialized

identities and experiences with marginalization (Collins, 2013; Gonzales, 2018).

The sample size for this dissertation was 15 participants, which is within the

suggested range of 12-20 participants for narrative inquiry (Guetterman, 2015; Sim et al.,

2018). However, I remained reflexive throughout the recruitment process and assessed for

saturation, or informational redundancy (Sim et al., 2018), of the sample. This reflexive

approach included continual reflection on the limitations of the sample by maintaining

fidelity to gathering depth rather than seeking to generalize the emerging data (Guetterman,

2015). As such, I employed critical and comparative reflections on the data (Sim et al., 2018)

of specific characteristics such as discipline, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and

institutional type.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the interview transcripts and supporting documents provided to me by the

participants using the restorying framework (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This framework

involved gathering stories through the interviews and artifacts participants shared, then

analyzing these items for key elements or themes to be rewritten with elements of time, plot,

place, and scene (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In my study, the interview questions were

organized in a three-part sequence starting with meaning-focused questions to solicit how

FoC arrived at their research topic and who may have influenced their scholarship, context-

focused questions that highlighted turning points that influenced the outcomes of their

scholarship, and process-focused questions that gathered insight on the actions and events

that led to the outcomes of their scholarship (Maxwell, 2012, p. 83). These three approaches

facilitated inductive reasoning and a nuanced understanding of how the participants have contributed to activist scholarship.

I applied the interpretive three-dimensional space approach that analyzes data for three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the participant's places) (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990); Creswell & Poth, 2017). I examined the data for embedded context within participant accounts that explained how time and space influenced the way participants interpret their experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) I also applied a CRT lens to deconstructing the role of power between the participants, their research partners, and the institutional reward systems. For example, I evaluated the data to understand how they made sense of their racial and cultural heritage in relation to how they engaged with collaborators and institutional reward systems. I also searched for key historical or social events that explained and/or altered their perception of scholarship. Lastly, I searched for evidence of how institutional context or status of underrepresentation impacted their decisions. In applying this three-element framework, I was able to excavate the temporal aspects of becoming who the participants were as they were retelling their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narrative research is a collaborative project between the researcher and participant, where both parties learn and change from the encounter (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 73). This interchange of ideas and perspectives is important because narratives also hold opportunities for the researcher to gain insight into their own work or life (Creswell & Poth, 2017). As such, I reached out to participants to clarify details as needed.

I used Dedoose, an online qualitative analysis platform to code and analyze the transcripts. Initially, I coded the transcripts for major themes using an inductive approach

based on my research questions. I used open coding techniques to deconstruct the excerpts from Dedoose. Open coding breaks the data apart and further delineates the codes into subcodes. Emerging properties and dimensions emerged from breaking the excerpts or blocks of raw data into sub-excerpts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). Open coding was also used to help the process of deconstructing the text into narratives. The open coding processes revealed possibilities in constructing a narrative that included a plot, character, and events that explained the experience of each participant (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Next, deductive techniques were used to explore emerging themes. Subcodes emerged from these parent codes that resulted in ten characteristics and themes reported by the participants as they enacted activist scholarship (see Table 2).

Table 2

Dedoose Coding Sample

Research Questions	Parent Code	Subcode 1	Subcode 2	Subcode 3
Scholarship includes social justice-oriented goals	Forms of social justice	Community engagement	Conscious development	Policy Development
Scholar's orientation to an activist identity	Yes	No	Emerging	Undecided
Which community/collective are partners in the scholarship	External Communities	Internal Communities	Professional Community	Combination
Factors that influence scholarship approaches	Lived Experiences	Social identity	Improve daily lives of minoritized people	Cultivate leaders/activists
Costs associated with conducting activist scholarship	Professional	Personal	Health	
Rewards received from scholarship	Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
Strategies were used to navigate faculty pathway to tenure and promotion	Policy	Teaching	Access to knowledge development process	Improve praxis
Perceptions of relationship with the institution	Supportive	Divergent	Skepticism	Distrust

Presentation of Findings

The findings of my dissertation are presented in two chapters. In Chapter 4, I provide

four narratives that detail selected participants' reflections on their journey in practicing

activist scholarship. This chapter presents a nuanced restorying that illustrates individual

narrative manifestations of the more general themes discussed in the next chapter. In Chapter

5, I draw on data from all 15 participants to present the 10 characteristics that connect the participants and several general themes in activist scholarship in addition to findings around rewards and punishments.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers aim to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by spending time in the field with participants and probing for a more nuanced understanding of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Narrative research, a qualitative method, is a fluid inquiry process that involves researcher and participant collaboration to collect and construct a nuanced story of the participant's experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990); Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, the issue of power relations remains a concern in narrative research, making it necessary to build in strategies that address concerns related to who tells the story and who can change the story (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Therefore, I established "trustworthiness" and ensured that the findings are credible between researcher and participant by developing thick descriptions with abundance and interconnected details (Stake, 2010, p. 49) that pass participant and external audits (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In qualitative research, the triangulation or drawing upon multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical schemas helps construct validation points rather than imposing context or theories upon the narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Lather, 1991, p. 56). I engaged Creswell and Poth's (2017) framework to assess the accuracy of the data through the lens of three groups: researcher's lens, participant's lens, and reader's or reviewer's lens (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2017). The first lens of the model is the researcher's lens, in which I engaged in triangulation of different forms of data and remained vigilant of

disconfirming evidence. I included a collection of multiple secondary data sources provided by the participants as stated above then triangulating those with the interviews. For example, the analysis included reading CVs and reviewing faculty websites. I also encouraged participants to share artifacts with me that have influenced their experience.

I kept notes on disconfirming evidence. My notes included responding to researcher positionality questions such as the following (Milner, 2007, p. 9): What do my participants believe about race and culture in society and education? How can we attend to the tensions inherent in our convictions and beliefs about race and culture in the research process? Why is this important? How do I recognize these moments of discord?

Furthermore, I engaged in researcher reflexivity through journaling to process feelings and concerns that arose from my personal experience as a Southeast Asian woman in the academy and a diversity and inclusion practitioner (Peshkin, 1991; Maxwell, 2012). I reflected on my researcher positionality using the following questions (Milner, 2007, p. 9): How do I negotiate and balance my own interests and research agendas with those of my research participants, which may be inconsistent with or diverge from mine? How do I recognize these moments?

I also wrote memos to process how participant responses prompted me to investigate other perspectives. For example, I wrote memos to further my understanding of the role of objectivity as it relates to activist scholarship and how relationality is a key concept for understanding activist scholarship and networks.

Finally, Creswell and Poth (2017) recommend examining the reader's or viewer's lens by enabling external audits, generating a thick description, and having peer review of data and the research process. The role of the external audit is to provide assessments on

whether my findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data. I also

sought an external check by my dissertation committee members who are familiar with the

phenomenon or my topic of ASoC and institutional reward systems. The next chapter will

provide detailed narratives of how four tenured faculty of color have navigated rewards and

importantly, costs, to secure tenure and practice activist scholarship in their own unique

ways.

CHAPTER 4

FOUR NARRATIVES OUTLINING THE EXPERIENCES OF ACTIVIST SCHOLARS OF

COLOR

This chapter presents four individual narratives that demonstrate two key concepts: the conceptual framework (critical agency, "outsiders within," and the three CRT tenets of racism is endemic, counter story-telling, and interest convergence) discussed in Chapter 3 and the activist scholarship continuum that was revealed in this study (discussed in Chapter 5). Chapter 4 offers firsthand accounts that contextualize my analysis using my conceptual framework.

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate, through four individual stories, that activist scholarship does not fit neatly into a label, discipline, or theory. Rather it is work that is grounded in deep reflection on the influences of lived experiences with inequity and the desire to advance social change in practical and meaningful ways. This chapter presents participants' stories in a narrative fashion, prior to describing themes that were shared across participants in Chapter 5. Importantly, as it will be demonstrated more thoroughly in Chapter 5, not all participants in this study identified themselves as activist scholars or labeled their scholarship activist. However, all 15 participants practiced scholarship in ways that aligned with my definition of activist scholarship as an integrated approach to research, service, and teaching that includes partnerships with marginalized groups to advance an explicit social

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change agenda. For this reason, and upon much reflection, I have chosen to continue using the activist scholar/ship term to describe my study's participants and their scholarship.

I begin with Elsie who demonstrated the journey of an "outsider within" scholar who considered herself an "accidental academic" yet has successfully earned tenured as a community-engaged scholar, the most widely accepted concept for activist scholarship. She detailed how growing her research and securing tenure have given her confidence to continue her activism. Second, I selected Charles who illustrated how he had shifted from a U.S. foreign policy origin to Asian American Studies to advance his university's mission as an urban public institution surrounded by ethnically and racially diverse communities. Charles explained that he used his training as a political scientist to combine research, teaching, and service for the benefit of Asian American and immigrant communities.

Third, I offer Abby's narrative, which demonstrates that activist scholarship can be done inside the institution and informed by their experience as a minoritized faculty or "outsider within" experience. Though Abby was widely regarded as an activist scholar who engaged in social justice with internal and external audiences, she noted that most people would not call her an activist scholar. She also illustrated that activism can be accomplished with more than one approach. Finally, I selected Logan to demonstrate the activist continuum that allows for growth and reflexivity as a scholar. Logan expressed a deep commitment to collective projects and activism through university service.

Elsie: An Accidental Academic Practicing Classic Activist Scholarship

Elsie was an Asian American woman, an associate professor who described herself as an "accidental academic" with a refugee origin story. She explained that she originally knew very little about the academy. However, she became aware of the role of the academy

through her trials and tribulations of navigating formal schooling as a refugee, teaching in K-12 education, and community organizing work. Her professional experiences revealed a high dropout rate among Southeast Asian youth, which was largely invisible to scholars and policy makers. During her time as a teacher and community organizer for Southeast Asian communities, it was roommates and community members who encouraged her to pursue a doctorate to highlight the dropout rate. Her roommates and fellow community members convinced her that an advanced degree would help create the platform and legitimacy to draw the attention of policy makers. Elsie saw her scholarship as an answer to a community call and her community was the origin of each of her consecutive academic projects.

She recalled three pivotal moments in which her community served a significant role in her academic journey, two of which related to what she learned from roommates in different graduate programs who explained to her that academia was a vehicle for intellectual curiosity and answering critical questions about her own community. The first roommate, from the west coast, encouraged her to pursue a doctorate as a vehicle to pursuing important unanswered questions about educational improvement. The second roommate, who Elsie met years later while living on the east coast, echoed the importance of a doctorate and introduced Elsie to a prominent scholar in an education graduate program. And third, throughout her teaching and youth programming work, community members encouraged her to pursue a doctorate because policy makers will not listen to teachers. The elders and community members from Asian youth centers shared with her that white educators and policy makers do not know their community. They impressed upon Elsie that research would give her the opportunity to use her knowledge of community struggles to train teachers to support parents and students.

However, Elsie found that the segregated nature of academic disciplines created challenges for communal research like activist scholarship. Elsie explained that there is a sense of isolation with her scholarship that integrates education, social justice, and Asian American studies. In her words:

> [I]t's hard because when you're in education then the Association for Asian American Studies are the people who do the scholarship on our Asian American community. Then you have the education folks. And then there's the people who are educators who are in the AAPI community. Right? So that it's very narrow. And the people who do the social justice work, I got connected through AERA, the American Education Research Association.

Elsie eventually found scholars who did anti-oppressive education scholarship involving Asian students. Her academic community grew to include other scholars who studied educational equity, but with a different spin including, for example, scholars who used decolonizing curriculum and tools, immigration scholars, and higher education scholars. Elsie shared that conferences were helpful spaces to connect with other scholars who examined Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, in particular, special interest groups (SIGs) that focused on research and education of AAPIs. Elsie shared that she connected with scholars who conducted research involving Filipino communities and applied similar methodologies, providing inspiration for her own scholarship.

Elsie remained steadfast in her belief that it was her community that brought her into the academy. Elders, leaders, and parents from the community shared with Elsie the issues that troubled them, provided a supportive network of academic projects, and they pushed her to meet the community's high expectations. She recalled that it was the community that

affirmed her concern over the lack of research on the Asian dropout rate that she noticed while serving as a K-12 teacher. Community members shared that the pervasive model minority myth resulted in a focus on Black and Brown student dropout rates while Asian students were largely invisible to decision makers. Also, she recounted that community members remained important partners in her community organizing work and encouraged her to study the community, citing how her teaching experience legitimized her expertise in the Asian dropout rate.

Elsie explained that her scholarship was conducted to address community needs. She shared that the extent of her scholarship expanded beyond print and publications in traditional tier-one journals. Her scholarship was published in southeast Asian specific journals and was internationally downloaded by over 1,000 people in different areas ranging from academic agencies to nonprofits. The data produced from her scholarship were used to secure grants for community capacity building and teacher training. Ultimately, as Elsie noted, what mattered was the community impact of her work as opposed to an impact factor.

Elsie's scholarship was also designed to provide counterstories of Asian Americans and knowledge creation. Her work argued against the model minority and tiger mom myths that are prevalent among Asian Americans. Elsie noted that her methodology for her dissertation was a counterstories to knowledge creation, where she surveyed Southeast Asian parents in their native languages. Her methodology involved community members as collaborators to inform the questions in pilot programs and to collect data so that they could use academic research skills to learn other things. Elsie shared that these findings were used to secure a national grant for over $150,000 for parent engagements projects. She explained:

[I]t's not just like, oh, I'm doing this, drive by, take the information and leave. I build

the capacity within my community to do the methodology. We create the surveys

together. Then we both use the survey findings for my publications and then for their

grant writing.

Elsie recounted that creating counterstories was a part of her doctoral work as well.

She published a paper that moved the concept of parent involvement beyond bake sale to

community engagement. She stated that this project was one of her early collaborations with

the community to add to the literature on parent involvement. This project included more

than her single authorship and included AAPI community members. Her scholarship

involved ethnic community entities (local bodega owners and temples) and community

members as collaborators in the research process. Her intentions always included developing

competencies that better serve her community. For example, as she was teaching students to

conduct the research, their findings were also used to testify and develop congressional

briefings. Elsie explained:

[Research], it's not research for research's sake. It's applied research. It doesn't sit on

the shelf. It now goes into policy briefs. It goes into my congressional briefing.

Her original research involving her community became relevant to designing

trainings for other refugee communities. Shortly prior to our interview, she used her

scholarship to design supportive programming for Afghan evacuees relocating to the area

surrounding her institution. After learning from a local community agency that did not have

the capacity to prepare the city for an influx of refugees, Elsie jumped into action and

connected her public-school contacts with the university's international institute to plan

programs. Elsie explained that her scholarship had taught her to manage relationships

between the community and the institution to produce impactful programming for refugees. Additionally, this project garnered public attention with interviews by local newspapers creating an interest convergence where refugees were served, and the institution received positive press.

Elsie completed another service-learning project involving her local community. The project was designed to encourage local youth to attend the university. Elsie learned from working with a teen agency that they wanted more tutors as well as individuals to offer campus tours. She and her students visited community spaces and asked questions to determine community needs to inform the university's outreach to the community. She used her grant dollars to encourage young people to participate in campus tours.

People from across various fields also helped shape Elsie's holistic approach to activism. For example, community activists taught her about lobbying and advocacy. These activists gave her access to philanthropists so she could use her research to encourage the "redistribution of money." This was key for leveraging federal funds to help the community. Of note was how her work had been used in the public policy arena to train a Southeast Asian advocacy group for 10 years of training, cited as a data point for congressional staff meetings, and helping to pass a state bill on data disaggregation.

Elsie explained that her scholarship followed the journey of her students. Initially, she studied K-12 education in relation to the dropout rate. When many of her students entered higher education, she also turned to examining higher education. Around the time of our interview, her focus was on Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). Elsie explained that her last two studies were at AANIPISI community colleges, one on the east coast and the other on the west coast. In these studies,

she examined the connections between career readiness among Southeast Asians in college settings. As Elsie explained, it was university-level educators who needed more cultural competency training and money for supporting low-income first-generation students. So, these challenges prompted Elsie to be involved in national scholarship organizations for the last decade.

Tenure and Promotion: Leveraging Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Elsie did not take on an activist identity until after she had her own faculty line. Her initial claim to activism was couched as the "much softer community-engaged scholar." She shared that she only explicitly claimed activism after tenure because there was less fear of retaliation and censorship. She explained that claiming an activist identity was a political designation. She was also much more comfortable with her methodology post tenure, whereby she shifted from her original training in mixed methods toward a much more qualitative community-centered approach.

She explained that, as early as graduate school, activism was discouraged as doctoral training centers focused on objectivity and quantifiable measures. Elise shared that she even experienced microaggressions from faculty when she shared her research topic with them. Some made comments such as Asians are statistically insignificant as they made up only 3% of the U.S. population. Therefore, Asians were not included in studies because they did not make up a significant portion of their data sets. However, Elsie knew that Asians were not statistically insignificant in certain areas in the Midwest, California, and Massachusetts. In fact, Elise had to pull data from these places to give to faculty so that they could now have a broader understanding of her community.

Elsie arrived at her institution while they were engaged in strategic planning in the early 2010s. One of the pillars for the strategic plan was global inclusion and engagement. She reflected that her hire was also a way the institution could "check off the box" that there was a Southeast Asian faculty member on campus. The location of her institution, however, had one of the largest Southeast Asian communities in the nation, so she understood how social identity can be leveraged as a marketing tool for the institution. Elsie stated that her role at the university gave legitimacy to the institution because she was one of the few, if not the only professor from her ethnic group. She explained that she made sense of her role within the institution in such a way because she had heard of using social identity as a marketing strategy to help the institution look good. Elsie felt that she was used as a "poster child" for the institution's show of diversity and cultural competency. She was assigned all the diversity courses, which involved teaching diverse populations, engaging family and communities, and developing inclusive context.

However, she leveraged cultural competency training as part of her skillset and eventually made the argument to incorporate a course on community partnerships into the curriculum. Her efforts included working with the institution to define community partnerships and building rapport with community partners. She knew from experience that institutions came into her community and thought that they could tell communities what to do. At the same time, communities would nod and smile, and then did what they wanted after the institution left.

Discussing her own work, Elsie detailed a past program built on her scholarship that involved bringing school district staff and parents together to learn more about the roles of school social workers, guidance counselors, a superintendent, and city council members. She

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worked with these groups to create a workshop, provided the training, and removed herself

from workshops by the third year. As she explained:

> [I]t's not just about getting the data and publishing. It's about using that data for the
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> needs of the community, whether it's to get funding, to build the capacity or to also
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> serve the community in different ways.

She shared that her choices made her a divergent faculty member. First, she engaged

in heavy service despite the Provost encouraging her focus primarily on research and

teaching. As a first-generation professor, she did what she was used to by saying yes to

helping people. If a community asked for help, she said yes. So early in her tenure, she

became an associate editor of a journal focused on Southeast Asians and the co-director of a

center on Asian Americans.

Furthermore, Elsie shared that her institution hoped to move from R2 to R1 status. As

a result, the institution sent an underlying message that faculty had to bring in funding to

realize the R1 goal. This message was promoted at an annual tenure and promotion meeting

for all tenure-track faculty. However, Elsie shared that education, as a field, had limited

access to research dollars. Her perception was that only disciplines in the sciences could

access NSF and NIH dollars, where it was possible to secure a million-dollar research grant.

She noted that most government-funded research grant for large amounts of money were

based more on quantitative metrics, rather than community-engaged qualitative research.

Nevertheless, Elsie helped secure $3 million in federal grants (a $1.5 million grant for

AANIPISI programming and another $1.5 million to create an engineering mentorship

program). However, she confessed that she was not sure if these dollars would be perceived

as sufficient for the institution as the projects were more based in student affairs than

research. Elsie also believed that the institution valued her research and grants, but not her service. She explained, however, that as one of only a handful of faculty members from her community, she provided significant mentorship to Southeast Asian students and served on numerous dissertation committees from across the country.

Elsie also felt that her institution valued her teaching since she taught all the diversity courses. She also received a teaching award and an undergraduate mentorship award. Although she did not teach undergraduates, students tended to find her and then stay with her throughout the academic year. She also received a faculty service award that listed her different accomplishments in the community. However, the individual who nominated her was the co-director of the center she oversaw and knew her work.

Elsie shared that her ideal next project would include publishing with community members. Elsie hoped to expand her work beyond methods like YPAR by publishing with undergraduates and students in the teacher education program. Elsie explained that she did not want to do single authorship anymore because she was always about the community. She wanted more co-authorship that included community voices. She wanted her students and community members trained to help them become involved from conducting interviews to completing the analysis. Elsie also discussed that her post-tenure work proved to the world that her community included academic scholars who can write about themselves. She hoped to eventually publish with parents, a Southeast Asian community organization, and with teachers. Ultimately, she wanted these community members to view themselves as academic scholars and scholar practitioners who do not need a doctorate to be published.

Charles: An Activist Scholar for the Public

Charles was a Japanese American man, a full professor whose activist scholarship had impacted public policy for Asian Americans for the last thirty years. His scholarship primarily centered on Asian American political engagement. His academic work was used to advance the field of Asian American Studies, build the capacity of non-profit organizations, and argue for policy change. Charles identified as a realist, which he defined as a term used for scholars who understand the use of power but are critical of the various uses of power. He expounded that the common thread among institutions, large and small, was their desire to control the minds and actions of others. Thus, his scholarship included discussions of how power manifested itself in the realities of Asian American communities.

Originally hired to fill a position focused on U.S. foreign policy, Charles became a leading voice in the field of Asian Americans and political activism. Charles shared that his scholarship aimed to counter the model minority myth that was developed partly due to the perception that Asian Americans were largely a silent minority politically. Charles recounted how a significant case paved a path for his scholarship. He explained that a famous kidnapping case in the 1970s, involving a Japanese American woman, became a key breakthrough in Asian American activism. It was made known that this woman was not receiving legal advice partly because she came from an economically poor background. The Japanese American community rallied around her by resurfacing how economic disparities and lack of legal representation were also injustices done to Japanese Americans during the U.S. internment camps. This was but one example of how Charles saw how ethnic studies became a space in which communities of color push the university to open academic spaces beyond academic subjects like English or history.

Charles explained that the professoriate was about finding ways to combine research, teaching, and service. He shared that he took service seriously throughout his career as it was a way to reach out to the community. Charles shared his extensive history with service outside of the university that was informed by his scholarship on race and ethnicity. In reviewing Charles' curriculum vitae, I noticed that he had held critical positions within federal agencies focused on race and ethnicities, headed non-profit organizations that provide scholarships to students impacted by war as well as a position on a legal assistance board of directors. Charles explained that his wide-ranging service derived from a desire to see that people get taken care of properly, with a focus on integrating research, teaching, and service:

The notion that all three of them work together and service is a critical part of that reaching out to the community either professionally, on campus or external is very much a part of what we do. And I have taken it seriously. So, my scholarship and my service and my teaching all are part of this larger, if you will, activist sort of frame that I've tried to develop.

Charles's activist scholarship continued to be grounded in his interest in political science, which was about policy and activism to understand how people govern themselves within a society. However, Charles noted that activism also asked that an individual be specific with their end goals. He recounted his conversation on specificity with a local non-profit organization who used the research center's findings in their report on Asian American impact on local politics:

[We] talked about the great opportunities now for office holding and Asian Americans that participate in the political process. But at the end of it, I said, look, it's not enough to have a seat at the table. It's not the political process or to vote to me. It's

a question why are you active? And what's your agenda? And I made clear that I

think the agenda is as important as anything else. And to me, I think it's the most

important thing. If we have a lot of people who participate and vote on what I think

are the wrong policies and so forth. And I would rather, frankly, that they not

participate in the process. I mean, you participate in the process or create structure to

do things and to do things is to move principles to policies. As I said, principles,

without policies are merely platitude. You gotta have principles that you want to act

on in terms of real things that impact real people's lives.

In essence, Charles argued that activism is about the act of doing while we have a seat at the

table where power is brokered and there must be clear values and beliefs that undergird such

actions.

Tenure and Promotion: Shifting From Individual Scholar to a Collective Argument for

Social Justice

Charles' path to a tenure-track faculty position was controversial as there were

irregularities in the hiring process. He explained that he originally applied for a position

focused on U.S. foreign policy. The finalist pool included a strong internal candidate with

distinct connections to the Dean, which influenced the process in ways that required him to

give two job talks before he was hired. His first job talk was focused on his research related

to foreign policy and was poorly attended as there were assumptions that the internal

candidate would be the successful applicant. However, he was invited back to give a second

job talk, which he focused on Sansei activism. He explained that activism in Sansei or third-

generation Japanese American communities had very little research for him to report on in

his job talk. Nonetheless, he was successful and received a one-year contract only to be

called again to re-interview the following year due to claims of discrimination made by the internal candidate. The pathway to tenure was secured with a permanent contract the following year.

Despite the tumultuous beginnings at his institution, Charles reported that his university was an important place for his work. Charles explained that the institution had a mission to stand with the city and all the diversity that the city entailed. He explained that his institution was snuggled in an area sprinkled with wealthier institutions. However, he often pointed out to local leaders that his institution required investment because it was a local institution that was building the local activist pipeline. Charles reflected:

[Home institution] seemed like it's sort of small potatoes in that environment. And its students are not the kind that [a wealthy institution] attracts generally. They're not the elite of the universities across the country or even locally. [Home institution] often has students of color who are the first in their families to go to college. Many of them are struggling to get into [home institution] and are succeeding to get basic skills and so forth. But to me that that's the particular population I want to work with and to serve and to build my activism, either in the classroom or the communities from which they come, and I think in the [local] area. I say this often, we talk about Asian Americans, and we talk about building the pipeline of activists and leaders and people are active in the nonprofit sector. And we talk about building this capacity amongst universities in the area.

Charles believed that having tenure allowed him to pursue his interest in Asian American studies. He shared that the pre-tenure years were the individual part of one's identity as a scholar and were focused on developing an individual record, not a collectivist

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argument. Charles lamented that this was an archaic way of thinking but was nonetheless a necessary part of how academia works. He spent his post-tenure and pre-full professor years developing ethnic studies curriculum and creating a policy institute. However, Charles noted that there were challenges from colleagues during the period leading up to being promoted to full professor. He explained that a retired professor who had served as chair of the committee expressed to Charles outside of a formal meeting that his ethnic studies scholarship was problematic for his full professor bid. Charles received feedback from colleagues that his political science record was not as strong post-tenure with ethnic studies having been his primary focus. However, colleagues from outside of his department were added to his committee that included Asian American Studies, who ultimately convinced the committee that community-based research was essential to political science scholarship.

Charles also noted that his institution had provided many opportunities to make a real impact both locally and nationally. His scholarship built a free-standing research center focused on Asian Americans and conducted important policy work in collaboration with several other race-centered research centers. In fact, he reflected that his activist journey in some ways realized a curiosity from youth. He explained:

> I'll never forget when I was a young kid, I read a life magazine article called the action intellectuals. And this was something in the early 1960s. And it focused on people who were intellectuals, meaning they were very famous people at colleges and universities who actually went out and emerged from the ivory tower to see that they should have an impact on—policy or life and politics and so forth. And I thought to myself, wow, that'd be kind of a cool thing to be. Although I never thought of myself as being one of them. And I still don't, by the way, these are people who are some of

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the great leaders, but I thought, wow, that's kind of neat to be somebody who's

involved in learning and creating knowledge and so forth, which is really what a

professor's life is much about but to be doing it in an active environment, to use that

knowledge and so forth for a purpose to try to make life better for people who need it

and to provide support for them and to use it in an activist way. If that's what a

definition of action intellectual is, then I was really inspired. I hope from that very

early indication when I read that life magazine article that I remember to this day that,

hopefully in some ways I could be inspired to do that. In some ways I have, in a small

way, tried to do that.

Charles shared that despite having to constantly navigate struggles with external forces such

as resources shortage, change in leadership, and student enrollment, it was a worthy struggle

to conduct activist scholarship at his institution.

Abby: An Outsider-Within Scholar Broadening Institutional Legitimacy

Abby was a Chicana associate professor who worked with institutional leaders to

broaden the legitimization of academics to include all faculty. She defined legitimacy as the

ways in which one's value to the institution is determined. She explained that her scholarship

focused on how legitimacy, power, and worth are entangled in organizational practices and

policies. Her scholarship aimed to understand how an individual's institutional affiliation

affects their academic trajectory. In practicality, her work included examining faculty hiring

practices, evaluation methods, and promotion outcomes.

Abby's interest in power, institutions, and legitimacy ran through her master's thesis,

where she studied gender and political behavior, to her faculty scholarship. Her master's

thesis focused on legitimacy by examining how young Latinas engaged in the political

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process, in particular, formal engagements such as party politics versus grassroots community-based activism. She was especially interested in how an institution was able or willing to recognize or not recognize a group's actions, knowledge, and interests as either valid or not valid. As such, it was her intention that her master's thesis would lead to a PhD program in political science. However, she shared that life took a different turn and she ultimately pursued a doctorate in education instead.

Her doctoral program had a profound effect on the direction of her scholarship. She explained that it was a professor who set her on the path of examining faculty life. This professor assigned topics to students rather than having students pick a topic. He assigned Abby the topic of academic freedom and tenure. She initially felt lost, but the assignment led to reports from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which revealed how academia was at the center of the politics of knowledge, legitimacy, and power. At that moment, Abby gained insight into why she never had a Black woman professor and how racism, sexism, and genderism operated within the process of tenure.

Abby shared that her higher education professor in her doctoral program became an important mentor. Although he left her doctoral program before she graduated, he reached out to her after she completed her dissertation and recruited her for a faculty position at his institution. Soon after she was hired, he recommended that she attend the annual meetings of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) to connect with higher education scholars. He explained that there would be others at the conference who shared her research focus. Abby confessed that her mentor also encouraged her to attend to make connections because he knew she was introverted. She explained:

He knows me. And he really did because I'm actually very introverted. I usually stay

alone a lot, kind of a little bit of a loner. And he really needed me to go and to talk to

people.

Abby shared that she had continued to attend conferences and, within them, as many sessions

as possible. However, she learned that the real meetings happen outside the conference room.

As she noted, it is through having coffee or sharing a meal with other scholars and talking

about your study where you find a network to help nuance your research.

Abby shared that most people would probably say that she was not an activist scholar.

However, she believed that activism looks different for a lot of people within different

spaces. Without acknowledging the activist identity, Abby elaborated on characteristics of a

non-activist scholar. She explained that a non-activist scholar is not concerned with how to

move their thinking, writing, or knowledge into a practical and policy-oriented public space.

Instead, these scholars write and never think about how their words land with other

communities. She was adamant that she was not of this group of scholars. By contrast, Abby

said:

I'm critical but also pragmatic. And I'm very concerned with how the work that I do

can be helpful to academic leaders, even largely organizational leaders, because a lot

of the topics that I take up are academic in nature, but they translate to other settings.

Abby explained that she was constantly oriented by the need to challenge relations of

power or majoritarian culture. She drew heavily from critical scholar bell hooks for her

teaching by including emotionality in teaching and learning. She also worked to ensure that

the classroom was filled with love and laughter. In addition, she recognized that the

classroom is not a neutral space and was intentional in her readings. For example, she

explained that although most writings in the Western academy come from white men who have written about organization, business leadership, and administration, it is important to critique how these ideas fall short and have missing pieces to their arguments. Therefore, she included the "classics" in her syllabus and taught her students to challenge or build on those concepts. She explained:

> I'm more about my classroom becoming a space where we acknowledge that the cannon and disciplines are created by white wealthy men with the colonial racist ideology in many ways. But also, how do we map out from there? How do we connect? How do we challenge? How do we productively connect and challenge those ideas at the same time?

Abby stated that the collective in which she primarily worked may have caused people to question her activism. She explained that her work was largely with people in academic leadership roles, which were still largely filled by white people, not people of color. However, Abby shared that the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened her network with women of color scholars from across the country. She also shared that she recently took on more traditional activist practices through a faculty advocate role. This role was not an administrative position but rather that of an advocate who interfaces with faculty, the provost office, and leadership. Her duties involved working with faculty to identify problems, scan the environment for inequities and gaps in policy, and provide training to all hiring committees. She explained that this role was an additional platform to walk provostial stakeholders and other institutional leaders through her research to surface questions or changes in practices. Her scholarship prepared Abby to have conversations with faculty

committees around how norms, evaluation practices, or assumptions shape research ideas and researcher identity.

Abby reflected on her own scholar identity and shared that she loved conducting research and felt lucky to be in a place where research was a priority. However, she expressed frustration with the hierarchy of research at the institution. She explained that the institution wanted her to publish, secure grants, give big talks on her research and serve on boards. She was productive and successful by these metrics. She also explained that her area of study was considered an applied field, so she was able to challenge and engage policymakers and practitioners. However, she had colleagues who conducted small action research projects within communities of color who were less likely to be able to secure federal grants. Therefore, she wanted her scholarship to support the work of others by examining the policies and procedures that allowed them to engage in their work. For example, she designed a study to trace the process for layoffs as related to COVID in hopes to understand how people sought to recover from the pandemic. Her scholarship was used to inform collective labor and management practices and policies. These are examples of how her love for research aligned with the institution's goals and allowed her to help people think about their practices or policies.

Tenure and Promotion: Leveraging Tacit Knowledge as a Faculty Member

Abby shared that she had always received positive feedback that praised her productivity. As she noted, however, such feedback can be a slippery slope as the feedback rarely related to subject matter. She noted that the only informal critique she had received came from an older white man colleague who questioned whether her work would made sense to general practitioners. Abby suspected that the critique was partly due to her framing

knowledge production and legitimacy in ways that were not familiar to her colleague. In the end, the critique was not included in her official tenure file.

Abby also noted that post-tenure has been about finding time and energy to continue the work. She remained productive with publications, graduating students, and teaching. The only negative feedback she had received was a warning through a formal letter expressing that she had a large advising load. She viewed the feedback as a reminder that she needed to learn how to say no. Abby lamented that it was much harder because her load had increased. She explained:

> The level of service and leadership has just rocketed. I'm just slower with my scholarship now. I have a very large student load. That's continued to grow larger. I have a very heavy service load. For example, post-tenure immediately after tenure, I ran a search here. I took on a program coordinator role. I then became equity...you know, the advocate role here in the college. I co-chair the women of color initiatives on campus.

Abby explained that although her department had factions that spoke on academic labor issues in many different venues, people were generally very happy about her scholarship. She felt that although the more senior colleagues may not have fully understood her work, there were the earlier career faculty, mostly folks of color and a few white allies, who appreciated her work. She explained:

> I think that they have a lot of respect for my work. I know that my colleagues really respect me. I know that they know that I work very hard. I know that they know that our students will be getting very good training around organizational theory and perspectives. You know, I know that they think that they'll get very good training

around qualitative research design when I get to interact with them. So, I know it
means a lot to them in that way.

Abby shared that she was working with four cross-race and ethnic coalitions.
However, she was still working to find a way to express this work in her CV and connect it to
her scholarship. She noted that her work with these groups felt like mentoring emerging
scholars and serving on workshop and program committees. For example, she convened a
summer writing group for a four-day writing retreat. This group came together to cook for
one another, write, and learn from each other. These meet-ups became an important source of
support for the group.

Abby felt that there were unique expectations placed on scholars of color, noting that,
if you are named an activist scholar and you are also a scholar of color, there is sort of the
assumption that you should be working with or in your community all the time. Yet, her
work was never so clearly community focused as the impacts she aimed to make were inside
of colleges and universities among power holders who were not always people of color and
very rarely Latinx. Often, her work involved engaging stakeholders or audiences who were
white. She confessed that, for some people, it could mean that her work was not critical.
Abby argued that this perception was an example of how whiteness operated in academia.
She explained with a sense of frustration that whiteness gets to have all the freedoms to do
anything intellectually, yet the scope of intellectual inquiry for people of color is usually
narrowed. Abby lamented that even one's own community would be suspect of the
individual, recalling how someone at a conference asked her why she was not using critical
race theory and Latin Crit Theory. Abby explained that whiteness has resulted in a paradox in

which evaluations tell scholars of color to look at your own community while academia questions the subjectivity/objectivity of such scholarship.

Abby shared that her intentions had always been to develop creative and intellectually rigorous scholarship and find ways to take it to people both within and outside of the academy. She had been able to do so by surrounding herself with a lot of like-minded women of color scholars who shared the same urgency. This community of scholars became her network and collective to advance her social justice work in impactful ways.

Logan: A Critical Scholar Shifting Toward Activism

Logan was an Indigenous man, an associate professor who was shifting his scholarship toward activist-leaning practices. His original scholarship had to do with Native American Studies, Latin American Studies, and queer studies and examined kinship and the changing structures of gender, sexuality, and race. His academic work was used to inform presentations to Indigenous communities on kinship and gender, to design curriculum on Indigenous knowledge production, and to develop policy guidance. Logan shared that his hope was for his scholarship to help people to better understand how they belonged and how their experiences and feelings related to broader structures of (in)justice or repair.

Logan shared that his work also examined adoption and Indigenous people who were removed from their families. He stated that his scholarship allowed him to write autobiographically in many cases and served as a claiming of an Indigenous narrative. He explained that his father was one of many Indigenous children who were put into adoption. Logan detailed how his father, who had been adopted by a white family, grew up not knowing anything about his biological family. They did not learn of his father's Indigenous heritage until Logan was in graduate school. Logan explained that they ultimately were able

to reconnect with his father's biological mother and became citizens of their nation. Logan lamented that growing up as an Indigenous person in the South made him intimately aware of the impact of cultural and ethnic ambiguities. However, he argued that his lived experience had informed his relationship to his scholarship, concepts of community, and how to mentor students of mixed racial heritage in ways that other faculty may not.

Logans explained that his scholarship was conducted in friction with the traditional canon in his discipline. In terms of approaches, he shared that he had shifted away from binary thinking or a counter canon and instead focused on dissident and radical critique as the center of knowledge production. He explained that his work on an independent Aboriginal curatorial project inspired him to use a backwards chronological approach to highlight Indigenous understandings of time and reflexivity. Logan provided an example from his classroom:

> I taught the class kind of backwards historically, so asking students to situate themselves in relationship to knowledge at the beginning of the course and ending with cosmological stories of creation. So, moving from where you are now to the origin story is a kind of inversion of the traditional method, but it's also one that is more in line with Indigenous understandings of time as circular or iterative. So, in that sense, I tried to structure the course methodologically itself as an example of Indigenous knowledge production rather than a kind of Western understanding of time as a linear sequence.

Logan shared that two external projects had influenced his scholarship. He recounted his experience working with a film school during graduate school. This film school was operated by a collective who worked with young people in Latin America to make short

films and documentaries. Logan explained that this project very much influenced how he thought about community engagement and collective understandings of working with under-resourced communities. The film school project was an education for Logan in program development and teaching. For example, the project offered opportunities to teach young people in Latin America how to make films by creating a study abroad program to fund the project. In terms of teaching, this project created opportunities to learn second language acquisition in a practical way. Students worked at mediating cultural and linguistic differences while at the same time working toward a shared goal.

However, Logan shared that he felt discouraged from participating in this film project. He recalled his advisors warning him to not spend too much time working on the project. They explained to Logan that finishing the dissertation was the priority. However, Logan remembered feeling like he was not a whole person unless he was also engaging in this collective activist work. He explained that his research was and continued to be about historical formations which did not have much engagement with real live people.

Despite feeling deeply committed to collective activist work, Logan was hesitant to claim an activist identity. He explained that he was not the type of activist as someone who was on a frontline defending land or water. Instead, he shared with pensiveness that his contribution to the activist struggle had been to use his skillset as a writer to tell stories and engage in public conversations of why and how activism was needed. He reflected on his activism:

> [T]o use a phrase that kids use these days, I think I'm activist-adjacent in a lot of
> ways. I think about what are my abilities and what are the tools that I have? And what
> are the contributions that I can make? And it's writing things. It's writing op-eds and

it's helping people organize things. And it's engaging in public conversations about these issues. It's articulating. One of the things that I do think is part of my skill set is writing. That's one of the things that I do well.

Logan described an example of an international policy project where he provided guidance on how abstract notions, like intersectionality, can be implemented into policy and enacted to receive funding from multinational organizations. About two years before our interview, an international organization reached out to him and asked if he would be willing to write a discussion paper on Indigenous peoples, gender identity, and sexuality. Logan admitted feeling strongly resistant to the project as the organization had a history of marginalizing Indigenous communities. Eventually, Logan concluded that this paper would be an opportunity to influence the organization's work involving Indigenous peoples and sexual and gender minorities. Logan explained that this paper was a way to shift a theoretical discussion about intersectionality and to put it into extremely practical terms. He admitted having learned a lot from this process about how to implement policy. Logan reflected that the discussion paper was important and valuable, but he had not shared the work with others in fear of receiving judgment from Indigenous communities.

Tenure and Promotion: Beyond Publications Toward a Hope of Being in Good Relations

Logan's path to tenure went well. He explained that he submitted articles to top journals and was able to get them published. He stated that, for the most part, he had positive experiences with peer reviews and that people often thought that his work was interesting. He only had one article rejected twice with two different journals, but the article was ultimately published. Logan also received a raise after earning tenure and remained extremely

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productive, so he received a merit raise as well. Yet, Logan felt frustration over the inconsistent state budget and did not expect consistent merit-based salary increases.

Logan admitted to feeling overextended post-tenure. He was overwhelmed with voluminous invitations to submit articles, write a chapter, or contribute to a special issue of a journal. He acknowledged that he needed to practice saying no but did not like disappointing people. However, he confessed that he had also gotten more comfortable with working primarily with a friend on a project or someone who he was in alignment with politically and ethically.

Despite feeling extremely supported by his department, however, institutional support for Logan's work was inconsistent. Logan was the only Indigenous faculty member at his institution. He explained that he felt completely invisible within the institution and that academic work around decolonization was neither legible nor visible to the institution. Logan was so frustrated with the lack of Indigenous faculty that he had applied for positions outside the institution. He wanted to feel supported by the institution with genuine actions of commitment that uplift Native American Studies. Logan described institutional support as establishing a Native American Studies minor or program, building connections between staff professionals who are programming for Native American awareness with faculty who are doing community-centered work, and involving Native perspectives on university committee work.

Logan concluded that the university did reward him for his work. He had received rewards through tenure, merit raises, and university awards. However, the rewards Logan desired were for the university to operate in a way that was in accordance with, in his case, Indigenous understandings of life and reciprocity. In his words:

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[I]f all [awards and raises] were to go away, I would still be fine. What I want is for the university to be doing things in a way that is in accordance with, in my case, indigenous understandings of life and of reciprocity and of being in good relations. That is what I would like for the institution itself. They don't have any understanding as of now of what that means. And I haven't been asked by them, what that means, but that's what I would want. That's how I would feel valued, is to do things in a way that is in accordance with your own cultural identity that would make me feel valued to allow me to be an Indian within this institution.

Ultimately, Logan wanted to feel valued for his own cultural identity within the institution.

Summary

The narratives presented in this chapter demonstrate that practicing activist scholarship does not fall neatly into a label or observable checklist. Rather, successful application of activist scholarship varies based on institutional context and personal and professional background. Yet, all four participants reported having a keen awareness of racial disparities and the need to address injustice that guided their approaches. The next chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of major themes the emerged from all 15 participants that shed light on ways to engage in activist scholarship.

CHAPTER 5

ACTIVIST SCHOLARSHIP: CHARACTERISTICS, REWARDS, AND PUNISHMENTS

In this chapter, I discuss the findings drawn from my interviews with 15 participants who responded to my recruitment. All participants were included in the study because they were recommended by other participants and/or met my standards as scholars of color who produced scholarship focused on communities of color with social justice goals. My analysis also included reviewing multiple forms of information such as participants' curriculum vitae, professional websites, syllabi, social media, and public presentations. I highlight some of the varied ways participants engaged in activist scholarship, including research, service, and teaching that included partnerships with marginalized groups to advance an explicit social change agenda (Davis et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2014).

It is important to note that these findings should be thought of as representations of elements of activist scholarship that I found among the participants, rather than as requisites for activist scholarship. The narratives presented in this chapter are personal reflections of how participants made sense of their scholarship. Simply, I aim to present the depth and range of participant experiences by analyzing key events, processes, and epiphanies reported by the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Overview of Findings

The overall findings are discussed in three sections: (1) the ten characteristics of activist scholarship based on participants' orientation toward activist scholarship, (2) the rewards of engaging in activist scholarship, and (3) the costs of engaging in activist scholarship. Participants were given pseudonyms to account for privacy and ethical issues. They were also identified primarily by racial identities and not ethnic identities as these scholars are often one of the few who examine their research topics.

My analysis was guided by my conceptual framework. First, the concept of *critical agency* was applied to understand how race-related service opportunities were used by participants to resist and reshape oppressive structures in higher education (Baez, 2000). Second, the concept of *outsiders within* served as a lens to understand how participants' dual status of inclusion and exclusion within the academy informed their experiences as scholars of color (Collins, 1986). Finally, I applied three *CRT* tenets in this study: (1) recognizing that race and racism are endemic in educational institutions, which leads to delegitimizing knowledge from communities of color, (2) providing counterstories that oppose the notion of race neutrality in higher education, (3) and applying interest convergence as a concept to examine the tension that exists when the interests of the participants converge with institutional goals and interests (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Ten Characteristics of Activist Scholarship

This section outlines the ten characteristics of activist scholarship based on participant responses when asked about their orientation to activist scholarship. Participants responded with varying degrees of comfort in connecting and identifying their work or themselves with activist scholarship. Importantly, only half of the participants shared that

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they viewed themselves or their scholarship as activist. The narrative presentation of these findings illuminates how some participants explicitly engaged in activist scholarship and how other participants were manifesting activist scholarship regardless of their connection to the activist scholarship identity and label. The ten characteristics of activist scholarship include the following: (1) Scholarship Included Explicit Social Justice Goals, (2) Definitions of Community Vary, (3) Redistribute Institutional Resources Toward Internal and External Communities, (4) Offer Alternative Ways of Knowing, (5) Action Over Activist Identity, (6) Collective Work, (7) Community Impact, (8) Expansive Conceptualization of Scholarship, (9) Research as Relational Work, and (10) Teaching-Focused. It is important to note that the quotations presented in this section sometimes reflect more than one characteristic of activist scholarship. This is due to both the richness of the data and the interconnectedness of the activist scholarship characteristics that participants in my study depicted.

One: Scholarship Included Explicit Social Justice Goals

When asked about the nature of their scholarship, each participant shared that their scholarship examined the outcomes of a system in which communities of color experienced barriers to access and opportunities. Most explained how their scholarship included an intersectionality lens by recognizing that these communities hold multiple social identities which compound the effects of systemic racism. During the one-on-one interviews with me, participants reported examining and providing strategies to address the following topics: six participants reported examining the role of race in education, three participants engaged in research related to issues around race and gender, three reported engaging in scholarship on the role of racism in public policy reform, and the final three participants shared that their

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scholarship focused on how decolonization as a framework can shift dominant narratives about communities of color.

Piper, an Asian American woman, shared the following about how her scholarship examined the nexus of race and educational systems, explaining the goal of her scholarship:

I think the goal will always be to provide racially equitable, racially just teaching practices for students of color. And as much as you want to get to that, we can't teach it in this culturally sustaining way. [Pre-service teachers] first need to understand their own whiteness to be able to do an honest approach to racially just education.

Other participants took a sharp focus on public policy reform work. For example, Connor, an African American man, reported how he shifted to community-centered scholarship by transitioning from pure economic analysis to approaches that were focused on impact:

I thought there was an audience that really wanted answers to the questions and there weren't…that we have people telling me that it's what the problem is, but we do need some answers, some solutions and finding solutions was a little more complicated for economics than defining what was the problem.

Charlotte, a Latina, echoed the goal to offer solutions for working toward racial equity in her scholarship:

I think, over the years, a lot of projects that I have been involved in have had an important kind of dimension to it that had to do with addressing the sort of impacts of unequal treatments and unequal access to resources in society like differences in health outcomes among communities of color.

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Participants also described how their scholarship strived to shift narratives by examining patterns of racial inequality using decolonization and liberation frameworks. Mya, an Asian American woman, shared how her work centered a decolonization framework by constantly questioning structures in society and (re)creating narratives. Mya described her scholarship:

> [M]y scholarship tries to address that social justice can be anything and everything which kind of empties it of any solid meaning. So that's why I talk a lot more about decolonization. I talk about social transformation because social justice is, has become a brand. And, so when something becomes a brand in a racial capitalist society, we kind of need to leave it alone for a while, 'cause it loses its catalytic power.

And Jennifer, an Asian American woman, focused on consciousness development by offering a relational lens to social justice. She explained:

> My research became less about, kind of like, identity and more about, you know, identity in relation to racism…or racism in relation to mental health or Asian American studies in relation to racism. And then often, you know, what will Asian Americans and then people of color do, either reduce the effects of racism or develop a consciousness that allows us to resist those negative effects or the internalization of the ideology.

And in another example, Piper articulated how she advanced a strongly racial justice-focused agenda through her teaching:

> The ultimate goal will always be to provide racially equitable, racially just teaching practices for students of color, and as much as you want to get to the, oh, we can

teach it in this culturally sustaining way, this way. [White students] first need to understand their own whiteness, to be able to do an honest, an honest approach to racially just education.

Two: Definitions of Community Vary

Participants provided a loose definition for the community aspect of their scholarship. Ten participants framed community as primarily external to the institution. These participants described communities of color in ways that are recognizable in scholarship forms such as community-based/engaged, community-facing, and participatory action research (PAR). Luke, an African American man, shared how he framed the value of community knowledge for his students:

I'm very, very upfront with my students on the very first day of class. This is who I am. This is the way I operate. You are in the business of producing knowledge. [W]hen you go into your classroom and your community, especially communities of color that are rich in stories and rich in experiences, [it's] about helping your students produce that knowledge.

Maggie, a Southeast Asian woman, responded to my question about community with responses that included government agencies and community organizations. She further provided the following response to highlight her community-based scholarship:

My work could be divided into three areas. One is looking at immigrant populations, including refugees and trying to understand how immigrants adapt and assimilate into their whole societies, including health assimilation. So that's kind of one domain of my work. The other, second sphere is looking at the role of racism and discrimination in affecting racialized or BIPOC people's, health, and wellbeing. And then my third

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area of research is more community-based and participatory and working with different Indigenous communities around issues of perinatal health.

Four participants framed community as including both external and internal groups, in relation to their campuses. These participants described community as including members of minoritized groups who are embedded in the institution. The institution itself is a community in need of social justice change. For example, they shared how other faculty members were a part of the community in which their scholarship made an impact. For example, Mya shared the following reflection:

[A]ctually I was just having some exchanges with some scholars who are junior to me in terms of the number of years that they've worked fulltime in the academy. And they've let me know that they've been impacted by my scholarship and how I show up for them, which I understand to be that I show up for them as a relative. I show up for them as somebody who, if, if they're wondering about a mistake that they may have made or being told that they've made a mistake, I'm a person that they can talk to about that.

And Elsie provided the following explanation on how she interpreted community as both Southeast Asian students who are now internal to the institution and external Southeast Asian groups:

So, the arc of my work has always been the focus on Southeast Asians, whether it's the young people or their families in the communities and how they navigate or manage education systems. Right? So, it just expanded from K-12 to now the 13-21 space. It's always engaged with community members. Right? And one methodology

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that is different with [the post-tenure focus on] higher ed is I actually hired an undergraduate, so she published with us as an undergrad.

In addition, Jennifer said the following about how she framed community as embodied because her students bring their communities with them to the institution. She explained:

[There] are all of these, like community-engaged initiatives, right? And they always start with, what community are you working with? Or what community organization are you working with? Right? And with that beginning, I'm always like, oh, I shouldn't be filling this out, right? Because I'm not working with the community, you know, and I understand the limitations of what I do. And I understand the importance of work that is embedded in and with the community that is outside. Like community organizations or people that are not in the academy. Um, but I also, you know…I feel like that is very binary. It's like, there's us and there's them, right? And well, you know, so does that mean that if I am researching Asian-American students that I'm not doing community work well? And particularly at [the urban institution], it's like our students are the community.

An additional conceptualization of community was offered by Abby, a Latina, whose scholarship primarily focused on organizational studies. Specifically, for Abby, community was defined as women of color colleagues from inside academia, within her field of study. She explained:

Last year when COVID was at one of its highs, one of the things that I did along with some other women of color is I just, I reached out to a set of women of color colleagues, okay? Across the field. People who know how to write grants, people that

know how to talk about tenure. People that know how to do work-life balance, all the, all the kinds of stuff. Right. And I asked them if they'd be willing to give up two or three hours of a summer day to be on zoom. And they said, yes. And then we pulled together a small group of women of color faculty, early-career faculty. It was off the radar. We didn't do any advertising, but we just pulled together a group of women of color to just say like, what do you need? What are your questions? Here's how we, here's how we did it. How can we be helpful to you? I like to do a lot of those kinds of things.

Finally, in a broader example, focusing on her work as a journal editor, Piper shared the following reflection of how she conceptualized community in relation to scholarship and service by taking on a role of a community maker for scholars contributing to the field:

[The] way I move through [academia] is to make sure it's authentic with myself. I try to show love. Um, whenever I give feedback as an editor, now I actually send a video. You know, cause I had an assistant professor or doc students, who are like, oh my God, she hates my work. No, no, that's not it. If I give you a lot of comments and I'm giving you a video, I'm showing you exactly how to make this piece even stronger so it's ready for publication. And I try to make it as humanizing as possible.

Three: Redistribute Institutional Resources Toward Internal and External Communities

Participants reported that their scholarship was largely driven by the desire to be helpful to various communities and not just for the purpose of scholarly publications. They believed that using their academic skills and training to develop solutions to address challenges faced by minoritized communities is a form of redistributing institutional social

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and monetary resources to communities that are often underserved and underfunded. Specifically, the resources would help elevate operational challenges faced by grassroots organizations or underfunded diversity courses at an institution of higher education. Oftentimes, they referred to using their skills and knowledge as playing a central role in such redistribution of resources.

Elsie, a Southeast Asian woman, discussed how her scholarship redistributed resources to underfunded communities through capacity building:

[I]t's about building the capacity. So, the first year I conduct the workshop and then we have the translator. Second year, I co-lead with the community agency. By the third year, I remove myself from that circle. The community agency and the parents are now conducting these family workshops. That's how I do the kind of narrative— because it's not just about getting the data and publishing. It's about using that data for the needs of the community, whether it's to get funding, to build the capacity or to also serve the community in different ways.

Emily, a Latina, offered another example of building capacity through teaching academic research skills to community-based organizations:

[A lot] of these community-based organizations, when COVID happened, they really expanded their missions to, you know, serve food, to help with evictions, to provide transportation, even create their own vaccination clinics, right? Bring people to testing. [They] were all-hands-on-deck with COVID, but they were also collecting a lot of information and data. But they haven't analyzed it. Like, they've organized the information to see where there may be adjustments in the work activities they need to do or how they have to become more prepared for another pandemic in the future.

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And so, teaching the community-based organizations how to analyze their data, how to organize it in databases, you know, look at trends and unpack, and how to go through what's called quality improvement, is like a Freirean approach.

In relation to the redistribution of resources to internal communities, Jennifer, an Asian American woman, shared how she used her social capital collected through a strong publication record to re-allocate resources toward an unfunded course on social justice at her university:

[A]fter the 2016 election, I start[ed] these teach-ins that we did annually for three or four years. [T]he other thing was doing this course empowerment activism for social justice, which is a mixed undergrad-grad course. So, the teach-in was pretty much a grassroots effort. But you have to have some money. And I went to the dean, and I said, 'cause I had a relationship with the Dean. And I said, because I had done all of these things, we want to do this. Can you give us some money? And so, he gave us a little bit of money, you know, not a huge amount of money, but probably the bigger thing is I went to the Dean and said, I want to teach this course, empowerment, and activism for social justice. It's not on the books. I want to teach it next semester. I want to get credit for teaching it next semester. And I don't have time to put it through governance and I want it to be an interdisciplinary undergrad/grad course. And he said, okay, we can make that happen immediately. And we did.

Four: Offer Alternative Ways of Knowing

Participants shared that their scholarship provided different ways of knowing and described these practices with the following two themes, in which scholarship: 1) broadens

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participation in the knowledge creation process and 2) reveals that alternative knowledge structures are possible within institutions.

Scholarship That Broadens Participation in the Knowledge Creation Process

Rachel, a Latina, explained how she included the voices of youth who are homeless into her scholarship:

I've always kind of worked with youth. It seems to me that that's the work that I've done all my life. And, part of it is really kind of like taking youth knowledge seriously, asking them like, really, I wanna know what's on your mind, you know? How are you today? Nobody ever asks young people about their opinions of the world or what's happening around them, and also to help them kind of theorize about the conditions of their own lives, but they also are theorists about these things. And, actually, they're very good at it.

And Nicole, a Latina who taught graduate-level education courses and focused much of her research on students of color, shared the following on her work in relation to broadening knowledge creation:

I teach participatory and community-centered, collaborative research that in itself is a very de-hierarchizing approach to doing research. So, the individual researcher does not exist. One sole person who gets all the accolades and visibility and the reputation of doing research is impossible with such an approach, with such a belief of knowledge creation, because everything is de-hierarchized.

Alternative Knowledge Structures Are Possible Within Institutions

Participants also discussed how their scholarship served as counternarratives to the neutral classroom by offering and valuing alternative ways of knowing. Some participants

discussed how embracing ambiguity and engaging in liberatory praxis like knowledge mobilization were embedded in their scholarship, while other participants maintained that their scholarship resulted in specific structural changes to knowledge creation. In regard to ambiguity, Abby explained how ambiguity created space for opinions, connections, and critiques:

> I felt like one of the important traits of being a scholar and being a scholar who tries continuously to commit towards social justice is being okay with ambiguity and flexibility. I'm very worried about when we become so righteous that we think we're right. That, to me feels, obviously there's things that are wrong, but a lot of us are all trying to figure out how to make it through, you know what I'm saying?

Meanwhile, Piper spoke about how her work offered a way to mobilize activists through knowledge:

> I don't have that capacity to be on the ground in terms of an activist. But I do it in my own way. I work my ass off to think of new ways to engage in the revolution. So, that is how I see activism, activist scholarship. I give it to my mentors who volunteer in classrooms and leading protests and stuff like that. And I honor those scholars. And at the same time, I do it in my way by continuing to always commit to provide knowledge, these ways of seeing that may not have been entertained before.

And Rachel explained how her work disrupted the hierarchy of learning set forth by a traditional canon:

> [A]s a teacher, I always thought the official cannon of literature is always like central. There's an official knowledge, a legitimizing kind of process of whose knowledge is legitimized and whose isn't. And that was always a huge theme in my classrooms.

[W]hy is the cannon full of these dead white men? And so, I would give them Gloria

Anzaldúa. I'd give them Sheri Moraga. I had these kids who were <queer>, who were

Latino, Asian, uh, Native, Black. I wanted to collect their stories and make their

stories the center of my, of my high school curriculum. And so to do that meant, we

need to question like, well, whose knowledge is legit here? And so to do these other

kinds of alternative ways of like doing, you know, English, composition, English

narrative, the argumentative essays, uh, other kinds of expository essays, why not do

them in other ways? And so, um, I had lots of friends, I had poet friends and

filmmaker friends, and they would come into the classrooms, or they would have

grants and, and they would want to come work with these youth to collect their

stories.

Importantly, these responses offered insight into how participants developed

counterhegemonic frameworks in their scholarship by offering and actively engaging in

different forms and sources of knowledge production.

Five: Action Over Activist Identity

All participants emphasized that their scholarship was translated into action through

practice and/or policy. However, only six out of the 15 total participants directly identified

their scholarship as activist scholarship, and six other participants did not consider their

scholarship as activist in nature. Three other participants provided mixed responses when

asked if their scholarship was activist. Participants who did not explicitly identify with an

activist label noted that they saw it as too focused on diagnosing problems and less on

providing solutions, as advancing the agenda of an interest group regardless of facts, and as

centered on scholars who work on the margins of the institution and broader community,

inherently neglecting insider activists. All participants stressed action over an identity or a

label that categorizes how an individual makes sense of their sense of self and relationship to

others (Baxter Magolda, 2001). As noted by Nicole:

[F]or me, if you try to touch on identity, I'm not, I don't play the identity card for me.

It's all about the action. The action. Um, you know, what did James Baldwin say…I

can't trust who you are because I see what you do. Yeah. And that's what it is to me.

Charlotte also explained how an activist scholarship identity could lead to scrutiny

over the authenticity of the work. She explained:

[Activist scholarship] communicates [a] particular ideology. There is sort of a lot of

political posturing and a flattening of complexity that is seen as political, activist, and

moving things forward but, I don't know, more performative.

I found three sub-themes among the actions detailed by the participants, including (1)

engagement in policy development and improvement, (2) shift from solely diagnosing

problems to addressing problems, and (3) aiming for deep change by being specific about the

desired change.

Engagement in Policy Development and Improvement

Ten participants shared that their scholarship had contributed to policy development

and improvement in their respective fields. Often, their policy engagement included local

public policy and testimonies for state and federal government. Logan shared that he had

been working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a policy that translates

the Intersectionality framework into daily practices that would be more inclusive of Lesbian,

Bisexual, Gay, Queer, Transgender, and Intersex (LBGTQI) communities. Logan explained

his perception of the impact of his scholarship:

And so, of all of the things that I've done, I think this will actually have the most

impact in practice because it is actually about how abstract notions, like

intersectionality are implemented as policies that governments, actual governments,

will have to enact in order for them to receive funding from multinational

organizations.

Furthermore, Charles, an Asian American man, provided the following reflection on

how his scholarship on Asian Americans had influenced an interaction with a local policy

advocacy group:

[W]e had a discussion at a [local] foundation. I presented a report on Asian Pacifics.

And there was a very large presentation by the [foundation] on some studies that they

had done. And I made a point by the way, with the [foundation] that their study was

based largely on work that they had done in conjunction with, in collaboration with

our Institute.

Shift From Diagnosing to Addressing Problems

All participants expressed a deep commitment to shifting from solely diagnosing

barriers faced by communities of color to addressing real immediate problems. Participants

expressed the desire to engage in scholarship that is helpful, practical/pragmatic, and that

improves the lives of communities of color. Henry, an Asian American man, noted as he

described how the origin of the program he oversaw began as a continuation of community-

organizing efforts by local Asian American communities:

It's not my curiosities that I'm trying to address or answer. And it's not in a way the

major questions of the field either. That's not really what's motivating me or shaping

my choices. Um, it is really very immediate, very local and very much based on real work.

And Emily shared how her scholarship included building the capacity of community partners to address issues related to COVID-19:

I have a project with [the city], looking at a study by the Center for Disease Control on how do you do health literacy with immigrant communities and health literacy about vaccination? Like how can you get the Haitian community that mostly gets information from podcasts and radio stations and the Brazilians who also get information from WhatsApp and the Latinos that get it from television and this idea of how literacies around COVID are being communicated in immigrant communities and why there's vaccination hesitancy here. And we're finding, it's not about hesitancy. It's literally about accessibility to make people want to be vaccinated, so there's also challenging the stereotypes about who wants to be vaccinated. And there's a lack of understanding that people are working long hours, they're essential workers and there's barriers for getting vaccination. So if we understand that, then we bring the clinics to the work sites where we do the vaccinations at the schools. We do it at the church, after church services, that's the kind of research that I know is going to make a real impact.

Being Specific About the Desired Change

Participants called for specificity when engaging in social justice scholarship. Nicole explained that a vague definition of social justice can lose its meaning:

[T]he word social justice alone, it's dropping like heavy rainstorm, millions of droplets everywhere. People are not afraid of it anymore. Now, they're still afraid,

you know, the assault on critical race theory because people are so fundamentally

terrified of anti-Black racist work, you know? But social justice, it's become, what is

a good word I'm looking for, it's become disarmed just because more and more people

are using it. You see social justice in mission statements of schools, of corporations.

When you asked, what does social justice mean to [me]? And I really think, for me, it

means doing anti-capitalist and anti-racist work. That's what social justice is.

Mya, an Asian American woman, explained how she has been specific about social

justice change in her scholarship:

[My scholarship] also tries to disrupt this idea that humans are at the center. That

actually our greatest teachers are our plants and animals, water, airways. [I]t tries to

put in some perspective this project of settler colonialism, it tries to put in perspective

the project of white supremacy, which is actually kind of young in many ways. [S]o,

my scholarship tries to address that social justice also gets bandied about, it can be

anything and everything, which kind of empties it of any solid meaning. [T]hat's why

I talk a lot more about decolonization. I talk about social transformation because

social justice is, has become a brand. And so when something becomes a brand in a

racial capitalist society, we kind of need to leave it alone for a while, cause it loses its

catalytic power.

Participants also shared that their scholarship avoided the buzzword trap by being

specific about their forms of activism. They explained that their respective scholarship

invites people to move beyond terminology by offering frameworks and practices that

challenge power dynamics. Jennifer explained the value of being specific about the purpose

of social justice:

You know, activist scholarship is about promoting justice, that you actually have a

really clear idea about what you mean by justice. This is why I cite Prilleletensky all

the time. Because that article for me is like, "oh, you have a very clear idea of what

you mean about justice? And you mean justice for the individual and for

relationships, and for the group, and for the community. And how justice is related to

wellbeing and to care, and to wholeness."

Participants shared that activist scholarship is purpose-driven and saw having an activist

identity as only one of several factors. Therefore, as noted by participants, a scholar must

negotiate the desire to expand their academic approach with being specific about their

purpose and the change they wish to see.

Six: Collective Work

Participants expressed that activism is a collective effort. Over half of the participants

reiterated that activism requires coordinated efforts between disciplines and institutions as

racism is systemic. Participants shared that collective work includes transdisciplinary

research/projects, advancing the work of other critical scholars, inviting guest speakers from

the community as content experts, and creating academic programs in partnership with

community groups. Mya explained that activism is a collective endeavor:

I don't understand how activism is an individual's pursuit. That to me doesn't make

any sense. It's always collective or it's not activism. Um, it's not actually changing

things or it's not imagining with others. So, it's really with education for liberation

that I am more animated as a scholarly informed organizer, who happens to have a

PhD that often gets in the way of me listening. Because PhDs, as you have likely been

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experiencing, we train students to have some kind of authority, which makes us worse at listening. And no, no organizer is very good if they don't know how to listen.

Furthermore, participants explained how working in collectives helps address isolation and both emotional and physical burnout. For example, most participants shared that other scholars of color in their activist collectives or professional organizations invite them to be co-authors, provide letters of support, and inform them of professional opportunities. As Luke shared:

> When I first got there, I was on this island by myself. No one was doing the work that I was doing, having the conversations that I was having. And I needed to find that brotherhood and sisterhood across the academy. And so that's how I did it. So, getting emails, you know, being involved in SIGs and divisions at AERA and being actively involved in the critical race studies association, being actively involved in AESA, all came as a result of needing fellowship with people in the academy.

The collective nature of activist scholarship thus provided academic and emotional support for the participants.

Seven: Community Impact

Participants' motivation for scholarship remained centered on advancing the community's needs and, vice versa, communities had considerable impact on the work of study participants. Some reported origin stories of how the community shaped their scholarship and influenced how they made sense of that emphasis within the context of the university. Henry explained this tension as follows:

> It was a community-centered motivation and figuring out how to do that within a university context. Obviously, taking on a number of questions that are academic-

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centered, but the principal motivation throughout all these years was community-

centered, organized within the university as the domain to free resources for the

benefit of community.

And Connor reflected on his identity as a Black PhD in economics and his related sense of

responsibility to the community:

I guess the main reason why I got involved in it is the fact that I live in a world where

there are relatively few Black PhDs in economics. And so, somebody finds out that

there's a Black PhD and they kinda hope and expect that a Black PhD in economics

will come into the community and say something that's helpful.

In addition, Elsie focused on how her community provided her with opportunities for

research and purpose. She described the origin of her scholarship:

It's usually the community that tells me, "[Elsie], you need to do this." And then I say

OK then I go…but that's my origins, right? Like originally when they said, "[Elsie],

why is there this dropout rate?" They said, "you need to go study this because we

don't know anything about the schools…you work for the schools." So that was my

impetus, sort of like doing a community call.

Eight: Expansive Conceptualization of Scholarship

Participants expressed a commitment to praxis or scholarship that includes "reflection

and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, 2000, p. 79). They provided

examples of how their scholarship was used to inform university diversity engagement,

teaching, professional development trainings, and community-campus partnerships. Rachel

shared that her scholarship informed how she integrated HIV education and prevention with

a creative writing curriculum for unhoused LBGTQI youth:

I can arm them with critical thinking. I can arm them in a way so that they can learn

to love themselves, to put a condom on and to love that person who they're with, even

if it's just 10 minutes, to put a condom on so that they could love themselves enough

to want to protect themselves. And so that work has, has been central in almost

everything that I've done, this harm reduction kind of approach to working with

youth.

Another example of integrating research, teaching, and service was provided by

Charles, who discussed the class he taught on the internment of Japanese Americans:

When I taught my class on the internment of Japanese Americans, I would say you

are probably one of, maybe two or three lucky classes in the entire country that are

focusing on the Japanese American internment, quite the different picture. And, at the

time about 40 something years ago, I don't know if there were a lot of 'em, but there,

there were not a lot of full-blown classes. There are lots of discussions in Asian

American studies classes of the internment as a critical part of that. But in terms of

full-blown class, I think I'm still rare in terms of that gives me an opportunity to look

at some of these realities. And then for about 20 years, I've taught a course as part of

the honors program, which is a smaller research seminar, where I'm able to bring a

smaller group of people together to do research projects related to the internment.

Furthermore, Henry explained that his scholarship on Asian American studies has

informed his teaching and research:

I basically made the decision early on that I was gonna continue to really center my

work on the Asian American studies commitments and bring them into the academic

world of the College of Education in terms of what kind of research I would do, what

kind of publications I would write, the content I would bring into my graduate

education courses. I decided to just be holistic and to not have two different things or

to not fit into the College of Education's past. I really felt that what I was doing was

showing that it could be possible to have this more holistic integration of scholarship

research, teaching, and service commitments that were community-focused, student-

centered, and equity minded. All of that would be possible.

Finally, Elsie provided an example of how her scholarship advanced her institution's

mission of global inclusiveness and engagement while making a local impact:

Even now, when we notice that the Afghan evacuees were coming to my city—we're

gonna relocate about 250 to 500 within the area—within the institution, I said, okay,

have you connected with the local community members? Have you connected with

the school district? And they didn't. The community agency was like, oh, we're

inundated, we're at capacity. So, then I brought my contacts from the public schools

with the international institute [and] say, okay here, um, we need to be in partnership?

Right? And then the school district said, this is what we want, and this is great, right?

And, and so then I said, okay, what are, what are the other capacity issues that you

have? How can I help with that?

These quotes reveal how participants connected their scholarship to other efforts by drawing

people together and fitting their research into larger social justice projects. In doing so, they

found legitimacy in their own scholarship as their work became practical and helpful to

others.

Nine: Research as Relational Work

In higher education, the myth of a neutral classroom and objective research has become a valued space to occupy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995;). Participant comments below demonstrate how their scholarship challenged these notions of objectivity and neutrality in academia through a focus on relationality. In particular, participants reflected on how their scholarship was shaped by social location and how they came to know what they knew through the relational aspects of those locations. Participants also shared that graduate school socialization framed activism as biased academic work, making it necessary to strategically resist standards of objectivity as faculty members.

Importance of Social Location

Charles described how his upbringing in a small mining town revealed a "pecking order" in his town, where white people tended to have the best jobs and people like his father and mother had the worst jobs. He explained that his father worked for 30 years as a water boy at the mine, the highest-level job that he could get in town for Japanese Americans. His father carried and gave water to white workers. Charles' mother worked as a cleaner for other people's houses and made salads at the university Charles later attended. He confessed that witnessing the mistreatment of his parents, low-income communities, and people of color in his town served as the basis of much of the activism within his scholarship. He shared:

> My purpose in life is not simply to have good children and be successful. I want to
> have an impact or have the full ability, my own talents, or my own abilities, and be
> able to live my life along those lines. And I have a feeling, my parents were robbed of

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that ability. And so early on my activist roots, where I wanted to be able to speak out

in ways that my parents could not. And that's the basis of my activism.

In addition, Abby described how her history as a Spanish-speaking student shaped her

scholarship. She recounted that when she showed up to school with her Latinx parents,

teachers assured her parents that there were remediation services available to help Abby

succeed in elementary school. She counted this moment as critical in her understanding of

the role of educators and institutions in assigning worth or legitimacy to knowers and

knowledge. Abby explained that this moment informed her line of research:

I've thought about it so many times over the course of my academic career, in that

instance, there was sort of this immediate delegitimization of all of the investments

that my parents had put into me. The fact that I was showing up at kindergarten,

knowing how to read little words, knowing how to write, that was sort of invisiblized

in that interaction. So, I wouldn't know it until years and years and years later. But I

think that having that experience really attuned me to how schools, educators, people

that we often view as the helpers, so to speak can often, if not careful, will be pretty

detrimental to people's experiences. I think that line of interest in power and

institutions and legitimacy, it went all the way through my master's thesis.

And Logan explained how his lived experience as a mixed-race child of an

Indigenous man adopted by white parents shaped his scholarship on his community and

kinship:

I have allowed that process to be part of how I understand my relationship to

scholarship, to community, to mentoring students. I can relate to students who are

mixed race in a way that other faculty may not. I can relate to students who are

students of color who don't quite understand what the [explicative] is going on in academia. And I can be like, oh, it's colonialism. That's what it is, <joyful laughter>, you know. I don't have any problem saying that because I have felt it. And I've had to work it out in my own head.

Fighting Objectivity

Researcher objectivity is privileged in academia and has rendered some researchers more authoritative than others (Patel, 2016). The myth of neutral research has also done harm on scholars from minoritized groups (Stewart, 2022). Below are excerpts that describe how participants fought objectivity in their journeys toward the relational work of activist scholarship. Elsie explained:

I was told [in graduate school] not to be an activist, right? Cause being an activist meant you're not objective. So, in R1 training, objectivity and quantifiable measures is the right, the norm. So, the activism I didn't take on in my identity until after got my own faculty line. And then I didn't even couch it as activism. I couched it in the much softer community-engaged scholarship.

Maggie shared the following about how objectivity was a key factor in her graduate school training:

[W]ithin my discipline of sociology and certainly in my university, but within American sociology, historically, we like to pretend that we're objective, right? And that good rigorous objective sociological research is the opposite of activism. And so, you know, there's a very derogatory term that people have used to talk about, you know, academics who work within their own communities like "mesearch," right? And so, I think you picked up those kinds of subtle and not [laugh] so subtle

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messages from your mentors or from people in your PhD program that to be

considered a good academic or good scholar, you have to distance yourself from

activism.

Regarding the risks around fighting objectivity, Mya recalled how she was disciplined

when her students broke from whiteness and objectivity:

I have been disciplined at, mostly, institutions that were, that are quite wealthy,

because when students have beautifully fallen in love with this idea, this thing of like,

we could change everything and let's start, when that leaves the classroom is when

administrators get uncomfortable. And that's when I've been disciplined to the ways

that they can. So, I've been asked to come into meetings and then I always bring

somebody with me. Somebody who's more senior than I am, and usually a white

person.

These excerpts reveal that the participants understood that developing scholarship that is

focused on racial justice and social change is not a neutral endeavor; rather, it is a relational

undertaking, a commitment that they actively embraced in their work.

Ten: Teaching-Focused

Participants described how their scholarship educated students and prepared them to

be practitioners and activists. Importantly, then, although there was varied identification with

the activist label for themselves, participants highlighted that they played a strong role in

preparing the future generation of activists. For example, Connor, a participant who did not

view himself as an activist shared that his scholarship included training future activists:

I don't think of myself as an activist. I do think of myself as somebody who has a

large number of friends who are activists, who have a large number of family

members who are activists, and a large number of students who are activists. And I think that my role is to train the activists, to make sure that the activists get the story right.

And Henry, who strongly identified with the activist label, shared that using a holistic approach grounded in the Asian American experience was a part of his activist agenda:

I liked [my institution over well-funded private institutions] rather than being in a place that especially that did not value teaching, which is what I most cared about. And service, the way I thought of service was not so much administrative committees and bureaucracy community engagement. And so being able to value service in a community-centered way. So I found ways of modeling a balanced, robust, highly integrated and holistic vision and practice of teaching, research, and service that was doing education stuff, but also very much grounded in Asian American realities.

In addition, Emily shared that her teaching included having students do something meaningful with their knowledge:

When it comes to teaching, I'm activist because I also always have the students do a project. So, there's place-based learning that happens, some field experience, even a service project at the 100, 200 levels. But it's always something that is an issue, or a problem related to whatever the class is. The students are gonna do something.

Maggie focused on how her classroom aimed to broaden the concept of research to include different approaches:

I have a two-week module on research, participatory research, for instance. Within those two-week modules, we will discuss the difference between say Indigenous methodologies versus community-based participatory research versus kind of more

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positivist-oriented qualitative inquiries. It's not so much actively challenging the status quo in a loud sense. It's more like giving students a broader perspective of what's out there and helping students to understand that there's more than one way to be a good scholar or a good academic, or even a good sociologist.

And Mya explained how activism in teaching, reflected in the critical conversations she encouraged in her classroom, was central in her work:

I love teaching. So, for reasons that have to do with how I look, like literally my phenotype, the tone of my skin, and the ethnic confusion that a lot of my students have about what my ethnicity is, I am able to talk about race and ableism and heteropatriarchy and factors of oppression in ways that I've watched lots of students break up with whiteness in my courses. And, because I love teaching so much, I care about them as individuals, even the wealthiest, most privileged students. I care about them. I need all of them to be in on this project of social transformation.

Focusing on how her scholarship centered on teaching students to do good as practitioners in their field, Jennifer detailed:

I teach this course on activism in psychology and social justice, and it has really helped me articulate a bunch of things because I have to help students articulate them. So, a couple of frameworks that I've kind of developed in those dialogues is this kind of idea of where do you situate yourself in your activism.? Do you situate yourself at the center of the center? In other words, do you work in mainstream spaces to move mainstream people in mainstream ideas? Do you work in the center of the margin, which is what a lot of traditional community-based activist work does. It works with empowering people in the margin and collaborating with people in the margin.

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Hopefully empowering them to not be as damaged but also hopefully to empower

them to create knowledge, to shift that the discourse and the center. But those aren't

the only two options. You can work at the margin of the margins as a multiracial

person.

These participants demonstrated how the knowledge they gained through lived experiences

and through faculty socialization influenced their approaches to teaching, with a central focus

on teaching students to be activists.

Navigating Rewards of Engaging in Activist Scholarship

This section presents findings on extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that participants felt

were supportive of their scholarship. It is important to note that rewards work together to

create positive change for individuals, the institution, and the academic field. The findings

reveal how individual characteristics such as demographics, academic disciplines, and

institutional type interacted and influenced how participants made sense of what was

rewarding for them. Importantly, participants reported engaging in activist scholarship as

both rewarding and challenging.

Extrinsic Rewards

Participants reported five forms of extrinsic rewards or tangible benefits as showing

positive regard for their scholarship: awards, funding for research, editorship of professional

journals, tenure and promotion decisions, and merit raises.

Teaching, service, and research awards have become staples of institutional rewards

(Chism, 2006; O'Meara, 2005b). In this first category of extrinsic rewards, four participants

reported that they had received awards from the university. Elsie, for example, shared that

she had received awards for her teaching and service:

I think the awards that I've publicly gotten have often been for my service. So, the faculty mentorship, well not all, 'cuz I did have a teaching award and then a mentorship award, a faculty mentorship for undergrad award. And, and the irony of that was that I don't teach undergrads, but I mentor them cuz they find me and then they stay with me and then I sort of like mentor them through their academic year.

And Logan noted that the university gave him a diversity award for his achievements in his discipline:

One thing that just happened that I think is interesting is that one of the people that works in the communications office wrote me to say that she had pitched to [the university] magazine to write a profile of me for the magazine because I had won this diversity [award]. And, because I also had won this teaching award, and my book won an award.

Second, three participants discussed that they had received institutional funding to support their scholarship. Logan and Abby reported that they had received mini grants from the institution to advance their research. As Abby explained:

[V]ery recently I got a really small little internal grant to launch the project that I mentioned about looking at the processes of COVID layoffs. Last year I got another internal grant to support my work around faculty hiring. So, I've been successful in those ways.

In addition, Logan reported that he had received funds as a part of his diversity award:

I was awarded a diversity, like a mid-career diversity award by the provost office. I think that was a one off, I think that they started that initiative, and I don't think that it's continued beyond one year and one group of people. But I didn't apply for that. It

was just one day they said you're getting this award. And, but then it was weird because it was $4,000 or something like that. And I appreciate that. But for some reason the budget was weird, and they had to pay it all out in one check and it ended up being there was a lot of taxes that had to come out of it.

Also mentioning monetary rewards, Maggie shared that rewards came in the form of "mutual usery" when the institution was looking to highlight work that advanced the call to action from a national report to decolonize higher education. She noted that the institutional funding she had received provided monetary support for her research and served as a form of "protection" against her department that was not supportive of her scholarship. She sarcastically explained how she made sense of the research dollars from the institution:

[I]f they're going to parade me and my work around, then I'm going to use them to fund my work so that my work can continue to benefit the communities that I work with.

Third, participants also reported secondary outcomes received from prior rewards such as promotion, tenure decisions, and professional opportunities. Forms of secondary rewards reported by participants included opportunities for professional growth and recognition/respect from the field and/or institution. For example, Luke shared the following about how he had been tapped by the vice president of the program to be program chair for an organization after a successful term as co-editor of an in-house professional journal:

I was program chair for division G, that's what I was asked to do. I didn't solicit the vice president of the program to do it. He emailed me and asked me to do it because of the work that I had done with the CRT conference the year before. And, and I

firmly believe that if you just do, if you just do the good work, it will all develop in a way that's supposed to develop at the end of the day.

In addition, Abby shared that her scholarship garnered respect from the institution, expressed through a grant which led to tangible rewards like growth opportunities and meaningful committee work. She explained:

My colleagues, my dean, my chair, deans of other colleges, and department chairs have highlighted my work in their departments. For example, they'll call on me to give a talk to their faculty about evaluation practices, so that's really cool to be able to do that. I was also an associate editor through [journal] for two years and I think that's because, you know, you usually get there because people trust your work. You know, I actually recently stepped off because it was just so much service. Um, but those are the kinds of things. I get to do really cool things with committees and national committees, 'cause I think people respect the work.

Fourth, seven participants responded that they saw a successful tenure application as a reward. Interestingly, participants recounted their experiences leading to tenure and promotion decisions with a tone of ordinariness. In fact, participants recounted their path to successful tenure with confidence that made securing tenure appear like a natural step in the faculty experience. The participants' comments were especially illuminating as they did not put much focus on the tenure and promotion process, which is different from the literature in which securing tenure is a primary reward (Griffin, 2020; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Also, the findings suggest that participants were determined to earn tenure even when the process seemed unclear and even conflicting. For example, Elsie shared:

There were mixed messages from inside, where my chair would say: "Be productive." But then the chair of the personnel committee would be like, I want 12 publications. Be productive did not have a numeric value. He was thinking six and this other person was thinking 12. So, I was charging on in my first three years thinking I was being productive, 'cuz I was doing one a year, 'cuz it's six years, I do one each year and I'm good. But my third year, um, it was during a review and that person sat me down saying, you're not gonna get tenure. You only have three. This is what I'm looking for. Right? But they're from the STEM field. So that person who's chairing the personnel committee was looking at the metrics through their eyes. So even within our college, we had mixed messages. So, for three years straight, and this is where my health declined. I eventually produced 11 [publications] for total with book contracts. So then I could get to 12, so that I could get tenure but it would've been nicer if they told me in the beginning that you want 12.

And Piper shared that she was confident she had a strong tenure portfolio when it was time to apply for tenure, implying that she made sure that her accomplishments were, without a doubt, tenurable:

I mean they couldn't deny my scholarship and my awards from [professional organization]. By the time I went up for tenure, and we had a seven-year tenure, I think I had like 36 journals, peer-reviewed journal articles, not including the book or the book chapters. You know, so I'm like don't even play with me you know. I've published six peer-reviewed in top-tier journals every year since I got tenure, you know.

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Similarly, Emily focused on the fact that she did everything she could to attain promotion and tenure; however, she also shared that her bid for tenure felt like a balancing act of pursuing activist research while meeting traditional tenure expectations:

When I was going through grad school and I saw how being the only woman of color, like how all the others, the whites and the other students behaved, and what they did and how they were succeeding and sort of modeling their careers. And I was like, I got to do that too. I'm going to do my stuff. So, it's not one or the other, I just thought I'm saying, you know, I've always done these things, but I also know, okay, I gotta still present at professional associations. I still gotta jump through that hoop in order to get that power. But I know that that's not where the rewards are and how many use that power is not going to be the same way as my other colleagues. So, I have always observed what are the expectations of white people. I know they're not the same for me because they're lower. So, I'm going to meet that expectation and maybe even go above or go around or go over here. I think a way of sort of navigating, right. How, um, I'm going to still be in those spaces where I will get that tenure. I will get that promotion. And then the same time, I'm going to also try to have the community piece in there, you know, and try to disrupt that power dynamic when I am in those spaces, but I gotta get there too. So, there's that, you know, uh, balancing act.

In the fifth type of extrinsic rewards, other participants shared that monetary benefits in exchange for doing a job they enjoyed was a reward. For example, Logan shared that a merit raise is a welcomed reward:

So, within the department, I have been granted a merit raise. So, there's been salary increase for a year. Um, that was the year after I got tenure. So, you know when I got

tenure, I got a raise. And then the year after that, I also had a lot coming, coming out

in the pipeline. So, the year after tenure, there were, you know, two or three articles

that came out and a couple other things. And I, you know, I was super productive,

super productive so I got a merit raise. But that, you know, merit raises, we don't get

every year and they're not, it's not a constant stream of funding.

Overall, my findings on extrinsic rewards indicated that awards and monetary support

reflected respect toward the participants and their scholarship. However, these rewards were

also accepted with a degree of skepticism, illustrating that rewards should be sustained and

deeper than a monetary and labor exchange between the participants and the institution.

Intrinsic Rewards

Participants also reported intrinsic rewards or intangible benefits that resulted from

the content and/or psychological effect of the job (O'Meara, 2005b; Williamson et al., 2009).

Participants revealed that they found the following intrinsic rewards through their

scholarship: potential to positively impact students and communities of color, capacity-

building with communities of color, and opportunities to share their research with others. For

example, Henry shared the following reflection on the impact his scholarship had on

students:

[S]eeing the impact on those students who then became new generation leaders of

their communities over time…so, those effects of the work were far more rewarding

to me, mm-hmm, than the institutional definitions, that fall under the reward system

of the bureaucracy.

Emily echoed these sentiments regarding her hope for graduate students to make a

difference in society:

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I always have graduate students. Graduate students really inspire me. And that's, to

me, the most rewarding because they also get to get their degrees and make an

impact.

In addition, Mya offered the following reflection on how her relationships with her

students as intellectual partners ware a reward: "I've been rewarded, I think more informally,

but very powerfully through students wanting to think with me, that's a huge reward."

Jennifer echoed that working with students to potentially make society better was a

reward for her:

[W]hat motivates me to keep doing it…the short answer to that really is the students.

The students and the future and the change and possibility of change.

And Rachel shared that mobilizing her students from minoritized groups had always

been rewarding for her:

I feel like my work was supposed to be about healing and it was about radicalizing

my students. So, part of this was always about making their stories central in

curriculum and in my own research.

Finally, Abby explained that advancing social change was the intrinsic reward:

I love research, so navigating the institutional reward system, I wasn't even really

thinking about that. I was more thinking about how I could do my work because I

really wanted to do good work and I wanted to connect with people about the good

work. So, because I knew that what I wanted to do pretty much aligned with the

reward system, I didn't really care about it too much, which I know seems really silly.

I wanted to do what I talked about earlier, work that was not only creative and

intellectually rigorous or whatever that means. Um, but it would, we could find a way to take it to people.

It is clear from the findings on intrinsic rewards that the participants were driven to create positive and sustained change. They reported being motivated to create to be a part of continuous change through building future thinkers and leaders who will use their scholarship to improve the lives of minoritized communities.

Navigating Punishment While Engaging in Activist Scholarship

Importantly, my findings indicated that punishments were just as critical to consider as rewards in understanding the experiences of activist scholars of color. In particular, participants shared their apprehension of retaliation and silencing from institutional agents if they self-identified their scholarship as activist-leaning. These findings reveal that discouragement of activist scholarship can come from both administrators and colleagues. The following themes around professional punishment emerged from the findings: backlash and professional costs.

Backlash

Participants shared that they experienced backlash as accusations of being noncollegial and questioning the rigor of the methods they used. For example, Jennifer explained how remaining committed to social change can be perceived as making waves:

I make too many waves, but also I think this is the piece about being an activist scholar is that you get boxed in. I am very detail driven. I am very organized. I track things at multiple levels. I keep history in my head. I could be a very good administrator. I have skills. I understand processes and people. But those things are never recognized in the higher up because what you are seen as is somebody that

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makes waves. You know, which is also true. I do make waves. Okay. But, you know, there's a piece of, well, do you value that? Does the university want somebody with integrity to their values?

Jennifer provided an example to make a point about there being an added layer of managing discomfort when confronted with discussions related to anti-racism:

Until maybe five years ago, I was actually quite nice about it. I was pretty diplomatic. I mean, at some point there was a previous provost that we had some interaction that I felt I rubbed him the wrong way. And I sent him an email and said, "I'm sorry if I was a little too strong there." And he said, "No, it was fine. You have this amazing talent in saying things that people don't really want to hear in ways that are approachable." And I worked at it. So even if you are careful about how you do it, you know, you're still making waves. And so, there's lip service to the anti-racism or disrupting the status quo.

Furthermore, Luke described his experience with being labeled as uncollegial when advocating for curriculum change prior to earning tenure:

[During] my first faculty position in this teacher education program where we're preparing teachers to go into the public schools that all of them, for the most part, are predominantly Latino. I got reprimanded by the department chair for trying to change the program 'cause they were using this fundamentalist racist book in the diversity course. And I wouldn't have it <laugh> I wasn't having it. I got labeled.

Luke further explained that this experience resulted in one of his articles on creating an equitable classroom:

I bring that [the article] up because my work to create an equitable education began as a result of the reprimand that I got when I was pushing back on the school. The college was using this fundamentally racist textbook. And they're trying to get me to fit into this mold and be this well-behaved minority, which I wasn't gonna do. I was there for a long period of time and I'm finding out that many of the white faculty didn't wanna hire me.

And Piper shared that there were a range of other critiques leveled at her despite earning tenure:

So, but then they try to attack something else. They started noticing my [research] first, they started talking. They tried to attack my research, "This isn't real research." And changed the RTP process, um, to say, uh, that they only accept, uh, um, what was the word they put? They said, 'empirical research only.' And then they put an asterisk saying "not just theoretical" because I started doing theoretical research. They were doing everything to get me out. And then since they couldn't hit that because I was doing well, they decided to try to attack my teaching and turn students against me. It's just, it was an unbelievable display of non-stop workplace harassment and bullying.

Piper provided examples of the harassment she had received from colleagues and another person in a leadership role:

As I got more prominence in the national and international field, that's when all the threats started coming. One person told me to stop talking, stop making, making up words like whiteness and white supremacy. Yup. Making up. I wish. Cause I would be cited all the time if I made up that word. Another one, I had a dean who was

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putting plants in my [professional] presentations to report back to [them] how many

people would show up. And then later [they] would threaten me saying, "I know

there's a lot of standing room only, but you get tenure from me, not the nation."

Physiological Ailments as a Result of Backlash

Participants shared that burnout manifested in forms of physical ailments, mental toll,

and exhaustion. Interestingly, it was women faculty who explicitly named burnout because of

navigating backlash and other forms of retaliation in the workplace. This section illuminates

a relationship between punishment and finding success in a faculty position. For example,

two women participants discussed that they had developed autoimmune diseases as a result

of navigating racism and sexism in their profession. Nicole shared the following statement:

I live with now two auto-immune diseases for the rest of my life that has direct results

from having to battle all the time. I didn't have them when I first started at [the

institution], you know. I have them now and I cannot just swallow medicine to make

them go away. It's just something in my system. Now I have to live with it for the rest

of my life.

Nicole explained that the nature of a job that requires significant labor, coupled with

silence around the toll labor takes on bodies, exacerbated her health deteriorating:

I mean, our bodies and our emotions, that's the division of our labor because we're too

feminist, we're too radical, we are too soft. The minute we bring in our health, um,

that speaks to the perceived limitations of the work. It's very ableist really. The many

late night conversations advising work that I do like 9:00 PM and onward, I put them

[kids] to bed and I work with students who are all day in the school system working,

and they have to put their little ones to bed. And the only time we can connect is in

the evening, everybody's tired, but that's the only time we can talk about the dissertation work, or they have a dilemma at the workplace, you know, a total unfair supervisor and can [I] help them? So, it's not just dissertation. It's just general life advising, life-sharing work. And that's not counted in what we do because how do you fit that into academic advising or teaching or service?

In addition, Maggie shared that her experience in racialized faculty environments had resulted in physical ailments:

I was diagnosed with hypertension, high blood pressure this year. My blood pressure has gone through the roof since 2019, because that's when all the, the shit started happening with my former chair, right? I have been diagnosed with clinical depression. I started on medications because I was literally crying in class because of everything that was going on, right? And so, it comes at a huge cost to faculty of color.

Maggie further detailed her frustration with institutional barriers for faculty of color:

I struggle with it because, you know [pause] talking about it, you don't want to portray yourself as a victim. But at the same time, I know so many faculty of color whose health has deteriorated because of similar issues of navigating really toxic white spaces. And so, if success happens but at the cost of our health and wellbeing, is that truly success? There's clearly something wrong with the academy if, droves of faculty of color are leaving and those who stay are dying slowly, right? Literally I feel like I'm dying slowly, and I probably will experience premature mortality because of these toxic spaces.

Elsie also reported the physical costs she had experienced as a result of engaging in activist scholarship:

It's at the, it's unfortunate at the detriment of my health, right? Like, so it's 'cuz you, the community is always in need. And then the universities always want you to be productive. … But we've been conditioned as women, especially women of color, to always be in service of others, right? And so, it's the norm.

Elsie further detailed that she feels the work of academia removes a degree of humanness from faculty work:

[Y]ou just do the work, we're work bees, we're not human beings, we're human doers. Once we finish one, we go into the next thing. And then the university always puts on these lists of things we do. We finish with the fall but we're already doing the spring. We're already scheduling for next year. So it's this capitalist model of constantly producing and producing. And then there's this false dichotomy of balance, which is predicated on white privileged males who have support systems to do that. So, my health suffered for it, so weight loss and weight gain ebbed and flowed. I got sciatica nerve ending. I got muscle spasms. So, all of these sort of health conditions that crept up because the demands were always constantly there.

Professional Costs

Other participants said that identifying their work as activist scholarship has led them to be "boxed in" or labeled as uncollegial or ungrateful, thereby limiting their access to positions or spaces with decision-making power. Jennifer explained:

My experience is that if you are somebody who really does that [disrupt status quo] then you are, you are not given access to power to actually make decisions. I've been

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exploited and used by somebody who just has a bunch of lip service. So now we're

coming full circle. The university and the administration want people like me, activist

scholars, to say, "See? We have this person in our space." Recently, the chancellor

put out something about how amazing it is that we have all of these ethnic institutes.

Yeah, there is no mention of the fact that they're being defunded. I think one of the

costs of being a scholar activist, if you're really challenging the status quo, and

particularly if you're bringing that at all into the university is that the structure works

to keep you in your place.

And Mya shared that she had been called in to explain student behaviors to

administrators and was disciplined when she refused:

I've been pulled into administrators' offices when they had felt the heat from

administrators above them to shut down the student protests. I think the worst

reactions of higher education, there have been many ongoing attempts to kind of

contain any kind of structural agitation to just "that's a personality issue or that's that

individual's thing." So, calling me into offices is also a conceptually and practically

very bankrupt way of dealing with unrest on campus. It's ahistorical, it's uninformed.

So, but I have been pulled into those meetings and asked to explain students'

practices. And I just refuse to, so places have been happy for me to leave sometimes

because students take the ideas out of the classroom, which is, which was what

universities say that they want, but they don't really want that usually. Cause it

makes…what students will do is indict the university first because it's spatial. So,

they're gonna refer to that space. And it's about, this is where we can really feel the

corporatism. Like the corporation does not want to be indicted. It wants to be like,

you know, a *nice* capitalist thing, which does not exist. So that's how I've been, that's

at how I've experienced discipline.

Finally, Emily shared a nuanced account of how the culture of non-activist faculty is

sustained even by individuals who claim to engage in activist scholarship. Emily explained:

When you're a person of color faculty, one of the minority, and on top of that if you're

a person of color and you're doing social justice work, you're even more of a minority

because those people of color who do make it into the academy tend to be

conservative. They tend to internalize the oppression. They end up doing a lot of this,

what I call "tough love" approach to working with students where you gotta write like

this, you can't use this, you have to jump through the hoops the way I did in order to

get my power. You have to be like me. Reproducing the inequalities. So, even my

colleagues now that are more activist were like you got to keep your head. No, you

don't say anything. You don't talk, you don't raise these questions otherwise you won't

get tenure.

Yet, Emily also provided an important example of the hope she sees among the new

crop of faculty:

So activist equals troublemaker in academia. You're always going to be the

dissenting vote. Hopefully, at least at my institution, I'm seeing younger faculty that

are more activist, who are coming right from the beginning, shaping their academic

identity. In a way that is challenging the status quo, like "I am a scholar activist," you

know. I see that more when I'm on search committees and stuff.

Importantly, my findings show that punishment is a constant factor in the participants'

pathway to tenure and promotion, making organizational socialization or the process to

transition from pre-tenure to full professor rife with barriers for FoC (Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, these findings revealed that navigating rewards and costs of practicing activist scholarship is nuanced with individual choices made that lead to survival and resistance within oppressive norms and structures. The next chapter provides a discussion of major themes in this dissertation related to the experiences of tenured FoC engaged in activist scholarship.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The research presented in this dissertation aimed to explore the experiences of tenured faculty of color (FoC) engaged in activist scholarship, or activist scholars of color (ASoC). I entered this dissertation with activist scholarship defined as an alternative form of academic work that includes explicit political goals and is conducted in partnership with intellects from marginalized communities as a tool for change (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017). While this broad definition of activist scholarship was supported by my findings, my dissertation also contributed significantly to developing more nuanced understandings of activist scholarship.

Activist scholarship emerged out of the need to advance an explicit social change agenda using academic research and spaces (Davis et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2014). Often championed by FoC, activist scholars become "outsiders within," holding both inclusion and exclusion status to strategically navigate institutions of higher education and subversively challenge disciplinary and scholarship boundaries (Collins, 2012). Despite demonstrating significant impact in efforts that have addressed societal challenges, activist scholarship and the FoC who have produced such scholarship have faced suspicion and lacked recognition within institutional reward systems (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2013).

This study gathered the insights of ASoC who have navigated institutional systems of rewards throughout their careers in higher education. The research, a narrative inquiry study conducted through semi-structured interviews with 15 participants selected through snowball sampling, intended to shed light on three primary research questions accompanied by two sub-questions:

1. In what ways do tenured ASoC engage in activist scholarship?

2. How do tenured ASoC experience institutional reward systems and structures in higher education throughout their careers, as they practice activist scholarship?

   a. How have tenured ASoC accomplished their agendas in the context of institutional reward systems?

3. How do tenured ASoC enact their espoused social justice values and principles as they engage in scholarship?

   b. What factors or motivations inspire tenured ASoC to bring their work into academia?

Through interview analysis and coding processes using a conceptual framework that included critical agency (Baez, 2000), the concept of "outsiders within" (Collins, 1986), and tenets of Milner's (2007) CRT in educational research—(1) race and racism are endemic in educational institutions, (2) counter-stories illuminate the myth of race neutrality in higher education, and (3) interest convergence exists when institutional interests converge with those of activist scholars—my findings provided insights into the complex interplay of factors that influenced the participants' activist scholarship. The study uncovered six major themes, which are discussed in the subsequent sections:

1. Ten Characteristics of Activist Scholarship

2. Advancing Change Through Interest Convergence

3. Conflicting Feelings Over Rewards

4. Punishment as a Constant Companion

5. Physiological Costs From Punishments

6. Influence of Social Identities on Activist Scholarship

Six Major Themes

The literature revealed that activist scholarship can be defined in varied ways. Therefore, it is important to begin by exploring the meaning of this work as explained by ASoC themselves. While I began this dissertation with a specific, narrow definition of activist scholarship, built on existing literature, my findings provided nuances to that definition. Specifically, I learned through my findings that it is important to have awareness of 10 characteristics to understand how the participants engaged in activist scholarship. As consistent with a qualitative approach, the characteristics below made visible the practices of each of the participants and their experience with their respective institution's reward systems and missions, academic fields, and lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The characteristics are offered as elements of activist scholarship that I found among participants, and they provide insight into how participants made sense of their scholarship. It is important to note that only half of the participants identified explicitly as activist scholars, so the participants did not universally apply that definition to themselves. However, since their work fit the definition of activist scholarship used in this dissertation and because their approaches aligned across the 10 characteristics, I refer to participants as ASoC, with the

understanding that the characteristics of this form of scholarship are more important to center than the label attached to it.

Ten Characteristics of Activist Scholarship

The first thematic area identified 10 characteristics found among the participants when discussing their orientation to activist scholarship. As activist scholarship has been purged from the academy and justified as not scientifically meaningful, the first step toward validating it is to argue that activist scholarship is a legitimate form of scholarship (Greenwood, 2008), with specific characteristics. The 10 characteristics are as follows: (1) scholarship includes explicit social justice goals, (2) definitions of community vary, (3) redistribute institutional resources toward internal and external communities, (4) offer alternative ways of knowing, (5) action over activist identity, (6) collective work, (7) community impact, (8) expansive conceptualization of scholarship, (9) research as relational work, and (10) teaching focused. Importantly, the 10 characteristics were clear reflections of the theoretical underpinnings of my study, particularly as ASoC used critical agency (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012; Sewell, 1992) as "outsiders within" (Collins, 1986; 2012), addressing racial inequities through an intersectional lens.

First, activist scholarship explicitly examines disparate outcomes shaped by systemic racism. In alignment with the CRT tenet where race and racism are endemic in society and higher education (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), participants shared that their work ultimately aimed to address the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes for racially minoritized communities. In addition, participants applied an intersectionality lens to examine racial disparities in connection to other social identities. For example, participants explained their goals to reduce racial inequality for communities who are racialized, under-

resourced, and/or marginalized by gender and/or sexuality. Participants' responses

demonstrated an intersectionality lens in which there is an awareness that disparate outcomes

are multifaceted through the convergence of multiple social identities (Crenshaw, 1991).

Importantly, this lens allowed participants to trace the interlocking nature of oppression by

focusing on how racism is linked with other forms of marginalization in systems to produce

disparities (Collins, 1986).

Second, the definition of community varied across participants when describing the

communities at the center of their scholarship. Participants named groups from within the

university and external communities as partners. By broadening community to include

internal and external partnerships, participants revealed how activist scholarship presents

opportunities to disrupt the foundational hierarchy of the university at the top of the

knowledge creation system (Patel, 2021). Importantly, as participants noted, activist

scholarship cannot be separated between the institution and external communities—the

institution must view itself as a part of the human community. A broadened concept of

community allows for the tracing of how power circulates between academia, communities

and knowledge production (Rouse & Woolnough, 2018). Activism includes working within

the institution's racialized experiences as well as outside the institution, in external

communities.

A broadened conceptualization of community also allows people from minoritized

communities to participate in knowledge creation and potentially transform universities into

sites of critical agency where actions can redefine institutional structures (Baez, 2000;

DeMeuleneare, 2018; Jacquez, 2018; Lipsitz, 2008). In addition, the practice of opening

knowledge creation to individuals outside of the university also demonstrates the "outsider

within" perspective of speaking truth to the people and interrupting injustices regarding whose knowledge matters (Collins, 2012).

Third, participants shared that their academic skills and knowledge were used to redistribute resources to underfunded areas such as diversity education in a higher education institution or community-based organizations with limited capacity to secure grants and provide training. By directing resources toward underfunded areas, participants used their critical agency (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012; Sewell, 1992) as they resisted the majoritarian practice in higher education that privileges basic research and socializes pre-tenure faculty to prioritize publications and grants (Antonio, 2002; Fairweather, 1993; Osei-Kofi et al., 2010; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Furthermore, participants viewed the academy as a source from which they could strategically "steal" resources such as time and status to engage in social justice actions on behalf of communities who have traditionally been marginalized (Baez, 2000; Moten & Harney, 2004).

Fourth, activist scholarship reveals alternative knowledge structures and different ways of knowing by broadening participation in the knowledge creation process. In the academy, knowledge is seen as property and codified in policies and traditions to preserve whiteness (Harris, 1993; Patel, 2016). University-based research is often seen as a vehicle for maintaining the property-holding privileges of just a few due to the institution's scarcity mindset in competing for grants and vying for prestigious publication opportunities (Patel, 2016). In the academy, full professors are still majority white men and possess the most power to influence policies and practice regarding the construction of knowledge and publications (Finklestein et al., 2016; Griffin, 2020; Paganelli & Cangemi, 2019; Patel, 2016). By opening the knowledge creation process to include people of color as thought

partners and canonical sources, the participants of my study thus created a process that disrupted traditional classroom and knowledge structures with alternative forms of knowledge creation.

Fifth, my participants engaged in activist scholarship through actions that were observed in specific practices and/or policy improvement aimed to address unequal outcomes related to race and gender through an intersectionality lens. Participants noted that commitment to social justice through countering majoritarian academic culture is a consciousness to be developed rather than automatic knowledge through identity. While identity provides historical and sociological stance for what and how we know (Patel, 2016), it does not predispose an individual to be committed to activist scholarship. In fact, social identities change and shift with each encounter with oppression (Patel, 2016). Unlearning forms of colonization and oppression requires study and struggle to understand how we have come to claim some of the spoils of settler colonialism (Patel, 2016, 2021). In other words, a social justice consciousness is developed through seeking out opportunities to diagnose how oppression is embedded in society, followed by actively addressing its impact on people and communities (Kim et al., 2021; McKay, 2010).

Sixth, activism is a collective act that involves coordinated transdisciplinary partnerships and the advancement of the work of other critical scholars. Partnerships with communities and scholars from other disciplines create opportunities to share responsibilities for advancing social justice, to recognize different perspectives, and to respect all knowledge (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Kiang, 2008), rather than to extract knowledge by the researcher (Smith, 2012). Participants explained how their scholarship ensured answerability to *learning*, the construction of *knowledge,* and *context* by including a diverse range of

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perspectives in creating scholarship that serves those marginalized by the academy (Davis et al., 2019; Patel, 2016;). Participants shared how their scholarship disrupted the notion that PhDs are the authority in creating knowledge, demonstrating that scholarship is more than the diagnosis of social problems. Rather, it is a part of a collective endeavor for addressing oppression.

Seventh, activist scholarship remained centered on advancing the community's needs and knowledge. Participants described that the community served as motivation and a source of hope and valuable knowledge for advancing social justice. Participants shared that they included community insight as they built race- and ethnicity-centered programs and identified projects for investing institutional resources. These findings shed light on how race-related academic work, despite presenting the most challenges, provides opportunities to find political and personal benefits through connecting with communities of color and building relationships to communities to reduce isolation in the academy (Baez, 2000; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007).

Eighth, participants reported that they conceptualized activist scholarship expansively as a part of the larger social justice project. Participants developed curriculum that reflected important issues in everyday life for minoritized communities while advancing academic programs. The examples shared illuminate how activist scholarship operates as a form of interest convergence where institutions will allocate resources toward social justice efforts if they believe it is a benefit for their interests (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Participants shared that they received support or did not receive pushback when they designed their scholarship to advance their institution's mission to support student wellbeing, diversity goals, and integration of teaching and service.

Ninth, activist scholarship challenged notions of objectivity and neutrality in research by highlighting the relationality of research. Participants reflected on how social locations and experience with oppression drew them to activist scholarship (Gonzales, 2018; Quaye et al., 2017; Tang, 2008). Furthermore, their experiences also informed their approaches, ranging from scholarship that centers activist methods such as organizing or demonstration or advancing a political goal (Kezar, 2010; Quaye et al., 2017). Participants explained how oppression removed opportunities for them or family members, making activist scholarship a vehicle for claiming the ability to live a full life. These findings revealed how activist scholarship requires a re-imagining of the social arrangements among institutions and social relations that (re)produce and legitimate oppression (Fine, 2017).

The tenth, and final, characteristic of activist scholarship is that teaching is viewed as an opportunity to prepare students for activism. Despite varying association with the activist scholarship label, all participants expressed that teaching was key in advancing social change. These findings are aligned with the literature on how FoC often express having mixed feelings about engaging in community-centered scholarship, but view giving back to their communities as a part of their academic work (Baez, 2000; Dunlap, 2018). Participants reported giving back to their communities through teaching students to conduct rigorous research to advance arguments on behalf of communities, teaching students to be committed to advancing social justice from a race- and ethnicity-centered reality and providing students with real life skills to do less harm in society. These findings shed light on how activist scholarship has established alternative praxis in relation to ways to connect theoretical innovation with political challenges (Hale, 2008).

Advancing Change Through Interest Convergence

The second theme focused on the influence that institutional context has on activist scholarship approaches and strategies. Institutional context has the most profound effect on rewards and consequently evaluation criteria and outcomes for faculty scholarship (O'Meara, 2005b). Participants shared how they leveraged their activist scholarship with the institution's diversity mission. Diversity initiatives vary among institutions and can include developing an understanding of diversity and creating greater equity and parity in outcomes for individuals from diverse backgrounds (Hale, 2008; Kezar, 2008). Elsie, for example, shared that she had secured resources and institutional support to conduct activist scholarship because her work aligned with the institution's mission to provide global education. Her scholarship was highlighted in the local newspaper, which garnered additional support from the university president. And Maggie shared that her scholarship had received support from university administration because it highlighted how the institution was advancing a federal policy to decolonize higher education. These findings thus revealed that participants received support through a process of interest convergence (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), where higher education institutions supported activist scholarship when that scholarship aligned with their interests. While support from the institution was important, it is critical to recognize that its emergence through a process of interest convergence left ASoC with significant doubts about their institutions' involvement in their work, as also reflected in the subsequent themes.

Conflicting Feelings Over Rewards

The third theme demonstrated how participants navigated positive institutional rewards while experiencing conflicting feelings for having received those rewards. Rewards

are one of the varied ways that an institution of higher education recognizes faculty and their contributions to the institution (O'Meara, 2005b). Participants shared having earned extrinsic rewards such as diversity and mentor awards, mini grants, and award stipends from the institution to advance their scholarship, but they were skeptical of the institution's intentions.

My findings presented several examples of this theme. Elsie reported receiving a mentorship award for an undergraduate student, yet she did not teach undergraduate students. In fact, her mentee primarily reached out to her because there was no other faculty who was of the same race. In Elsie's case, mentoring of a student of color garnered a university award and validated her commitment to students of color as important faculty work. On the other hand, the institution engaged in interest convergence when Elsie mentored a student who needed a mentor from the same ethnic background but could not find one at the institution. Elsie was a logical choice because she at least shared was from the same racial group.

Logan also lamented with ambivalence about receiving a university diversity award. He shared that the university awarded him a diversity award that brought him to the attention of the university's communication office. They reached out afterwards to write a profile of him in the institution's newspaper. He shared that he had been openly critical of the university turning this request into a "double-edged sword," making him question if the university truly valued his contributions or did his work fill their diversity agenda. Logan's experience involving a diversity award demonstrated how rewards benefited the institution with potential newsletter content on their commitment to diversity while ignoring his desire to be valued for his cultural identity and the knowledge he brought to the institution.

Further, Maggie shared that accepting research funds from the provost's office felt like "mutual usery." She explained that she accepted the funds to advance her scholarship to

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benefit the Indigenous communities who worked with her, and the institution was motivated to provide the funds so they could "parade her work out" as meeting the national call to decolonize education. Similar to the second theme, Maggie's situation illustrated interest convergence where a mission of the institution merged with the participant's social justice agenda (Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These moments also showcased Maggie's conflicted reaction to practicing interest convergence to fund her scholarship involving indigenous communities and the institutions practice to use her scholarship to advance their response to external forces like the federal government's call to decolonize higher education.

In addition, participants recounted their tenure bid, an extrinsic reward, with a similar sense of conflict. They explained that earning tenure was evidence of their ability to meet high standards in their field. Some empowering reflections from the participants included taking pride in ultimately earning a unanimous vote at the university level. These findings would suggest that participants were aware that professional success and securing tenure and eventual promotion to full professor are synonymous with success for faculty (Griffin, 2020; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). However, participants also reported that the path to tenure included navigating conflicting or unclear tenure criteria (Griffin, 2020). For example, Emily shared that a department colleague suggested that she follow the institution's criteria for publications only to learn that each department had their own criteria. She reflected on how this piece of advice made her tenure bid frustrating as criteria for success are based on the degree of faculty research productivity (Antonio, 2002; Fairweather, 1993; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). However, Emily was aware of the low expectations set for her and was determined to "do even better than what was expected" of her.

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Maggie also shared that she had received minimal support and specificity from her colleagues during her tenure bid. In fact, like Emily, Maggie knew that low expectations were placed on her too. Instead, the white men full professors in her department lavished positive comments and specific advice to her white man colleague who was also up for tenure. She reported that they had advised him that earning superior ratings in just two of the three areas (teaching, research, and service) would secure him tenure. Ultimately, Maggie secured superior ratings in all three areas, along with a successful tenure bid without much guidance from the department. However, the impact was that Maggie felt rewarded by receiving tenure yet marginalized and neglected by her department.

Punishment as a Constant Companion

The fourth theme is one of the most illuminating findings and it highlighted how participants navigated not only rewards, but also punishments. The literature that ties institutional rewards to FoC's engagement has frequently been discussed using Boyer's (1990, 1996) *Scholarship Reconsidered* framework, which urges institutions to connect their missions to addressing social needs (Saltmarsh et al., 2015; Shaker, 2015). Boyer's work has been posited by scholars as providing insight on the levers (*scholarship of discovery*, *scholarship of integration*, *scholarship of shared knowledge*, and *application of knowledge)* that lead to broadened faculty involvement in and rewarding of social justice scholarship (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; O'Meara, 2005a). Yet, research has also found that, at institutions that use Boyer's work as basis to reward social justice scholarship, there is no correlation between successful tenure cases and faculty who engage in social justice or community-engaged scholarship (O'Meara, 2005b). Furthermore, research has revealed that the scholarship of discovery (basic research) continues to be the standard for intellectual work

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that is universally rewarded (Gonzales, 2018). In addition, the literature on rewards has little focus on the punishments beyond O'Meara's (2005b) noting rewards as both structural and cultural ways to socialize, reward, and penalize faculty behavior (O'Meara, 2005b, p. 162). However, there is copious research that speaks to FoC's experience in chilly or unwelcoming climates in academia (Griffin, 2020; Settles et al., 2019; Turner et al., 2008).

My dissertation findings recount these and other experiences with punishments in specific relation to tenured ASoC's engagement in activist scholarship. Specifically, my findings show that participants experienced backlash for advocating for anti-racist praxis, specifically when they critiqued the usage of racist text in department curriculum or engaged in qualitative community-engaged research. In a specific example, Jennifer reported that she had been labeled as non-collegial and had not been considered for administrative positions at her institution. She lamented that it was a paradox that other institutions would invite her to speak on social change, yet her own institution did not acknowledge her expertise. And Piper shared that colleagues scrutinized her scholarship, labeling it as "not real." They eventually critiqued her teaching as well.

In addition, Jennifer shared that her activist scholarship resulted in barriers for professional advancement. She explained that her resistance to injustice and the teaching of racial justice praxis earned her the label of uncollegial, making a promotion to an administrative leadership position nearly impossible. And Maggie recounted interpersonal challenges faced in department meetings that involved defending her methods and confronting assumptions that she was motivated to conduct activist scholarship only to secure funding. Interestingly, when it came to punishments, participants spent more time highlighting professional isolation and exclusion than objecting to the tenure and promotion

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process. Instead, they spoke about the need to broaden scholarship to include and broaden the knowledge creation process.

In addition to an institutional climate that does not support faculty in activist scholarship, participants reported punishments they had experienced as early as their graduate studies. They explained that there was a persistent privileging of traditional research methods in their graduate training programs (O'Meara & Rice, 2005). They received subtle and not-so-subtle messages couched in concerns for objectivity and academic rigor. For example, Maggie said her advisor instructed her to not conduct "me-search." The frequency and severity of these mechanisms of punishment in the experiences of ASoC make them critical to name explicitly in understandings of activist scholarship, particularly when practiced by FoC.

Physiological Costs From Punishments

The fifth theme revealed that there were physiological costs in addition to the professional punishments listed above. Participants shared that backlash and intense scrutiny had manifested into burnout and physical ailments. The constant navigation of slights from colleagues and superiors caused racial battle fatigue for participants (Smith et al., 2006), resulting in diagnosed auto-immune diseases, depression, and other health problems like nerve damage built up from as early as graduate school training. Overall, my findings revealed that pervasive racism in academia adds toxic layers requiring ASoC to constantly anticipate and respond to racial microaggressions.

Three women participants shared how their health was impacted by engaging in activist-leaning scholarship. Nicole reported that she had developed auto-immune diseases from what she called the "life-sharing" nature of the faculty workload. She explained that her

faculty responsibilities were not a clear division of labor, but work that converged with homelife with late evening advising sessions that impacted her time with her children as her graduate students were also working parents who could only work on their dissertation in the evenings. And Maggie shared that she had developed hypertension and clinical depression from working in a chilly department climate and in the midst of interpersonal conflicts with her former chair. She explained that her health deteriorated because of having to navigate "toxic white spaces" that did not support methods used to engage communities outside the university.

Interestingly, Elsie shared that it was the academy's "model of constantly producing and producing" that led to her health problems. She shared that the constant demand to produce had resulted in problems with sciatica nerve ending pains in addition to the constant ebb and flow of her weight. She said these health issues just crept up because the demand to meet the university's needs was constantly there in addition to meeting the needs of the community. These experiences of physical ailments are particularly important to recognize as part of the experiences of ASoC and should raise a major red flag in the treatment of ASoC by institutions of higher education.

Influence of Social Identities on Activist Scholarship

The final theme encapsulated all previous themes in this dissertation and found that social identities, particularly race and gender, are important in understanding activist scholarship. Often, FoC were drawn into activist scholarship through their own experiences that highlight how individuals from particular social locations are silenced (Gonzales, 2018; Quaye et al., 2017; Tang, 2008). In this way, exposing unique experiences of individuals revealed the realism of multiple realities (Maxwell, 2012).

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The participants reported that their social identities and lived experiences played a role in their activist scholarship. Participants viewed their scholarship as an answer to a community call or a responsibility to improve their home communities (Antonio, 2002; Baez, 2000; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Furthermore, critical and early interactions with social institutions positively shaped participants' commitment to the struggle for equity. Charles shared how deeply segregated communities revealed a hierarchy for groups of people. He explained that the hierarchy led to his father and mother having the worst jobs. Abby too shared that a moment in her childhood activated her sense of activism. She explained that schoolteachers automatically assumed she needed remediation services when she showed up to kindergarten with her Latinx parents. In addition, activist scholarship included a personal element through participants' social identities. Logan noted that his lived experiences as a mixed-race person shaped his scholarship and kinship or way of relating to others. This set of findings demonstrate that activist scholarship is influenced by social locations, social identities, and personal experiences. Therefore, activist scholarship is not a neutral form of research and rewarding it should include frameworks that recognize race, gender, and other social identities.

It is also important to note that participants were aware that their form of scholarship is heavily critiqued in academia for integrating components of social identities and lived experiences. In fact, activist scholarship has been long set aside as research that lacks objectivity and rigor (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2013). However, radical approaches like activist scholarship have a critical place in academia to open the knowledge-creation process to historically minoritized individuals and groups. To do so requires that researchers understand challenges that lead to stratification among faculty

with some researchers bestowed more respect than others (Patel, 2015). For example, academic leaders must address what the participants detailed as graduate training programs warning them to stay away from activism by labeling non-traditional scholarship as lacking objectivity, prompting participants to disconnect their social identities and experiences from research. Participants reported often-heard descriptions of activist research as "me-search" (Maggie) and "performative and ideological" (Charlotte). Yet, it has been through radical approaches that FoC developed knowledge and pedagogical approaches to advance social justice for racial and gender equity (Collins, 1986; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Griffin, 2020; Gonzales, 2018; Madyun et al., 2013).

Implications, Recommendations, and Future Avenues of Research for Activist Scholarship

I have argued in this chapter that activist scholarship is distinct and rooted in ASoC's resistance, as "outsiders within" (Collins, 2012) through interlocking systems of power and oppression through critical agency (Baez, 2000), related particularly to race and gender, through an intersectionality lens (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, my findings revealed that activist scholarship impacts lives, including those of the participants, other individuals in the academy, and collaborators from external communities by disrupting the knowledge creation process and aims to create positive and practical social justice change. Several implications flow from my findings, including a theoretical contribution, a call for policy changes, and suggestions for practical ways to reward activist scholarship.

Theoretical Implications for Expanding Boyer's (1990) Framework

The theoretical contribution of this dissertation is in the realm of Boyer's (1990, 1996) work and subsequent literature furthering Boyer's contributions. Boyer's (1990)

Scholarship Reconsidered answered the call to use knowledge that emerged through civic and critical scholarship to address society's needs while *Scholarship of Engagement* (1996) provided a framework to teach and assess community-based work (Rice, 2005). In many ways, Boyer's (1990) framework opened the door toward recognizing and promoting scholarship that connects institutional missions to societal needs (Baez, 2000; Boyer, 1990; Rice, 2005).

Boyer's intention was to advance the conversation around broadening the concept of scholarship and not to recommend a particular form of research (Boyer, 1990; Rice, 2005). Other scholars have added to Boyer's framework. For example, Vogelgesang et al. (2010) wrote that *Scholarship of Engagement* became an umbrella term to assess the scholarship of application and professional service (Rice, 2005). And Antonio (2002) found that FoC often are at the forefront of advancing Boyer's (1990, 1996) *Scholarship Reconsidered* and *Scholarship of Engagement*. In addition, Baez (2002) expanded upon Boyer's advocacy for teaching and learning discussed in Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered*. He reframed professional service and community-engaged scholarship as forms of critical agency for FoC. O'Meara (2005b) also discussed Boyer's framework as a foundation to understanding the impact the framework itself has had on rewarding faculty at different institutional types. It is important to note that the literature on FoC and professional service revealed that not all service is rewarded equally and FoC often report that service with minoritized communities and/or their own communities was considered less prestigious (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Kelly & McCann, 2014; O'Meara, 2002b; Vogelgesang et al., 2010; Wade & Dembe, 2009).

Despite the wide acceptance of Boyer's work, FoC have experienced scrutiny over the perceived lack of objectivity in community-engaged scholarship involving ethnically and

racially minoritized communities (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2013; O'Meara, 2005b; Smith et al., 2013; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008; Turner et al., 2011). This points to a glaring incongruence between higher education institutions' intention to answer Boyer's (1990, 1996) call for rewarding scholarship that addresses society's needs and their practice for rewarding the work. However, FoC have continued to produce social justice- and change-oriented scholarship. Key examples of this work include, but are not limited to, community-engaged research (DeMeuleneare, 2018; Dunlap, 2018; Dyrness, 2008), ethnic studies programs (Kiang, 2008), critical consciousness development (Kim et al., 2022; Madyun et al., 2013; Prilleltensky, 2012), and research related to the professoriate and race (Gonzales, 2018; Quaye et al., 2017; Settles et al., 2020).

Boyer's (1990; 1996) framework argued for macrolevel changes in higher education by calling for a broadened concept of scholarship (Daly & Dee, 2009). At the time Boyer (1990; 1996) crafted his framework that argued for the shifting from traditional scholarship to a public purpose, there were also critical scholars arguing for macrolevel changes to academia. During this time, there were at least three parallel conversations around critical methods such outsiders within (Collins, 1986), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), and CRT (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). These scholars were also offering critiques of traditional purposes and approaches for scholarly work. My study, as told by FoC, reflect more the conceptualization of scholarship by these critical race scholars than Boyer's (1990;1996) framework. The work of the critical scholars resonated more with AsoC.

The finding on the importance of critical scholars raises the theoretical question of the sole use of Boyer's framework to broaden and reward scholarship that is deemed legitimate within the academy. In my dissertation, I found that layering race and gender approaches

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broadened and deepened the thinking about scholarship and how it impacts minoritized communities. Mya explained below the importance of being specific about racial justice in her own approach to scholarship:

> [M]y scholarship tries to address that social justice can be anything and everything which kind of empties it of any solid meaning. So that's why I talk a lot more about decolonization. I talk about social transformation because social justice is, has become a brand.

The persistent use of Boyer as a dominant model for rewarding and legitimizing community focused, activist scholarship is a point that merits further investigation.

My findings revealed that although FoC receive some rewards, their work continues to be accompanied by intense scrutiny, suspicion, and devaluation, which lend a problematic flavor to the over-generalized, oftentimes broadly presented, reward systems that Boyer (1990, 1996) called for. Efforts to encourage activist scholarship should be specific and identities conscious. The conceptual framework I used in my study, including critical agency, FoC as outsiders within, and CRT, highlighted that activist scholarship, when practiced by FoC, needs to be considered as a domain that intersects with, but also diverges from Boyer's notions of scholarship of engagement and rewards for that work. It is only through this separate domain that we can develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of FoC's engagement in activist scholarship.

This dissertation thus proposes a framework and a set of guidelines to facilitate and engage faculty in activist scholarship that is race- and social identities-centered. First, I propose that academic leaders extend their view beyond Boyer's framework to include a critical lens as applied in the conceptual framework outlined in my study: critical agency

(Baez, 2000), outsiders within (Collins, 2012), and CRT (Milner, 2007; Patton & Catching, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002;) tenets of counterstories and interest convergence. Critical agency (Baez, 2000) reclaims scholarship and collaborations with minoritized communities as a way for ASoC to leverage their sense of self and commitment to social justice toward earning institutional rewards, including tenure and promotion. Next, the concept of "outsiders within" (Collins, 2012) explains how ASoC use their distinctive positionality in relation to external communities and the academy and, broadly, the knowledge creation process. The knowledge ASoC bring as minoritized individuals help enhance the understanding of the function of higher education as they straddle their privileged academic identity with their minoritized status as individuals from historically excluded communities.

Lastly, the application of CRT through the tenets of counterstories and interest convergence unearth how lived experiences provide insight into ASoC agency and voice. Their accounts or stories demonstrate how ASoC are thriving, and surviving racism in the academy on their own terms. ASoC narratives in themselves are counter-hegemonic views as they explain the overlapping nature of race, racism, and power in academia (Patton & Catching, 2009). The use of interest convergence in this new domain is especially significant as it makes visible existing power dynamics that shape policies, practices, and faculty values that have created an academic environment driven by the pursuit of prestige. This latter point has been articulated by scholars that have pointed out how Boyer does not fully match the full scope of faculty work, especially as it pertains to FoC who engage in social justice scholarship and service (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020). My findings demonstrate that the institution will only reward activist scholarship *when* it benefits the institution's values,

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thereby creating a dilemma for ASoC that often creates costs and punishments for engaging in activist scholarship.

Second, I offer the 10 Characteristics of Activist Scholarship to be applied as a guideline to insert activism and a racial equity consciousness into conceptual and practical understanding of faculty scholarship and related policies. I outline the characteristics with accompanying reflection questions below:

1. Scholarship includes explicit social justice goals. *How does scholarship trace racism and other forms of oppression?*

2. Definitions of community vary. *How can scholarship disrupt the role of higher education at the top of the knowledge creation hierarchy?*

3. Redistribute institutional resources toward internal and external communities. *How can the funding and valorizing of basic research be disrupted to broaden the concept of scholarship?*

4. Offer alternative ways of knowing. *How can scholarship challenge the notion of neutrality and center historically minoritized voices?*

5. Action over the label of activist identity. *How can scholarship center faculty racial and identity consciousness as they work to create policy solutions?*

6. Collective work. *How can scholarship ensure a systemic approach to problem solving?*

7. Community impact. *How is scholarship answerable to relationships within and between institutions and communities?*

8. Expansive conceptualization of scholarship. *How does scholarship impact the everyday lives of minoritized communities?*

9. Research as relational. *How does scholarship re-imagine and disrupt social arrangements within and between institutions and minoritized communities?*

10. Teaching focused. *How does scholarship give back to minoritized communities?*

The participants shared that their pathways to tenure included (un)learning academic norms that often rendered them invisible and/or punished. Unlearning forms of colonization and oppression involves investigation into how we benefit from racial and other forms of social oppression (Patel, 2016, 2021). The guideline above poses a series of questions that guided my conceptual framework and findings and asks that efforts to support ASoC and their activist scholarship center the individual's critical agency to disrupt norms and practices in higher education and incorporate dissenting voices into the knowledge creation process while maintaining a critical race lens where power and racism are realities.

My findings also speak to the importance of incorporating in theories of activist scholarship and reward systems a clear recognition that traditional reward systems are linked indelibly to systems of punishments. Scholars have shared that FoC often experience subtle discrimination and hostile environments (Griffin, 2020; Settles et al., 2019). My dissertation enumerated a long list of punishments that ASoC in my study were subjected to in their careers. The punishments reported by participants included backlash for advocating for anti-racist praxis and social justice-focused text. Among other examples, punishment also included being tasked by university leaders to explain and contain student protests using the knowledge they learned in classrooms.

This study indicates that navigating institutional punishment for activist scholarship is more detrimental than previously thought, also extending to physiological ailments. For example, Nicole explained that she had an autoimmune disease as the direct result of having

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to engage in continuous battle in a hostile environment. And Maggie shared that she had developed hypertension and high blood pressure because of a racialized faculty environment.

Implications for Policies and Practices to Reward Activist Scholarship

In addition to theoretical implications, policy and practice implications are also important to note. Specifically, my dissertation provides four implications for policy and practice with the goal of authentically rewarding activist scholarship and eradicating punishments for faculty who engage in activist scholarship.

Reward Activist Scholarship in Authentic Ways

Participants reported having conflicting feelings over receiving rewards from the institution. They expressed doubt about the authenticity of the rewards and explained that the root of their suspicion was grounded in inconsistency in institutional actions and rhetoric. While they were happy to receive rewards, they felt that their cultural identities were not valued. Ultimately, participants wanted to be rewarded for their activist scholarship in ways that are meaningful to their values and social and cultural identities. A crucial step in this process would begin with hiring and retaining a critical mass of ASoC to reduce hypervisibility and isolation.

Institutions should also reward ASoC in ways that are meaningful to them. A way that rewards can be meaningful to ASoC is to reward based on impact rather than the amount of grant dollars and peer-reviewed publications they bring to the university. For example, the 10 characteristics that emerged from this dissertation can also be used to design metrics for impact on the community. These characteristics can facilitate conversations around policy implications and practical examples of positive social change realized. Another recommendation for meaningfully rewarding ASoC is to provide holistic learning

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opportunities that reflect the scholar as a dynamic, ever-evolving learner who may pivot at points in their career to advance social justice. The planning for holistic learning opportunities could include working with faculty to understand the resources needed to design and make available trainings that maximize faculty members' knowledge of social justice given their limited time. For example, this dissertation offered insight into literature and practices that center race and gender with an intersectionality lens. The types of approaches and/or references in this dissertation can serve as a beginning point for designing a workshop on activist scholarship.

Authenticity in rewards is also important when it comes to recognizing various outcomes of activist scholarship. A specific starting point is to discuss what outcomes are rewardable. My study found that publications were not just for peers or the discipline but, rather, for broader purposes, including making an impact outside of academia: trainings on faculty evaluation practices (Abby), guidance for classroom teachers (Piper), a guide for institutional efforts to create agency for LBGTQI youth (Rachel), policy recommendations for an international organization using critical theory (Logan); a policy report for state bills and laws focused on Asian Americans (Elsie), among others. Yet, faculty success continues to be primarily judged on publication or research productivity (Griffin, 2020; O'Meara, 2005b). Activist scholarship can be an example of how institutions can reward publications in ways that are meaningful to FoC and minoritized communities by supporting the social issues important to them.

On a practical level, institutions can begin to examine how personnel reviews incorporate these values so that broader rewards for activist scholarship can be institutionalized. By embedding components that show value for relationships and

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community impact into the review process, tenure and promotion are less likely to be a process to get through, but processes that nurture and reward activist scholarship. Ultimately, reframing what institutions find valuable could result in ASoC securing tenure because of their activist scholarship, not despite engaging in activist scholarship.

In addition, higher education institutions need to create opportunities to discuss with ASoC which rewards are *meaningful to them*. Listening sessions can be developed into initiatives that highlight activist scholars' work while offering opportunities to informally explore possible ways to engage in and fund activist scholarship. These sessions are important as they recognize that faculty may have varying degrees of comfort with and knowledge of activist scholarship. Next, cross-disciplinary teams of ASoC can provide structural and social support for faculty who want to advance social justice. These teams could provide professional development on procedures and processes to build to self-efficacy while providing social connections to help navigate punishments associated with activist scholarship. Finally, a cross-disciplinary team charged to make meaning of activist scholarship as it relates to a program, or an event would be an opportunity to learn from existing ASoCs. These teams could lead to fruitful conversations on ways to develop an activist scholar identity amongst faculty, given that the activist identity has political implications as revealed in this research.

Create Policies to Eliminate Punishment for Activist Scholars

FoC often experience chilly or unwelcoming climates in academia (Griffin, 2020). In my study, participants reported receiving forms of punishments as early as graduate training if they were interested in activist scholarship. Participants shared that they were warned as graduate students that activist scholarship was "me-search" rather than objective, scientific

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research. Faculty advisors were also described as framing activist research as a deterrent from the dissertation. An action to take toward reducing punishments for graduate students who show interest in activist scholarship begins my reframing activist scholarship itself. My findings revealed that a characteristic of activist scholarship is ensuring that students know that alternative knowledge structures are possible within the institution. Faculty should create opportunities for graduate students to network and explore various forms and sources of activist scholarship in coursework as my findings revealed that activist scholarship can be accomplished across disciplines. Ultimately, graduate students need to be exposed to expertise from within and outside of the institution to open avenues for new ways to create knowledge.

Institutional leaders need to eliminate punishments when individuals express interest in activist scholarship. A key marker of activist scholarship is the focus on relationships and impact on minoritized communities rather than numbers of publications in academic journals. Therefore, institutions need to rethink what they deem as legitimate research and the impact they want to make on society. A relational approach to discussions around research and legitimacy should begin with bringing people who are already doing activist scholarship to the table. Faculty learning and development offices can play a key role by convening groups to develop definitions that are possible to use for measuring engagement and impact with local communities (internal and external). Another opportunity would be to create a culture of collective decision-making by undergoing training of specific ways to apply group decision strategies. These groups would have the opportunity to define these goals and impacts and, thereby, mitigate the punishments experienced by ASoC through clearer systems of recognition and reward.

My findings highlighted that ASoC are often punished through professional exclusion, isolation, and academic delegitimization. Having a sense of belonging for FoC to thrive can be challenging if done in solitude. Implications are therefore also important in relation to the social aspects of faculty life. Institutions should develop workshops for faculty to learn socially focused organizational strategies that foster an inclusive environment (Griffin, 2020). One way to foster a climate that supports ASoC is to examine and foster departmental support for activist scholarship. Some examples for programming would be to create working groups focused on developing and implementing racial consciousness curricula. These efforts could also draw on the 10 Characteristics of Activist Scholarship discussed in my findings to produce culturally sustaining metrics.

Another opportunity for change would be to convene departmental committees that are trained in facilitating difficult dialogues to provide mentorship on ways to engage in the history and ongoing role of race in the production of knowledge in higher education. My findings further reinforced the importance of addressing whiteness or the unwillingness of institutions to name systemic racism as the root cause of the marginalization and dismissal of people of color (Cabrera et al., 2016). This committee could engage in dialogue about how race and racism have shaped and legitimized traditional scholarship by prioritizing the institution's financial interests and how might *answerability* (Patel, 2016) to the learning process and the community's needs and wellbeing look like in their own work. In doing so, this process would provide opportunities to engage in dialogue about legitimizing alternative ways of knowing. In concrete terms, this committee can take the form of book groups, co-production of a paper for a conference, or co-designing a course to be offered for graduate students.

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Also, institutions should create mentorship programs that connect faculty with other individuals on campus beyond their faculty work. Often, FoC accept appointments in a city other than their hometown or graduate program, making connections to the community an added layer to navigate. Another opportunity to foster social acceptance is to create network groups for faculty based on interest rather than just a shared discipline. These programs increase chances to foster a sense of community for ASoC as they plan their activist scholarship.

Discuss Role of Professional Organizations

Relationships and networks developed through professional activities provide essential support structures for ASoC (Baez, 2000; Kiyama et al., 2012). Consistent with the literature, my findings revealed that ASoC often encountered professional and social isolation (Griffin, 2020; Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 30; Kelly & Winkle-Wagner, 2017; Stanley, 2006; Tuitt et al., 2009). Participants shared that professional organizations played a key role in connecting them with other activist scholars in the field. For example, Elsie explained that professional organizations helped her connect with scholars who crossed disciplines to conduct anti-oppressive education-related scholarship for Asian communities. And Abby also shared that she found professional organizations to connect with other scholars who can nuance her research. In addition, Luke credited professional organizations for facilitating relationships that helped him secure letters of support for his tenure bid.

Connecting with other activist scholars is critical to activist scholarship as the work involved is collaborative. Institutions should develop partner programs with national organizations to create fellows' programs where early-career activist scholars can visit institutions with more senior activist scholars. These mentorship and community-building

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tactics would demonstrate institutional responsibility for nurturing critical relationships to conduct activist scholarship. Participants confirmed that professional organizations play a key role in connecting ASoC. The networks that emerge from being with other ASoC are much needed as they reduce the sense of isolation that is a reality of ASoC. Furthermore, these connections provide opportunities for collaboration, a key characteristic of activist scholarship.

In conclusion, ASoC experience rewards and punishments throughout the faculty pathway. As a result, they often doubt the institution's authenticity in supporting their work. Institutions should work to improve trust by embedding characteristics that are important to ASoC into professional development opportunities: improving relationships between faculty and institution and making community impact a shared academic value.

Future Avenues of Research on Activist Scholarship

Activist scholarship offers opportunities for FoC to engage in critical social justice scholarship that can connect higher education more meaningfully with internal and external minoritized communities. However, previous research and this dissertation revealed that activist scholarship often goes unrewarded and includes navigating continual punishments. These findings raised complex questions about future avenues of research to be explored, including: (1) exploring the 10 characteristics of activist scholarship; (2) examining activist scholarship in different fields of study, institution types, and gender and racial groups; (3) studying how personnel review committees evaluate activist scholarship; (4) examining the role of professional associations in the advancement of activist scholarship; and (5) examining how ASoC socialize graduate students to engage in activist scholarship.

Exploring Reluctance to Identify With Activist Scholar Label

Based on my recruitment of study participants, all indications existed that their scholarship aligned with the definition of activist scholarship. In all cases, it included explicit political goals, work with minoritized communities, and a laser sharp focus on change. However, about half of my participants were reluctant to identify with the activist scholar label when I asked them directly about it. It would be important to explore how FoC develop an activist identity and what terms they use to describe their identity. In addition, what are the reasons why the term "activist" may not feel representative of their commitments?

Exploring the 10 Characteristics of Activist Scholarship

The 10 characteristics of activist scholarship identified by participants in my study provide an important steppingstone for further research delving into the deep meanings and functions of each characteristic both on their own and in relation to each other. Researchers should conduct studies using varied methodological approaches to explore the ways in which the characteristics might play different roles in different types of activist scholarship. For example, what are the similarities and differences in how ASoC engaged with internal and external communities in their activist scholarship? How have ASoC advocated for broader conceptualizations of activist scholarship with respect to different types of publications and other outcomes? And what are the various expressions of collective work in activist scholarship involving different fields of study and sectors of society?

Examining Activist Scholarship in Different Fields of Study, Institution Types, and
Gender and Racial Groups

The next area of research would be to examine activist scholarship in various contexts to understand how activist scholarship is nuanced in the work of faculty in different ranks, as

well as in different academic disciplines and fields of study. For example, an examination of activist scholarship among pre-tenure faculty may contribute to a better understanding of how faculty, particularly those in early phases of their careers, navigate rewards and punishments. It is also possible that activist scholarship is rewarded and punished differently in various academic disciplines and fields of study. A study exploring this topic would provide field-specific implications for higher education institutions to develop authentically nuanced reward structures and ways to mitigate punishments. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore the role of social identities in shaping activist scholarship approaches and methodologies. For example, do ASoC from different gender identities center different methodological approaches in their activist scholarship? Or, what might be the role of different abilities and sexual orientations in shaping the approaches of ASoC?

Studying How Personnel Review Committees Evaluate Activist Scholarship

Personnel review committees are one of several mechanisms that evaluate faculty contributions in the areas of research, teaching, and service. In relation to my study, it is particularly important to explore how these committees consider the contributions and outcomes of activist scholarship in their reviews, particularly because the implications of that process are critical for the success of ASoC. Future research should engage in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches to examine whether and how personnel review committees consider, discuss, and assign – or do not assign – value to the 10 characteristics of activist scholarship outlined in my study. In addition, studies should consider how personnel review committees evaluate various outcomes of activist research, going beyond the commonly accepted attention to peer-reviewed publications and grants. How do personnel review committees consider outcomes such as curricula, policy documents, and

professional development programs, for example? How about faculty contributions to the legislative process based on activist scholarship? This research would be an important step in institutionalizing a system that rewards activist scholars for the intended outcomes of their research.

Examining the Role of Professional Associations in the Advancement of Activist Scholarship

It was clear from my findings that activist scholars view professional organizations as connectors and spaces of belonging. They shared that organizations provided the much-needed network to find other scholars who share activist-leaning approaches. These networks were crucial to activist scholars in my dissertation as some reported that these networks led to research collaboration and partnerships. Researching how activist scholars use professional organizations and networks to create a sense of belonging and find potential collaborators would therefore help us further understand the role these professional organizations play in shaping the experiences, well-being, and success of ASoC. Traditionally, professional organizations have played key roles in garnering acceptance for new academic frameworks, and it is possible that their role is considerable in relation to building spaces of support for activist scholarship broadly, and for ASoC more specifically, as well.

Examining How ASoC Socialize Graduate Students to Engage in Activist Scholarship

My findings confirmed that graduate training programs remain grounded in traditional research and that punishment is a risk for graduate students when expressing interest in activist scholarship. An additional avenue of research would be to examine how ASoC socialize graduate students to be engaged in activist scholarship. In particular, research

should explore the approaches and methods that ASoC use to support their graduate students' interest and engagement in activist scholarship against the tide of graduate programs' general refusal of recognizing the legitimacy of that work. How do ASoC prepare their graduate students to practice activist scholarship? How do they support graduate students in developing research topics, finding rewards, and confronting punishments? And how do ASoC engage their graduate students in networks of support that can be the steppingstone to their personal and professional well-being?

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to understand the experiences of FoC who engage in activist scholarship at R1 and R2 institutions. My goal was to understand how they successfully navigated institutional reward systems that often do not lift up activist research. The voices of 15 ASoC provided different approaches and perspectives on how to accomplish race- and gender-focused activist scholarship using an intersectional lens. More importantly, they provided counterstories of resilience and strategy that represents the range of possibilities in how faculty can engage with students and minoritized communities to advance a larger public mission. As research revealed, the scholarship around student engagement has grown, but less is known about faculty engagement as it relates to contributing to a public mission (Wade & Demb, 2009). The findings are layered with academic approaches and positionality, thereby holding much potential to resonate with faculty of all ranks and disciplinary approaches. Lastly, this dissertation explicitly names punishment as a reality for ASoC so that we may begin addressing the wounds and lack of trust that race-neutral and generalized frameworks for faculty engagement have created between FoC and higher education institutions.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITING EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Dr. ____

My name is Mai H. Vang and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston). I write today to invite you to participate in my dissertation research.

My dissertation focuses on the experiences of Faculty of Color who engage in activist scholarship. Specifically, the study focuses on tenured Faculty of Color who engage in activist scholarship, a form of academic work that includes explicit political goals and is conducted in partnership with intellects from racially marginalized communities (Davis et al., 2019; Hale, 2008; Quaye et al., 2017). My goal is to examine how they navigate institutional reward systems.

I am asking that you consider participating in a 60-90-minute interview via Zoom. These interviews will be recorded for the purpose of accurate translation. However, these recordings will be in audio format and remain confidential to only myself as the researcher. Recordings will be destroyed after transcribes are completed and verified for accuracy. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at mai.vang001@umb.edu. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

In community,

Mai H. Vang
PhD Candidate
College of Education and Human Development
University of Massachusetts Boston

APPENDIX B

QUALTRICS DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. Pseudonym _____
2. Rank_____
3. Year tenure awarded _____
4. Institution _____ (will remain confidential)
5. Race _____
6. Ethnicity_____
7. Age_____
8. Gender/ Gender Identity_____
9. Sexual Orientation _____
10. Religion_____

Overview and Purpose

My dissertation is focused on the experiences of Faculty of Color who engage in activist scholarship, academic work that includes political goals and done in partnership with minoritized communities.

My goal is to understand the perspectives of these scholars as they navigate institutional reward systems and advance through the tenure and promotion process. Institutional reward systems are defined as the many ways in which an institution and field regard as ways to recruit, sustain, assess, and advance throughout their career. The interview questions will be focused on themes of how you define your work, the context in which you accomplish your academic work, and the processes you use to accomplish your academic work.

I am also interested in the role that social identities influence your academic work. In your responses, please relate your experience to your background and social identities when possible. Also, please know that all interview data will be stored in a secure location to which only my dissertation chair and I would have access. Furthermore, my dissertation chair will have access to only de-identified transcripts.

Consent: Do I have your consent to record this interview for purpose of transcribing and ensuring accuracy?

Interview Questions

Theme 1- Meaning: What is activist scholarship?

1. Tell me about your scholarship.
   a. How did you arrive at the topics you examine?
   b. What are your goals or hopes for your scholarship?
   c. How did you decide on these goals and hopes?

2. In this dissertation, social justice is defined as actions and knowledge that counter the majoritarian culture of academia where the classroom is neutral and the academy represents the creators and owners of knowledge.
   a. How does your academic work and goals relate to this definition?
   b. If yes, how?
   c. If no, why?

3. Are there others who influence your scholarship?
   a. If so, who are they and how did you get connected with them?

b. How do they influence your scholarship?
c. How do you find balance between their influence and your work?

4. How do you define activist scholarship? What about Activist Scholars?
   a. What aspect of your scholarship makes it activist in nature?
   b. Is there a larger collective that you feel is impacted by your work?

5. What does activist scholarship mean to you? In what ways to you identify as an activist scholar?
   a. Has this changed over time?
   b. What led you to your conclusion?

6. How do you see the relationship of your scholarship with the institution's goals?
   a. How does it align with institutional goals?
   b. How does it diverge from institutional goals?

7. In this dissertation, activist scholarship includes Boyer's (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered framework in which scholarship includes academic work that is practical, political, and beneficial to society.
   a. How does your academic relate to this concept?
   b. If yes, how?
   c. If no, why?

Theme 2 - Context: What is physical and social context in which activist scholarship is done?

8. How would you describe your institution as a place to do the kind of academic work in which you are engaged?
   a. What constrains your academic work?
   b. What supports your academic work?

9. Are there systemic and/or organizational barriers that you feel shape your work?
   a. In the department?
   b. At the institution?
   c. In your discipline?

10. To what extent are you connected to other scholars who do similar academic work?
    a. How did you get connected with them?
    b. Do they influence your work? If so, how?

Theme 3 - Process: How does activist scholarship get done with the context of institutional reward systems?

11. What feedback did you receive through your review processes?

    a. AFRs
    b. 3rd/4th year review
    c. tenure review??
    d. How did you feel about the feedback?

12. What does your academic work mean to your department? University?
    a. Do you feel your work is valued?
    b. How have you felt like your work has been valued in formal ways?
        i. How about informally?
    c. How do you feel about the response of the following people to your work:
        i. your colleagues in your department
        ii. chair of your department
        iii. colleagues from outside the department

13. In what ways, if any, have you felt rewarded by your department for your academic work?
    a. How about your university?
    b. And your professional field?
    c. In what ways would you like to be rewarded for your work? (Please think about what you feel like may have been appropriate recognition of your work, as well as how you have seen the work of others rewarded at your department, institution, and professional field.)
    d. How would you compare those rewards to the ones you have received?
    e. Where is this reward highlighted in your CV?

14. How have you been able to accomplish your research agendas?
    a. Are there particular people who have been supportive of your work?
        i. Are these people from within your institution?
        ii. Are these people outside of the institution?
    b. How did you connect with these people?
    c. What was it about them and their work that helped you to feel supported or validated?
    d. Where is this collaboration represented in your CV?

15. How has your academic work changed post-tenure?

16. What other evidence can you share to help improve the understanding of how you have made sense of and navigated institutional reward systems?

17. Is there anything that you would like to share?

APPENDIX D

CRITERIA FOR SNOWBALL PARTICIPANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name
2. Email
3. Phone
4. Race/Ethnicity
5. Gender Identity
6. Academic work includes explicit political goals
7. Academic work conducted with racially marginalized communities

Link for Screening Questionnaire:

https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dccMlHOC8TFu210

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