Women of the Black Diaspora in Higher Education:

Policies of Inclusion, Politics of Belonging, and Spaces of Resistance

By

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Dedication

To my Mom and the women in my family that came before me:

Hand in hand, your light guides my path.

and

To Junior, Landon, Isaiah, Ashton, and Lucas:

Always remember fear is the only thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve.

My forever love, my dearest boys.

Acknowledgments

For me, the greatest gifts of doing hard things are the people waiting along our paths to show us the way, pick us up when we fall, and know we would do the same for them in a heartbeat. I've been blessed to have many people pick me up and dust me off during this journey and long before.

Dear Mom and Dad, thank you for always supporting me. In all phases of my life you have been there. You taught me to believe in myself and my dreams, to never settle for no, and importantly to always ask 'why not'? Thank you for giving me the freedom to be who I am while still providing the support I needed to keep me grounded. I could not have asked for better parents to guide me along this journey we call life. I love you! To my siblings, nieces, and nephews. I love you! Thank you for your calls and messages of support that always came right on time. Dear Junior – my husband, my team. We started our journey nearly seventeen years ago. Since day one you have always been right by my side. With your support, I have accomplished more than I could have imagined. You always make me laugh and know just want to say to put a smile on my face. Thank you for loving me like only you can. One life. One love.

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Abstract

While a large body of work examines Black women's experiences as students and faculty in universities, most studies narrow in on students *or* faculty and are geographically bound by nation. Drawing on intersectionality, global anti-Black racism, and theories of belonging and resistance, this dissertation provides an interdisciplinary analysis of how distinct educational policies of diversity and inclusion shape the ways Black women navigate and resist institutional, cultural, and social exclusionary practices in academia. Through a transnational, multi-sited ethnographic case study approach, this study uses interviews, observations, and artifact analysis to examine how women of the Black diaspora experience policies of inclusion and exclusionary practices in two public, predominantly white, research universities in the Midwest region of the United States and the South region of Brazil. Findings contribute to educational policy studies, Black diaspora and gender studies, and critical inclusion studies of education to show how distinct policy articulations of inclusion shape Black women's experiences with visibility. The findings demonstrate Black women's experiences with social, cultural, and economic exclusionary practices push Black women to conceptualize a sense of *limited belonging* at their universities. Limited belonging show the complex and nuanced ways Black women resist and reimagine norms of belonging in higher educational institutions which are deeply embedded in anti-blackness, patriarchy, and the notion of meritocracy. This study further shows a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with exclusionary practices and the spaces of resistance they create to heal, survive, (un)learn, remember and self-define.

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Experiences of Black Women in Higher Education in Two Countries within Two Policy Articulations of Inclusion

In 2008, during the implementation of affirmative action policies in Brazil, 'Blacks belong in the kitchen!' was spray painted on campus buildings of an elite university in southern Brazil (Oliven & Bello, 2016) signifying universities as white spaces. At Yale, a Black woman graduate student who fell asleep in a common area in her residence hall was required to present identification to verify she was not a trespasser in her own dormitory (Caron, 2018). In discussing explicitly racist incidents targeting marginalized groups on university campuses, Patel (2015) argues such backlashes to inclusion are common and predictable as universities are "borne of stratified racist settler colonialism that relies on myths of meritocracy and the rhetoric of diversity to maintain the underlying social order" (p. 658). Educational scholars argue widening access for historically marginalized groups is necessary for dismantling racial inequality in higher education and in society; however, beyond access, critical researchers and practitioners draw attention to the experiences and outcomes among those students and academics who have successfully 'accessed' higher education, but still find themselves marginalized (Arday & Mizra, 2018; Vu Tran, 2019).

Transnational educational and feminist scholars in Brazil and the U.S. have drawn attention to the various forms of exclusion Black women, faculty and students, experience in higher educational institutions (Gomes, 2018; Haynes, 2019; Lorde, 2007, Patton, 2019; Santos, 2005; Sotello & Viernes, 2002; Wilson, 2012; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). While there has been a considerable amount of research examining global policies aimed at diversifying higher Beducation institutions (Ahmed, 2012; Patel, 2012; Puwar, 2004) and the experiences of Black women in the academy (Arday & Mizra, 2018; Gomes, 2018, Haynes, 2019; Perlow, Wheeler,

Bethea, Scott, 2014; Winkle-Wagner, 2009), most studies have been geographically bound by nation. Educational studies reveal Black women's experiences with invisibility and hypervisibility, lack of support in their research endeavors, experiences with isolation, imposter syndrome, and pressure to assimilate to colonial mindsets (Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2019; Patel, 2015; Mizra, 2009; Squire & McCann, 2018).

Globally, many governments have introduced policies of inclusion aimed to improve the social, economic, and political conditions for historically and currently marginalized groups (Htun, 2004). Similarly, many organizations and higher educational institutions have introduced their own policies aimed at ensuring marginalized groups gain access to higher education. Scholars have examined how multicultural ideas influencing policies aimed at inclusion are reproduced and influence policy cross-nationally (Paschel & Sawyer, 2008).

This transnational multi-sited case study draws on Black feminist epistemologies, global anti-Black racism, and theories of belonging and resistance, to examine how Black women experience educational policies of diversity and inclusion and affirmative action policies at two predominately white institutions (PWI) in Brazil and the United States. Universidade Federal de Montañhas (UFM) is located in the Southern hemisphere of Brazil, and Midwestern University (MWU) is situated in the Midwestern region of the United States. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. *How are inclusion policies in higher education understood and experienced by women in the Black diaspora in Brazil and the United States?*

2. *How do the knowledges, experiences, and relationships developed by Black women in counter-spaces expose racialized and gendered cultural and institutional practices in IHEs in Brazil and the U.S.?*

Brazil and the U.S. offer instructive cases for examining the experiences of Black women in higher education and educational policies focused on racial equity in higher education. On one hand, both countries have similar histories of settler colonialism and the enslavement of African people during the transatlantic slave trade. On the other hand, Brazil and the U.S. have different racial histories with Brazil enacting policies to promote a form of integration or mixing of the races.

Race and Affirmative Action Policies in Brazil and the U.S.

Brazil and the U.S. have shared histories with settler colonialism and the enslavement of African people during the transatlantic slave trade. Between the 1500s and 1900s, both countries enslaved and transported African people for economic labor (Marques, 2016). The U.S. formally abolished the importation of enslaved Africans in 1808 after having transported an estimated 305 thousand human beings. Brazil continued to depend on the transatlantic slave trade as its primary source of labor in the coffee plantations until 1888 after having enslaved nearly 6 million African people ("Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database," 2020).

Despite common histories of settler colonialism and slavery, race relations in Brazil must be understood in its own context rather than as a variant or stage of U.S. race relations (Telles, 2006). The Brazilian case emerged from, *mestiçagem*, a nation building project common to several countries in Latin America where "racial mixing" and integration was encouraged as a way to "whiten" the nation (Hanchard, 1994). Ideologies of mestiçagem in Brazil argued the largely mixed-race population reflects a nonracist society. During the early 20th century,

Brazilian sociologist, Gilberto Freyre was considered an influential scholar for spreading the notion that Brazil was a society that succeeded at racial egalitarianism and avoided the pitfalls of U.S. style racism. The ideology of racial democracy was central to views of race and racism in Brazil for much of the 20th century. The notion of racial democracy and the severe political repression under the Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo dictatorship (1937-1945) and the military dictatorship (1964-1985) significantly limited anti-racist movements (Caldwell, 2017; Hanchard, 1994; Twine, 1998).

After decades of upholding the myth of racial democracy, Brazil implemented affirmative action policies, first the government sector during the late 1990s and expanded to include federal and state universities in the 2000s. This change came in large part due to the persistent Black Brazilian community members, activists, and scholars who criticized and contested the myth of racial democracy by calling attention to the ways income gaps, access to health care, educational opportunities and incarceration rates occur along racial lines (Salata, 2020; Pereira, 2012; Pereira, 2013; Pereira & Araújo, 2017). Internal pressure from Black Feminists (Aubel, 2011), the Movimento Negro Unificado (Telles, 2006), and Brazil's international commitments, specifically the 2001 UN Conference Against Racism, led to the Federal Quota Law in 2012. However, some federal universities adopted quota policies as early as 2003. The quota policy at UFM started in 2008 and requires fifty percent of their admissions to be from one of the following three groups: Afro-Brazilian descent, Indigenous or attended a public PK-12 school.

Brazil's Federal universities are free, public, and research-based institutions and are among the most elite higher education institutions in Latin America. Until quotas, federal universities have historically been exclusively reserved for middle-to-upper middle-class families who could afford to send their children to private primary and secondary schools to obtain targeted

preparation for the rigorous *vestibular* exam—an assessment that consists of multiple-choice questions and essays assigned on varying topics and is required to attend Federal universities. In stark contrast to private primary and secondary schools, public schools are significantly underfunded and under-resourced in Brazil and mostly attended by Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous students from poor families (Lloyd, 2015). This causes a paradox, wherein students attending private secondary schools obtain admission into free and prestigious public Federal and state universities, while young Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous students from poor families who seek higher education are left to pay for a university degree often from private, for-profit universities that are of much less quality than the public institutions.

Quota policies have caused a significant increase in the enrollment of marginalized groups in Federal universities. The number of marginalized students who attended federal universities increased 400 percent during 2010-2019. Currently, approximately 38 percent of students attending federal universities in Brazil are from underrepresented groups. It's important to note despite significant growth, 38 percent is still low for a country that has a 56 percent Black population. Due recent budget cuts and right-winged attacks on affirmative action policies, these numbers may start to decrease significantly.

Affirmative Action Policies in Higher Education in the U.S.

Social movements against racial and social inequality characterize the 1960s. While the civil rights movement combatted racial discrimination in public places and pushed for equal opportunities in education and employment, the women's movements brought an awareness to women's rights including gender equality and equal pay for women. Within this historical context, affirmative action policies were established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 as a means to redress the inequality and discrimination due to race, creed, color or national origin that

continued in spite of the ongoing social movements and protests. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson amended affirmative action to include sex-based discrimination. Overall, affirmative action policies in higher education institutions sought to increase the number of women and minoritized students and faculty in most educational fields, levels and ranks.

Since its inception and ongoing decline, policies used to consider race during admission into higher education institutions processes have been highly contested. Critics of affirmative action frame the policies as reverse discrimination against better qualified white applicants and affirmative action policies set marginalized groups up for failure by placing unqualified students in higher education institutions. (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Sowell, 2004; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1994 a/b). However, subsequent empirical studies have shown students who benefited from race-based admission policies generally earn higher grades and left school at lower rates compared to their peers (Fischer & Massey, 2006). While formal affirmative action policies can still be used as long as strict scrutiny is also employed, meaning that race neutral alternatives must be considered first, quota policies are no longer is use in the U.S. Ten states have banned all forms of race-based considerations in admission to higher education.[1] In fact, in California, Proposition 16 which would have allowed race and gender to be considered for admission into California's public universities was denied in 2020. However, many universities in other states still incorporate some form of diversity and inclusion policies, practices and

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[1] California (1996), Texas (1996), Washington (1998), Florida (1999), Michigan (2006), Nebraska (2008), Arizona (2010), New Hampshire (2012), Oklahoma (2012), and Idaho (2020)

programming to attract and retain groups historically marginalized by race, gender, religion and sexuality.

Contemporary discourses around diversity and inclusivity in higher education in the U.S. emerged from Grutter vs. Bollinger, a case decided on June 23, 2003, by the United States Supreme Court upholding the use of race-based admission policies as a means to promote student diversity at The University of Michigan Law School. The University of Michigan recruited researchers who created an empirical report highlighting the importance of racial diversity in higher education. Baez (2004) explains the argument for affirmative action as a means to right past wrongs no longer justified the use of race in admission policies pushing proponents of affirmative action to change strategies by using empirical data to prove the necessity for racial diversity.

In 1999, The University of Michigan's, *The Compelling Need for Diversity in Higher Education* report provided research-based evidence supporting race-based admission policies. The report suggests universities have an obligation to prepare students to be active participants in a democratic society and to educate and prepare future professionals for a diverse workforce. The authors argue students best acquire these skills in diverse learning environments explaining, "..diversity is a critically important factor in creating richly varied educational experiences and helps students learn and prepares them for participation in a democracy that is characterized by diversity" (Gurin, 1999 p. 36). This language was critical to winning the case as it provided empirical and tangible evidence that diversity benefits all students and enriches the overall learning environment. Although this strategy was crucial to maintaining race-based admission practices in higher education, contemporary diversity language shifts the focus of affirmative action policies away from social and racial justice.

Despite not having quota policies, some universities do consider race and gender during admission processes MWU is an example of one of those universities. MWU's most recent effort to increase diversity and inclusion is a ten-year initiative aimed at improving institutional access, increasing student and faculty retention and developing shared goals around diversity and inclusion across the campus.

MWU has several programs with the specific aim to recruit and retain students from marginalized groups. An example of a larger university initiative is a program that identifies and provides 10 "carefully selected and trained" public high school students with four years of full tuition. Through this program, MWU academically prepares students during their senior year of high school to attend MWU. Students in this program have a ninety percent graduation rate although less is known about the students' day to day experiences on campus. Other aims at diversity and inclusion include annual diversity conferences where scholars and community members come together to discuss racial disparities in the community, schools, and the university. In 2019, MWU started affinity groups--informal social gatherings designed to help faculty and staff from marginalized groups build community and share connections and for members where people who share the same backgrounds and identities can come together. Further, the university started a target of opportunity program in 2019 where they aim to hire more faculty from historically and currently underrepresented populations. Despite the vast programs, diversity policies and practices have not gone without criticism.

Critical Inclusion Studies

Critical inclusion scholars argue essential questions are dismissed when inclusion is presumed to be unequivocally beneficial (Bourassa, 2019). Inclusion tends to be interpreted as a necessity to overcome social and racial inequality; however, it remains critical that we analyze

the terms and conditions of inclusion and the experiences of those who are being included. Bourassa (2019) states, "Without a critical line of inquiry troubling the practices and conditions of inclusion, understandings of deeply entrenched relations of domination and subordination are easily glossed over, and a sense of who gets to include whom into what can either escape consideration or be taken-for-granted as a normative arrangement" (p. 2). Further, Mezzedra and Neilson (2013) urge us to challenge the widespread notion of inclusion as "an unambiguous good that facilitates the diminution of social and economic inequalities" (p. 159).

Diversity in higher education is often considered a proactive method to address racial and economic and social disparities. Proponents also argue diversity as benefiting all students proclaiming that incorporating the voices and viewpoints from diverse groups creates an advanced learning environment. Although critical scholars of diversity policies agree with the importance and value of shifting the demographics of higher education campuses to incorporate historically marginalized groups, they are skeptical about the reach and intent of policies.

Scholars have highlighted the contradictory nature of diversity policies revealing how policies and programs which aim to increase the number of historically underrepresented students within higher education institutions fail to address the various forms of institutional racism experienced by students of color (Ahmed, 2012). Abu-Rabia-Queder (2019) refers to the "the paradox of diversity" when describing the ways diversity policies claim to address issues of equity and inclusion yet remain rooted in white supremacy, patriarchy and heteronormative ideals and beliefs toward people of color. Iverson (2012) uses policy discourse analysis to examine the discursive practices shaping diversity. Findings from her study reveal language and discourses used in diversity statements work to construct outsiders. She argues that well intended

policies aimed at inclusion may unintentionally foster exclusionary policies that support inequality.

Abu-Rabia-Queder's (2019) qualitative study examined policies designed to promote diversity in an Israeli institution of higher education. Using narrative research, she interviewed 50 Ethiopian women attending various academic institutions in Israel to examine their experiences and interpersonal interactions with other students, faculty and administration policies of diversity on campus. Many of the women reported often being mistaken as staff. One of Abu-Rabia-Queder's (2019) findings which she labels, "the politics of rescue" explain how the university builds on the notion that Black women are in need of rescue. Her participants discussed how diversity policies cast the university as generous while stigmatizing Black women recipients as dependent and in need of rescue. Participants explained how scholarships and policies aimed at increasing diversity of the student body often minimized the women's intelligence and efforts and built on the trope of Black women as in need and dependent.

Her findings revealed that diversity policies intending to incorporate more students of color paradoxically maintain essentializing notions of identity and reproduce notions of the Ethiopian immigrant as in need of rescue and compassion. The study emphasizes that institutional racism occurs at various levels: micro (i.e., daily interactions with professors and students), meso (curriculum and financial support) and macro structural forces (diversity policies and programs). She argues university diversity policies at the macro level are not in and of itself sufficient to address racism at the meso and micro levels. Her findings support this notion. In spite of diversity policies and programming, her participants often felt invisible and alone as they found themselves as the only Black women in their courses. Another finding, labeled "in place

and out of place" highlighted how hierarchical understandings of color, gender and nationality impacted how the women's bodies were interpreted as out of place in higher education.

In her study of racial diversity in higher education, Leigh Patel (2015) uses Critical Race Theory and Settler Colonialism as analytical tools to situate the regular incidents of backlash that occur. She explains such backlash as logical and predictable consequences of diversity policies that don't take into consideration stratified racist settler colonialism, myths of meritocracy, and institutional and systemic oppressions. She draws on empirical studies examining the experiences of faculty of color and several incidences of backlash to diversity policies such the 2012 hate crime against Indigenous students at South Dakota State University where racist and derogatory statements were spray painted on the bathroom stalls. She centers such incidences alongside an analysis of the rhetoric of contemporary diversity policies to analyze the contradictions between a desire for diversity and policies that fail to address institutional discrimination. Patel (2015) theorizes how "institutionalized racism and property rights work together to stave off structural transformation" (p. 658). She uses a Deluzian framework of desire, which allows us to understand desires as more than suppressed wants which operate on the subconscious level and instead, view desires as conscious, complex and often contradictory. She builds on this definition to provide a lens into the complex articulations between the desire for bodies of color on college campuses, backlash to diversity, and the university as white property. Patel's conceptual framework pushes me to consider the ways the university is historically and currently a white space and the tensions between the desire for and backlash against the presence of Black bodies within university spaces. Considering the ongoing backlash against diversity across distinct policy articulations of inclusion, the question I seek to explore

throughout this dissertation is: What is the role/aim/possibilities of policies of inclusion that are embedded in a global system of anti-black racism?

A Note on Terminology

I use policies of inclusion to refer to all policies aimed at including students from historically and currently underrepresented groups. When referring to affirmative action policies in Brazil, I say affirmative action or quota policies. I use policies of diversity and inclusion or diversity policies when discussing inclusion policies in the U.S. Additionally, I acknowledge that Brazil has multiple categories of race. When asked, the participants in this study, in Brazil and the U.S. self-identified as Black, hence I describe them as Black throughout this dissertation.

In Chapter Two, I detail the existing literature examining the experiences of Black women in higher education in Brazil and the U.S. I also illustrate how my conceptual framework including intersectionality, bell hooks' (1990) concept of spaces of radical openness, Yuval-Davis' (2011) theory of the politics of belonging, and global anti-Black racism informed my research. Chapter Three lays out the research design of this study, including the research methods and data analysis, and discusses how my positionality shaped my research design, data collection and analysis processes.

Chapter Four examines Black women's experiences with visibility at UFM and MWU. It demonstrates how distinct policy articulations of inclusion—affirmative action policies (redistributive) in Brazil compared to contemporary policies of diversity and inclusion as rhetorical symbolism (representation) in the U.S.—contribute to the different ways Black women's bodies are made hyper-visible in academia and the similar ways Black women experience invisibility.

Chapter Five begins with an examination of Black women's experiences with social, cultural, and institutional exclusionary practices at UFM and MWU. Drawing on Yuval -Davis' (2011) theories on the politics of belonging, I examine how Black women conceptualize their belonging in heteropatriarchal and anti-black institutions by offering the concept of *limited belonging*. Limited belonging describes the complex and nuanced ways Black women contest, resist and reimagine norms of belonging in academia that are deeply embedded in anti-blackness, heteropatriarchy, and the notion of meritocracy.

Chapter Six shows a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with (in)visibility, hyper-visibility, exclusion, limited belonging and other habitual encounters with heteropatriarchal anti-Blackness and in creating "spaces of radical openness" (hooks, 1990). This chapter theorizes the spaces of resistance women create in Brazil and the U.S. to expose the economic, ideological, social, and political practices of domination women navigate in academia and imagines the possibilities within spaces of resistance.

Chapter seven provides a deeper analysis, discussion, and overview of the findings. I discuss how my research contributes to theoretical and empirical literature by expanding scholarly understandings of Black women's experiences with heteropatriarchal anti-Black exclusionary practices in disparate policy articulations of inclusion in higher education institutions. The research also deepens our knowledge of the specificities of global anti-black racism in higher education institutions. Chapter eight concludes the dissertation with implications for policy, practices and future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter, I detail the existing literature examining the experiences of Black women in higher education in Brazil and the U.S. and the counter-spaces they create to oppose systems of domination. I also illustrate how my conceptual framework including intersectionality, bell hooks' (1990) concept of spaces of radical openness, Yuval-Davis' (2011) theory of the politics of belonging, and global anti-Black racism informed my research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounds my study consists of intersectionality, spaces of radical openness, the politics of belonging, and global anti-Black racism. This conceptual framework offers a lens to challenge inclusion *or* exclusion as mutually exclusive as well as other socially constructed binaries such as visible *or* invisible. Further, these theories combine to allow me to analyze the ways systems of race and racism operate through social and cultural practices to maintain social and racial inequalities. Notably, this conceptual framework creates a vantage point to analyze Black women's acts and spaces of resistance as junctures of possibility where survival and change co-exist (hooks, 1990; Lorde, 2007) and as opportunities to expose ongoing systems of domination (McKittrick, 2007). I examine the spaces Black women create to resist anti-Black structural, institutional, and social forms of oppression and exclusion as spaces not merely to resist but as spaces to be creative and self-define. (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2019; hooks, 1990; Lorde, 2007; Mizra, 2009).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality emerged out of the Black Feminist tradition by Black feminists who theorized the ways race, gender, sexuality gain meaning from each other (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1982; Combahee River Collective, 1982). The origins of intersectionality have been traced back

to Sojourner Truth's speech, *Ain't I A Woman*, where she explained her position in society did not make her less of a women (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) officially coined the term 'intersectionality' when she wrote about the ways gender, race, and class converge to shape Black women's experiences with exploitation and exclusion within their employment. Collins' explains oppressions and resistances as operating on 'matrices of domination' to show the many ways categories such as race, gender, and sexuality, converge (Collins, 2000). Crenshaw (1991) demonstrates the various ways race and gender intersect with structural, political, and representational aspects by revealing how women of color experience unique intersections with structural and institutional inequalities.

I use the analytical frame of intersectionality in several ways as I consider the situated experiences of Black women in higher education across two universities. One, an intersectional lens allows me to analyze the women's experiences with an understanding that race, gender, and other hierarchies of power do not operate independent of one another nor are they additive (Lindsay, 2013). Instead, plural identities such as "black" and "woman" converge across various social categories such as "gender" and "race" (Bullock, 2018; Lindsay, 2013). Two, intersectionality allows me to consider how identities are social produced within institutions and systems of oppression enabling me to analyze how "the differential situatedness of different social agents inform the ways they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 4). Specifically, I use an intersectional lens to examine the constitutive nature of the women's identities (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, class) and the oppressions (social, cultural, institutional) they experience in higher educational institutions (Nash, 2008, p. 56). Further, I use intersectionality to understand how social, cultural, and institutional mechanisms of oppression collide to shape the women's experiences in higher

education (Collins, 2000; Weldon, 2008). Black women's multiple marginalized identities shape their day-to-day experiences and social encounters with (in)visibility, exclusion, (un)belonging, and resistance.

Spaces of Radical Openness

To gain a deeper understanding about the processes Black women utilize to collectively resist from within the margins, I draw on bell hooks' spaces of radical openness. hooks (1990) describes spaces of resistance "as a space of refusal, where one can say no to the colonizer, no to the downpressor," as taking place within the margins. She explains how the dominated make themselves into subjects rather than objects within spaces of radical openness. Spaces of radical openness provide a lens for me to analyze the women's various formations of resistance such as their use of subaltern literature, pedagogies of dissent, and oppositional ways of knowing within their unique spaces of radical openness. Similarly, Lorde (2007) explains "places of possibility" as not simply spaces to oppose but also to create and self-define (p. 36). I use hooks' spaces of radical openness to examine how women in this study resist racialized and gendered oppression and create and participate spaces where they refuse, resist, remember, re-write, and discover new ways of seeing reality through creativity and imagination.

The Politics of Belonging

I use Yuval-Davis's notions of belonging and the politics of belonging to analyze the nuanced ways women in this study conceptualize belonging in higher education and to analyze how 'boundary making' happens through social, cultural, and exclusionary practices at UFM and MWU. Intersectional sociologist Yuval-Davis (2011) differentiates belonging and the politics of belonging. She explains the notion of social and political belonging as always dynamic. Yuval-Davis explains, social agents' conceptualize a sense of belonging based on three combined and

interrelated analytical facets: *social and economic locations* (i.e., gender, race, class, nation, age group, kinship, profession), *identifications and emotional attachments* (the personal and collective narratives we construct and tell ourselves about who we are and who we are not), and *ethical and political value systems* (how our social locations and identifications and emotional attachments are assessed and valued by ourselves and others) (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Within these combined and interrelated facets, people judge their own and others belonging. Alongside belonging, Yuval-Davis describes the politics of belonging to highlight that boundaries for who belong and who don't belong are socially and politically constructed. She explains,

> The politics of belonging involves not only constructions of boundaries but also the inclusion and exclusion of particular people, social categories and groupings within these boundaries by those who have the power to do this (p.19).

Using a combination of Foucault's notion of 'disciplinary society' where power operates through governmentality and Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, Yuval-Davis (2011) describes the politics of belonging as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance' that always "symbolically separates the world population into 'us' and 'them' (p. 20). I use the above notions of belonging and the politics of belonging to examine how conceptualization of who belongs in academia informs social, cultural, and institutional practices at MWU and UFM.

Global Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Blackness is the rejection of the humanity of Black people and Blackness (Dumas & ross, 2016; Wilderson, 2017) and pervades educational discourse and practices as "meritocratic myths of educational opportunity" (Baldridge, 2020, p. 749). Global anti-Black racism is a useful tool to understand how Black women across geographical boundaries experience anti-Black racism. Paschel and Sawyer (2008) explain global anti-Black racism "stems from the logics of the

transatlantic slave trade and continues into our contemporary moment in almost every nation of the world" (p. 304). I use Paschel and Sawyer's (2008) notion as a lens to contextualize the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism that operates on global and local levels. Winant (2001) describes global anti-Blackness as "characteristic of contemporary society both local and global" (p. 19). Global anti-Black racism provides a viewpoint for me to examine the experiences of women in Brazil and the U.S., who have experienced similar yet different histories of enslavement, colonization and forced migration.

While describing how the relations between Black and Indigenous peoples within and across geographic borders and sites of possibility, King, Navarro, and Smith (2020) describe the importance of attending to the relational specificities of global anti-Black racisms. The authors explain, with the pervasiveness of anti-Blackness across the globe, "the everyday specificities of anti-Blackness as well as the modes of resistance to it, need to be attended to in order to assess the living and breathing relations between Black and Indigenous people all over the globe and, more specifically across the Americas (King, Navarro & Smith, 2020 p.7). The lens of global anti-Blackness allows me to view Black women's experiences with anti-Blackness as embedded in local and global contexts. Through examining their experiences in higher education across the Americas through the lens of global anti-Blackness, I am able situate their experiences in their local histories of race and racism while understanding the "relations of Black captivity are always at play" (King, Navarro & Smith, 2020 p.7). Hence, in spite of Brazil's framing of racial fluidity and the one-drop rule in the U.S., global anti-Black racism allows me to understand that in both contexts, Blackness is viewed as detrimental.

Experiences of Black Women in Higher Education in the U. S. and Brazil

hooks (1989), Lorde, (2015), Collins (2010), Alexander (2005) and other Black feminists have shared their experiences within academia stressing the consistency of racialized and gendered structures of oppressions in academia and society. Carty (1991) reiterates, "There is little difference between what we experience on the streets as Black women and the experiences we have inside the university. In both environments those experiences are structured by the same racist impulses and work to objectify and marginalize us" (p. 15). hooks (2009), Lorde (2015), Collins (2010), Alexander (2005) and other Black feminists have shared their experiences within academia stressing the consistency of racialized and gendered structures of oppressions in academia and society. In both environments those experiences are structured by the same racist impulses and work to objectify and marginalize us" (p. 15). Audre Lorde (2005) states that Black women were never meant to survive, particularly in the academy.

Empirical studies examining the experiences of Black women in higher education in the United States show that not much has changed for Black women; sexism, racism, and classism still shape their university experience (Caldwell, 2017; Halse, 2018; Walkington, 2017). While Black women have doubled their enrollment rates in higher education over the past 30 years, they graduate at lesser rates compared to white and Asian women (Winkle-Wagner, 2015). Black women who are faculty and graduate students report being funneled into race and diversity related mentorship and teaching assistantships that leave them overworked and depleted (Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012; Moore, Acosta, Perry & Edwards, 2010; Sotello & Viernas, 2002). Graduate students continue to face marginalization, isolation, exclusion, and microaggressions (Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Black women graduate students are also more likely to report having fewer funding, research, and network opportunities than their

white peers (Brook, 2002; Borum & Walker, 2012; Wilson, 2012). Women of color feel invisible and are more likely to experience isolation, imposter syndrome, and pressure to assimilate to colonial mindsets (Patel, 2015; Squire & McCann, 2018). Corbin, Smith, and Garcia (2018) explain the "racial battle fatigue" women of color experience from the psychological tensions and silencing they face in predominantly and historically white IHEs, leading women of color to seek out counter-spaces while navigating their oppressive intuitions and the broader society at large.

Winkle-Wagner's (2009) study examining Black women in higher education exposes how the academy shapes the gendered and racialized experiences of 30 women of color (27 Black, 2 Black Latina, and 1 Multiracial). Her findings describe the ways Black women engage with double-consciousness and disrupt commonly held assumptions related to inclusive policies and programs presumed to help Black women succeed and feel a sense of belonging in the academy. She described how their feelings of "two-ness" directly shaped their educational and social experiences, their sense of belonging on and off campus, and their desire to persist in higher education (p. 4). These qualitative studies explore how the historical and current exploitation and exclusion that Black women experience within society permeates the walls of the university and shapes the experiences of Black women in higher education (Alexander, 2005; Mizra, 2009).

Despite widened access to higher education, marginalized groups including Afro-Brazilian women and Indigenous people remain invisible and pushed to the periphery in IHEs (Barber, 2018; Lloyd, 2015; Mendes, 2021). Eurocentric structures and foundations of academia continue to force Black women into the margins (Gomes, 2018; Ribeiro, 2018). While widening participation is a necessary condition for dismantling racial inequality in higher education and in

broader society, critical Brazilian scholars argue that higher education institutions need to be restructured to attain a truly democratic society (Gonçalvez, 2018; Lima, 2011). Scholars note Black women remain invisible in the curriculum and as knowledge producers in the academy (Lebon, 2007; Martin, Medeiros, & Nascimento, 2004). Although Black women are entering the university in greater numbers, they encounter negative stereotypes and hostile treatment from their peers and classmates (Gomes, 2015). Black women in Brazil are excluded in the curriculum, knowledge production in society and have noted their invisibility in women's studies (Alvarez & Caldwell, 2016; Swift, 2017).

Black Women's Practices of Resistance in Higher Education

Using auto-ethnographic methods, Edwards' (2014) reflections on her experiences as a Black woman, graduate student turned faculty, mirror a sentiment of double-consciousness. Edwards (2014) describes this two-ness as "academic border crossing" to articulate the tensions Black women experience between staying true to ones' identity and conforming to "Academyland" (p. 86). She describes how this hybrid space and centering the knowledge of her ancestor mothers became a formative space of resistance that enabled her to reveal exclusionary institutional practices. She explains, "In those moments, when I allow my kin-women's stories to speak to and though me, I am able to catch a glimpse of the divide, the border, the place where I cross over. I feel more confident in my not-belongingness, and this confidence has been the key to my ability to move like a storyteller in Academyland" (p. 89). Edwards (2014) account of her movement within and between academic borders and subaltern ways of knowing and being underscores how spaces of resistance are sites of possibility to expose domination, but also reveals space as alterable.

These racialized and gendered structures press women of the Black diaspora to develop strategies and spaces of resistance or counter-spaces within the academy (Collins, 1990; Ong, Smith & Ko, 2018; Perlow, Wheeler, Bethea & Scott, 2014). In addition to finding support from other marginalized women, counter-spaces provide an opening for Black women to collectively engage in pedagogies of dissent (Mohanty, 2003) and "unruly, transformative learning", which Patel (2016) describes as learning that is emancipatory.

Harney and Moten (2013) explain the contradiction between the desire for and opposition of Black women on university campuses as: "Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all of that, she disappears. She disappears into the undergrounds, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university" (p. 26). I use Harney and Moten's conceptualization f the undergrounds to think though how universities commodify and tokenize Black women and the nuanced ways they contest and resist. The notion of moving to a "lowdown maroon community" offers a starting point to examine how Black women create and utilize such communities for survive and persist in academia.

Jalil Bishop Mustaffa (2017) describes historical and contemporary anti-Black violence in U.S. higher education systems across three time periods: Colonial Era, Post-Civil War and the mid-to-late twentieth century. Mustaffa (2017) names the historical and contemporary racialized experiences faced by Black students in higher education as "educational violence" and is particularly interested in the dialectical relationship between "black people's freedom projects" and "higher education and society's anti-black projects" (p. 712). The importance of Mustaffa's (2017) work is in his analysis of the structures within higher education as "institutional violence". He explains institutional violence as "the established operations and mechanisms that

reinforce dehumanizing paradigms within an institutional system" (p. 712). Mustaffa (2017) offers a (re)telling of higher education history that incorporates the resistances and voices of black students (p. 712). Mustaffa (2017) explains, " …I theorize higher education's history as contested moments between the intra-connected forms of education violence and Black people's life-making (p. 712). Mustaffa's analysis underscores the historical and contemporary ways higher education institutions maintain racialized and gendered oppressions and the ways marginalized groups resisted.

Black Feminist Thought and Knowledge Suppression

Alexander (2005) is critical of the limitations imposed on professors' aims to teach for justice. Further, Collins' (2015) acknowledges the acceptance of Black women's work in the academy; however, she urges Black women to be attentive to the "symbolic inclusion" of Black women in higher education where Black women's texts may be more welcomed than Black women themselves. Black feminist scholars note the invisibility of Black women's contributions to intellectual thought. Collins (1990) demonstrates the ways larger systems of oppression "work to suppress the ideas of Black women intellectuals and to protect elite white male interests.

American Black feminist scholars have noted the uneven distribution of Black feminist thought from other countries as being related to the suppression of Black women ideas and the hegemony of US knowledge production that preferences English language publications (Mitchell-Walthour and Hordge-Freeman, 2016; Riberio, 2018). Alvarez and Caldwell (2016), highlight the lack of theorization of Black Brazilian women in the field of Black women's studies in the United States arguing their invisibility as a reflection of their "broader political, social, and economic marginalization" (p. 9). She problematizes the "relative invisibility of non-US black women in US black feminist scholarship," demonstrating that the work of US Black

feminists has been translated and published in Brazil, however rarely vice versa (Alvarez & Caldwell, 2016, p. 9).

Alvarez and Caldwell, (2016) highlights the importance of feminist translation to promote transnational dialogue, which solidifies my belief that learning to speak, read and write Portuguese and Spanish is in and of itself a political act. They write, "Feminist translation, thus, may be seen as a way of encouraging conversations across boundaries of culture and location that have historically been used to divide women" (p. 24). Claudia de Lima Costa and Sônia Alvarez (2014) argue translation "is politically and theoretically indispensable to forging feminist, prosocial justice and antiracist, postcolonial, and anti-imperial political alliances and epistemologies" (p. 24). Further, Barbara Christian (1987) highlights another aspect of knowledge suppression where Eurocentric ways of knowing are privileged in academia. She writes,

> For people of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from
> the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing
> (and I intentionally use the verb and not the noun) is often in narrative
> forms, in the stories we create, in the riddles and proverbs, in the play with
> language because dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking.
> How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on
> our bodies, social institutions, countries and our humanity? (p. 52).

This literature gives me insight to consider how anti-black racism and patriarchy inform whose knowledge and ways of knowing is considered 'valid' in higher educational spaces.

Understanding the Patterns and Detours of Black Women's Experiences in the Diaspora

Transnational feminists have highlighted the value of being attuned to the particularities of Black women's experiences while acknowledging the possible alignments. *This Bridge Called by Back,* a feminist anthology by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga (1981), reflect the necessity and value of building alliances with women of color experiencing diverse oppressions. They acknowledge the differences of oppressions and identify the creation of boundaries as a means to divide and conquer. In the forward to this seminal book, Toni Cade Bambara (1981) draws attention to the power in transnational coalitions between women of color. She writes, "Now we've begun to break the silence and begun to break through the diabolically erected barriers and can hear each other and see each other, we can sit down and trust and break bread together. Rise up and break our chains as well" (Bambara, p. vi). The call to extend research beyond geographic boundaries was also a vision for Black Brazilian feminist, Lélia Gonzalez Gonzalez coined the term "Amefricanidade" to articulate her vision of a transatlantic feminism. Mitchell-Walthour and Hordge-Freeman (2016) explain, part of Gonzalez's vision included "constructing a transnational network of Black women from across the diaspora who could work together to promote racial and gender equality" (p. 8).

In 1990, Audre Lorde reminded African American women that we are not alone in our fight against racial, gender and class oppressions. Referring to Black women across the globe as "the hyphenated people", Lorde urged her readers to examine "the vital connections and differences that exist" between Black women throughout the world. She further explained, "The first step to locate these connections are to identify ourselves, to recognize each other, and to listen carefully to each other's stories" (p. 176). Lorde spent three months teaching a poetry workshop to German students in Berlin. During this time she recalled wanting to learn more

about the 'connected differences' of her sisters in the diaspora (p. 169). She writes, "Beyond the details of our particular oppressions –although certainly not outside the reference of those details – where do our paths intersect as women of Color? And where do our paths diverge? Most importantly, what can we learn from our connected differences that will be useful to us both….?" (Lorde, 1984 in Byrd, Cole, & Guy Sheftall, 2009, 169).

Angelique Nixon (2017) reflects on her generative experiences while participating in the Black Feminist Forum hosted by Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) in 2016 in Bahia, Brazil. The forum created a space for Black women from across the globe to grapple with how black women can create and foster change and "that so often change must begin deeply within ourselves and our relationships to each other" (Nixon, 2017, p.67-68). Her overarching question is: "As Black feminists, how are we/can we create communities and be in solidarity across our struggles, our generations, our identities, our privileges, and our oppressions?" (Nixon, 2017, p. 67). Nixon's insight is relevant in helping readers think deeply about Black womens' resistance across the diaspora and particularly useful when considering how women "co-build" global Black feminisms.

Nixon (2017) explains several themes that emerged by "being rooted in our imagination and creativity, using our anger as energy, learning from the past and building visionary solidarity, and forging stronger (re)connections with each other and the earth" (p. 68). The themes included: "love as our center, decolonize hearts, minds, bodies and systems; the need to learn each others languages across the Diaspora; transform/affirm our relationship to the earth and nature; spirituality and creativity as rootedness; and affirm our place in creating Black feminism as paths for social justice" (Nixon, 2017, p. 68).

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the conceptual framework and existing literature used to guide this study. A review of the literature examining the experiences of Black women in higher education and the ways they oppose systems of oppression across the diaspora showed women across borders experience invisibility, isolation, and exclusionary practices. Studies also show that Black women experience double-consciousness or two-ness and use strategies to resist and push back against racism and patriarchy in the academy. This dissertation contributes to these bodies of literature by examining how women across borders experience exclusion. Further, I go beyond naming invisibility and hyper-visibility to begin theorizing how visibility gets operationalized in distinct higher educational settings with disparate policy articulations of inclusion. Also, there is limited research pointedly examining how exclusionary practices shape the ways women conceptualize belonging in higher education. This study fills that gap by closely attending to the ways women make sense of exclusionary practices and conceptualize belonging despite of and perhaps because of their experiences with exclusion. Finally, this research builds on current literature examining how women resist by attending to the ways women's spaces of resistance expose global anti-Black exclusionary practices. This research extends scholarship on Black women's acts and spaces of resistance by analyzing how resistance unfolds in different ways in different national contexts.

Chapter 3: Methodology, Research Design, and Positionality

This qualitative case study examines how Black women experience educational policies of inclusion in Brazil and the U.S. I conducted my research across two predominately white institutions (PWI) in Brazil and the United States: Universidade Federal de Montañhas (UFM) and Midwestern University (MWU).

Black Feminist Epistemology

My research questions and research design reflect my ontological and epistemological beliefs. Guided by Black Feminist epistemology, I believe reality does not exist outside our interpretations, perceptions, and constructions (Dillard, 2000). I take the position that there is no one, objective reality or "truth." Instead, my research is guided by my understanding that realities are interpreted and co-constructed in social ways within economic, political, and cultural contexts (Collins, 2000). Further, I understand co-constructions of reality are rooted in hierarchical notions around race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, religion, and nation (Ahmed, 2020). Overall, my understanding of knowledge as co-constructed signifies that I reject the idea of objective research where the researcher is viewed as a disconnected observer (Dillard, 2000; Twine & Warren, 2000) Therefore, I situated myself and the women I interviewed as co-constructors of knowledge throughout the research process.

Black feminist epistemology attends to power, matrices of domination, and intersectionality. Hence, Black feminism is an ideal tool for me to examine how Black women in the diaspora navigate power, higher educational institutions, and systems of oppression entrenched in capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy (Alinia, 2015; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, Tomlinson, 2013). Further, Black feminist epistemology centers Black women as unique knowledge producers and meaning makers resulting from their marginalized position

in society (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1990). This perspective directly informs my use of in-depth interviews that enabled me to center the thoughts, voices, and experiences of Black women to understand their unique and complex encounters in higher education and their spaces of resistance.

Transnational Multi-sited Case Study

This study applied a transnational multi-sited case study approach (Marcus, 1998), using interviews, participant observations, and artifact analysis. A multi-sited case study methodological approach allows the researcher to provide analytical insights on similar and different things between the two sites (Bhattacharya, 2017) to ask how and why events separated by space and time re-enact similar patterns (Eisenhart, 2012; Visweswaran, 1997).

A transnational multi-sited case study design enabled me to identify patterns and detours of Black women's encounters with (in)visibility and exclusionary practices in higher education across social, cultural, and geographic spaces (Gunaratnam, 2003). Through this approach, I was able to consider if and how various manifestations of exclusionary practices informed the spaces of resistance Black women created across geographic contexts. Additionally, examining the experiences of women of African descent in Brazil and the U.S. provided an opportunity to situate their conceptualizations of belonging in local contexts and consider how racisms, gender biases, and exclusion across two higher education institutions transcend geographical boundaries.

<div align="center">Research Context</div>

UFM is located in a city I name Almeida in Southern Brazil. MWU is in a city I call Parkwood in the Midwest region of the U.S. Both universities were selected due to their targeted and proactive policies and programs aimed explicitly at including groups from marginalized backgrounds. Both universities are situated in predominantly white cities with an 80% or higher

white population, further exasperating the invisibility and hyper-visibility of Black women. Almeida and Parkwood are known for their progressive politics alongside their significant racial disparities in education, healthcare, income, and incarceration. These factors combine to make these two sites ideal spaces to examine how policies aimed at inclusion are experienced by women of African descent and Black women's unique formations of resistance to racialized and gendered oppressions in higher education institutions.

Almeida and UFM

Located in a large southern state, Almeida is one of the largest cities in Brazil. This capital city is located in one of Brazil's wealthiest states and is home to approximately 1.5 million inhabitants. The vast majority of the population is of European descent, specifically German, Italian and Portuguese. There are significant economic and educational racial disparities between Black and white Brazilians in Almeida. In 2017, Almeida was ranked number the one city for the highest racial disparities in education and income.

UFM, founded in 1895 is ranked as one of Brazil's most prestigious universities. UFM adopted its own Affirmative Action Program in 2008, resulting in the percentage of self-declared Afro-Brazilians entering UFM rising from 3 to 11 percent in less than three years (Oliven & Bellos, 2016). Racial quota policies in the south have been considered more robust than in any other region (Oliven, 2016). Almeida's majority white population and the historical and contemporary lack of representation of Afro-Brazilians at UFM attributes to UFM's aggressive quota policies. Being situated in a predominantly white state and having robust policies aimed at inclusion combine to make UFM an ideal location to examine how Afro-Brazilian women navigate racialized and gendered oppressions. In 2020, UFM employed less than 1 percent Black women as faculty. During 2004-2014, due to quotas, the number of Black women

(graduate and undergraduate students) at UFM increased from ninety-two to four hundred and thirty. Importantly, the tenure system in Brazil's federal universities is significantly different compared to the U.S. Since professors at Federal universities are considered public servants, they are automatically tenured after an initial three-year probational period.

Akoma[2]

Akoma is an Afro-Brazilian women's collective created by two professors, one graduate student, and one community member (who passed away in 2017). The Black women wanted to create a space for other Black women in the community and university to center Black feminist thought and engage in activism in their local community and at UFM.

Akoma provides a space for young women to meet monthly to discuss historical and contemporary scholarship written by women from across the Black diaspora. During these meetings women are able apply the readings to analyze their daily experiences with raced and gendered oppressions in and out of the academy. During my visit in 2019, the collective was in the initial phase of expanding its reach to include women of African descent throughout Latin America and several Afro-Uruguayan women were visiting the collective. Akoma offers opportunities to learn more about African cultures and heritage through UFM's extension department that connects the university to the community.

Parkwood and Midwest University (MWU)

Parkwood is a predominately white Midwestern city in the U.S. with approximately 250,000 residents. Parkwood boasts of liberal values, high standards of living, and a strong workforce. Yet, its Black community experiences some of the worst racial disparities in education, income,

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[2] Akoma is a pseudonym.

and incarceration in the nation. MWU is a public land-grant institution. It was founded in the mid-1800s and occupies Indigenous ancestral land.

MWU has an extended history of Black students resisting racist and exclusionary practices. In 1966, Black students at MWU organized by educating themselves about institutional policies and practices and demanding changes at the administrative level, including creating an Afro-American Studies department and demanding an increased enrollment of African American Students by fall 1969. In February of 1969, Black students formed the Black Student Alliance and organized the Black Student Strike to contest the ongoing discrimination and racism toward Black students and the minimal progress toward race-related campus goals. A center for race relations was created in 1968 through 1971 due to the persistent and ongoing organizing of Black students at MWU.

After seeing minimal change, Black students continued organizing, and in 1987, MWU developed its first diversity plan. In December 1987, one of the recommendations from the Steering Committee on Minority Affairs suggested establishing a multicultural center to address the ongoing problems of racism and feelings of alienation and isolation felt by students of color. Currently, the multicultural center serves as a central meeting place for many students of color.

Nearly fifty years later, in the fall of 2016, a campus climate survey reported that only fifty percent of students of color felt safe, welcomed, and respected compared to eighty percent of their white peers who reported feeling a strong sense of belonging at MWU. In 2018, the university began a recruitment program aimed to hire more faculty of color. Importantly, as a result of many Black and marginalized students reiterating their experiences with isolation, MWU created an online education program aimed to promote inclusion by creating a platform to celebrate each other's backgrounds and identities. However, despite the university's increased

focus on diversity, students and faculty marginalized by race, gender, sexuality, and religion still report experiencing exclusionary practices. As of 2020, MWU employed approximately 6% Black women (.9% full faculty, 1.2% Associate Professor, 4.2% Assistant Professor). In 2020, MWU student enrollment consisted of approximately 19 percent Black undergraduate and graduate students. Finally, the time and process to obtain tenure at MWU ranges depending on the department and program. However, generally, assistant professors must meet a series of requirements in the areas of research, teaching, and service. The process begins once they are hired and can take between 6-10 years.

Recruitment and Sampling

I recruited students and faculty at both universities using purposeful selection, criterion sampling, and snowball methods (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). I approached potential participants at university-wide events or at Akoma meetings (Brazil), or emailed them using a recruitment protocol[3] to invite them to participate in my study. The criterion for students, faculty, and staff included they self-identified as Afro-Brazilian (Brazil), African-American (US), African-descent (Brazil and US), and /or Black (Brazil and US) and attended MWU or UFM. I selected participants across various academic disciplines (STEM, social sciences, medical fields) and academic levels (students, staff, faculty).

Participants

The participants included 24 cisgender Black women between 20 -55 years of age, including sixteen students (10 graduate and 6 undergraduate), five faculty, and three staff members at UFM and MWU (See Table 1 and 2). This sample size enabled me to thoroughly examine how the

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[3] Appendix A - Recruitment Script

participants conceptualized higher educational spaces from various viewpoints, clarify relationships, and identify variations in the data. This sample size also allowed for a thorough examination of a range of themes and provided enough data for me to distinguish emerging conceptual categories.

UFM

At UFM, I recruited twelve participants: eight students, one faculty and three staff members. All of the student participants except for Adriana participated in Akoma. Most of Akoma's members are Black women from the south of Brazil. I approached potential participants at events such as Akoma meetings and UFM extension community-based events. I explained my study and provided my contact information if they were interested in participating. I followed up with potential participants by emailing a recruitment script with specific details about the study. I used a snowball method by asking participants to recommend friends.

One faculty member[4] (Maria) and three staff members (Patrice, Marcela, and Dina) from UFM participated in this study. I approached the faculty and staff members during Akoma meetings to determine their interest in participating in the study. All of the women graduated from UFM and provided insight regarding their time as students.

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[4] The tenure system in Brazil's federal universities is significantly different compared to the US. Federal universities are state-serving education institutions. Hence, professors are considered public servants and are automatically tenured after an initial three-year probational period.

I included three academic staff members with PhDs in the UFM sample due to the limited number of Black women faculty. During the study, less than 1% out of approximately 3,000 faculty members were Black women. The staff members worked in various academic level positions in the university, including two administrators who worked for an extension program at UFM aimed to bridge the university to the local community and the other administrator who worked for the department that housed the university's journal. The three staff members were selected because they attended UFM as students before and after quotas were implemented, which enabled them to provide a unique perspective related to the demographic changes after the implementation of quota policies in 2008.

MWU

Six percent of MWU's faculty are Black women, with less than one percent ranked as full professors, one percent as associate faculty, and four percent assistant professors. I recruited twelve participants from MWU including eight students—six graduate and 2 undergraduate level—and four faculty. I searched the MWU department websites to identify potential faculty to participate in this study. I contacted faculty members via email to see if they were interested in participating in this study. The faculty included two assistant and two associate professors in social science, STEM, and medical fields.

Table 1

Students (Total 16)

UFM Students (N=8)	Ages 22-39	Position	MWU Student (N=8)	Ages 20-37	Position
Adriana	23	Undergraduate	Ava	30	Graduate Student
Ana	26	Graduate student	Cali	24	Graduate Student

Bruna	28	Graduate student	Jada	37	Graduate Student
Dianna	27	Undergraduate	Laila	32	Graduate Student
Tatianna	30	Graduate student	Lucy	24	Undergraduate
Gabriela	24	Undergraduate	Penny	34	Graduate Student
Luara	22	Undergraduate	River	32	Graduate Student
Nola (co-founder of Akoma)	39	Graduate student	Sara	20	Undergraduate

Table 2

Faculty/Staff (Total 8)

UFM Faculty/Staff (n=4)	Ages 35-55	Position	MWU Faculty (n=4)	Age 32-41	Position
Maria (co-founder of Akoma)	35	Professor	Ella	32	Assistant Professor
Dina	53	Staff	Naya	37	Associate Professor
Marcela	55	Staff	Olivia	41	Associate Professor
Patrice	48	Staff	Joanna	33	Assistant Professor

Methods

The present study combines three data sources to effectively triangulate the data, including *semi-structured* in-depth *interviews, observations*, and *artifact analysis* (Marcus, 1998). These data sources enabled me to deeply analyze Black women's meaning-making of institutions, their experiences with exclusionary practices, and how Black women shape and are shaped by their spaces of resistance. I stopped conducting data collection when I reached

saturation and "no new information or themes were observed in the data." (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 66-67).

Timeline

This research was conducted over a five-phase process between June 2018 and March 2021.[5] I conducted a pilot study at UFM for one month in June 2018. The purpose of the pilot study was (1) to better understand the historical, political, economic, and social realms of Almeida; (2) to contextualize my observations by talking with community members, university students, faculty involved in the development of quota policies at UFM, journalists, and (3) to consider a research design for this study.

Initially, my research aimed to examine the ways globalization and privatization in higher education contributed to accessibility and racial inequities for marginalized groups. However, observations and conversations with my sponsor, community members, and Afro-Brazilian women at UFM and a local private university guided me in a different direction. Several themes began to emerge during my conversations and observations: (1) spaces of healing for Afro-Brazilian women, (2) policies aimed at inclusion in higher education, and (3) a dialectical relationship between oppression and Black women's activism in higher education institutions. These three themes merged to inform the current study.

I contacted potential participants at UFM during June 2019 to inform them of my study and schedule interviews. I returned to Almeida to conduct participant observations and in-person interviews over two months (July – August 2019). I conducted participation observations (in-person and virtual), including a diversity conference and ongoing programming through the

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[5] See Appendix B -Timeline

diversity office at MWU during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Due to COVID, I conducted virtual interviews at MWU using WebEx. I interviewed eleven out of twelve participants via WebEx during March 2020 – January 2021 and one in March 2021. I engaged in ongoing data analysis throughout and after the data collection phase.

Interviews

I conducted a total of 25 semi-structured interviews. The interviews at both sites ranged between 60-90 minutes. Per Internal Review Board approval, participants at MWU and UFM provided oral consent to participate in this study.[6] I used a semi-structured interviews protocol[7] consisting of *descriptive* (questions used to generate conversation around a particular topic), *task-related grand tour* (questions designed to gain insight into participants everyday experiences within a specific setting), *example* (participants were asked to provide examples to describe their experiences) and *structural* questions (questions designed to understand the participants' context and the social and cultural structures of the environment which they are making meaning of their experiences) (Bhattacharya, 2017; Glaser & Strauss, 2008). The interview protocol was designed to create space for the participants to expand on their encounters with exclusionary practices, conceptualizations of belonging, and creation of and participation in spaces of resistance. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to use a prepared protocol while allowing participants to explore experiences relevant to this study and maintain consistency across the interviews to compare responses (Bhattacharya, 2017). This approach created opportunities for me to learn unexpected results that a highly structured approach may not have

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[6] Appendix C: Consent Forms

[7] Appendix D: Interview protocols

allowed. I conducted 5 - 10-minute unstructured follow-up interviews to member check, clarify thoughts, and ask participants to expand on relevant themes as needed.

I also conducted additional informal interviews with university administrators developing and implementing inclusive policies and programs at both sites. These included two staff members at UFM who were engaged in the initial conversations around quotas at UFM and two members in the department of diversity and inclusion at MWU to contextualize how policies and programming aimed at inclusion are created and understood from an administrative perspective.

UFM Interviews

I conducted 60-90 minute semi-structured interviews with UFM participants in local coffee shops or the UFM campus snack shop. I recorded the interviews using an audio device and took notes. Three out of the twelve participants were fluent in English, and the interviews were primarily conducted in English. Four interviews were conducted with a native Brazilian Portuguese translator. I asked my initial and follow-up questions in Portuguese directly to my participants. Participants responded in Portuguese to me and the translator, and the translator translated participants' responses in English as needed. I conducted five interviews in Portuguese (without a translator) that were later transcribed by a native Brazilian Portuguese speaker.

The translator was also one of the participants in this study. I selected my translator because she had significant experience translating Portuguese to English and was a member of Akoma. As a Black Brazilian woman from the south of Brazil and a member of Akoma, she developed relationships with many of my participants and she had a deep understanding of being a Black woman in Almeida. This created a comfort level between my translator and the participants compared to having a stranger who was unfamiliar with the participants and Akoma. However, this may have limited the amount of information shared due to the lack of anonymity

and confidentiality of their responses. I tried to mitigate participant's potential discomfort by asking each participant if they felt comfortable with me using a translator to ensure I was fully interpreting their responses.

MWU Interviews

 I conducted 60-90 minute semi-structured interviews. All MWU interviews were conducted virtually via Cisco Webex due to the global pandemic. I recorded the virtual interviews using an audio device or through Webex's recording feature, and I took notes.

Participant Observations

UFM Observations

    I conducted twenty-five observations totaling approximately 70 hours at UFM university-wide events, Akoma meetings, and community-based events. University-wide events included programs and events held by the UFM external division. Many of these programs were student-led panels presenting their research or invited guests presenting on social issues in the country. For example, some events included student-led discussions around racial disparities in maternal health, educational disparities in Almeida's primary and secondary schools, and discussions among students and community members related to the experiences of Black women in the academy. Another university-led event I attended was a lecture related to the violent gentrification that was taking place in a community near the university. Some community based events included an event through a youth-led organization in Almeida that provided programming for primary and secondary students to learn more about their Afro-Brazilian heritage. The event consisted of the students expressing how the art-based educational program changed the way they viewed/understood their Afro-Brazilian heritage after completing the program. The students used dance, poetry, and capoeira to express pride in their hair, skin color,

and their culture. These events and others like it provided contextual data for me to understand how race and racism was being discussed and contested throughout the city. I also attended two classes with four participants and two participant's dissertation defenses. Observations allowed me to enter the spaces that the women navigate and witness events and actions first-hand.

MWU Observations

I conducted approximately 50 hours of observation at MWU between 2018-2019. I attended 18 university-wide events, including seminars, workshops, and conferences related to diversity and inclusion efforts to understand how diversity and inclusion notions were being communicated to students and faculty at MWU. Whenever possible, I asked informal questions during observations to better understand how students and faculty were processing various experiences and interactions. During fall 2020, I attended conferences and workshops virtually due to COVID. Unlike the Akoma, which was open to all Black women at UFM and the community, the spaces MWU participants named as spaces of resistance were more closed and intimate spaces. The writing groups were intimate spaces that were developed through close relationships over extended periods of time. For this reason, I relied on women's detailed descriptions of their spaces.

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Media and Document Analysis

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To situate inclusion policies in Brazil and the U.S., I gathered and analyzed historical and contemporary material on quotas at UFM and past and current campus diversity statements from MWU. I reviewed court documents and policies on affirmative action in the US. Further, I analyzed program materials for events aimed at diversity and inclusion at both sites and marketing materials, including websites, flyers, emails, and posters. I reviewed Facebook posts for diversity and inclusion programming and events to understand better the aims and goals for

current policies and programming around diversity, belonging, and inclusion. To better understand Akoma as a space of resistance, I analyzed materials from Akoma, including their vision statement, recruitment or informational posters explaining the aims of the collective, and their reading lists for their monthly courses.

Data Analysis

I transcribed nineteen of the twenty-four interviews. A native speaker of Portuguese who was unaffiliated with Akoma transcribed five of the twelve UFM interviews that were conducted in Portuguese. We talked before and after she transcribed each interview to discuss contextual information such as terminology specific to Akoma and reviewed any aspects of the interview that was unclear.

Data analysis is an iterative and ongoing process (Bhattacharya, 2017). The data collected in this study were transcribed and entered into MaxQDA for analysis. I used inductive and deductive coding methods (Saldana, 2009). I initially used inductive coding to code my field notes, interview transcripts, and documents to reveal existing and emerging themes, patterns, and anomalies within the data. Next, I used deductive coding based on relevant literature and my theoretical framework as a guide to develop a list of codes and categories based on the data (Ahmed, 2012; Alexander, 2005; Caldwell, 2017; Collins, 2000, hooks, 1990; Kahn-Perry, 2019; Paschel, 2016; Mizra, 2009). Some codes included: "diversity", "inclusion", "affirmative action policies", "resistance", "belonging and unbelonging", "invisibility and hypervisibility", "exclusion", "anti-black", and "patriarchy." I continued to expand the codes as I continued to review and re-review the data.

Reflective Notes / Memos

Another analytical practice I used during the data analysis phase was writing memos and reflective notes. I wrote memos in the margins documenting specific words and metaphors of the participants and engaged in constant comparison to check for examples that did not fit (Marcus, 1998). Memos allowed me to reflect on the patterns and relationships between the concepts that emerged during data collection. This analytical process was an opportunity to process what I was seeing in the data but also what the areas participants were not talking about.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systemic and iterative process for reviewing and analyzing printed and electronic documents (Bowen, 2009). I organized the information into categories according to my research questions (content analysis). Next, I engaged in thematic analysis to identify themes. Some of the themes included: "diversity", "inclusion", "belonging", "racialized hate crimes," and "historical and current moments of resistance and opposition". I searched for patterns and emerging themes through 'careful and focused re-reading of the documents' (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). This process enabled me to analyze how the universities framed policies aimed at diversity and inclusion and helped me understand the goals for Akoma. I synthesized all of my data from interviews, document analysis and fieldnotes to create a spreadsheet for larger thematic categories which included a list of participant quotes and phrases from field notes and documents.

Trustworthiness

I took steps to increase the trustworthiness of my data. First, I engaged in member checking throughout the data collection and data analysis to ensure my interpretations reflected the participant's experiences. I conducted unstructured follow-up interviews with participants to member check, clarify thoughts, and ask participants to expand on relevant themes (Lincoln &

Guba, DATE). Second, the multiple sources of data (interviews, observations, and artifact analysis) enabled me to triangulate my research findings effectively by looking for patterns across the various sources of data. Rubin & Rubin (2005) explain the interviewer should engage in ongoing self-reflection to assess how they may be influencing the interview through the questions they are asking or not asking. I engaged in self-reflection during the interview process to self-examine my understanding and responses. Finally, I kept a written journal throughout the research process to remain reflexive about emerging themes from the data. Reflexive journaling allowed me to disentangle emerging themes, inconsistencies, and patterns.

Reflexivity: Insider and Outsider Status and Racial Epistemology

Reflexivity as a methodological tool requires researchers to critically examine how their positionality, epistemologies, and relationship to participants inform the research (Hunter, 2002; Hanchard, 2000; Wasserfall, 1997). Yuval-Davis (2011) explains, "Situated gaze, situated knowledge and situated imagination, construct how we see the world in different ways" (p. 4). My questions about conceptualizations of belonging, practices of exclusion, and resistance are situated in my personal experiences with often being 'the only one or one of a few' while navigating educational institutions and societal spaces. Throughout this transnational study, I continuously reflected on my positionality. I am very aware how the research methods I chose, the questions I asked, and my concerted decision to center the voices of Black women in higher education are directly linked to my experiences as a lighter-skinned, cis-gender, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied Black woman socialized and racialized in America's racial system (Bolles, 1989; Hanchard, 2000; Twine and Warren, 2000). Conducting research in another country outside of my country of origin made reflecting on my positionality as an 'insider-outsider' and racial epistemology even more critical (Caldwell, 2017).

Insider-Outsider Status

During my pilot study in 2018, I learned how certain aspects of my identity fluctuate as salient and dominate the south of Brazil in varying situations and contexts. On several occasions, my phenotypic presentation was read as a Black or mixed-raced Brazilian woman until I spoke English, marking me as an American. For example, I walked into a specialty bakery to buy brigadeiros, a Brazilian dessert. A woman who appeared to be of European descent had just completed placing her order and moved to the side when she saw me enter. She looked at me curiously without saying anything, then sat down to engage in conversation with her companion. When I began to order using Portuguese and English, the same lady turned to me, this time with a welcoming smile, and asked, "Você é Americana?" We exchanged remarks as I waited for my desserts. She asked if I enjoyed Brazil's southern part and described the south as 'cleaner' and an ideal place to learn 'real Portuguese without the slang' and noted other differences between the south and the north of Brazil. I was aware of the south's racial demographics compared to the north and understood her implicit (and explicit) racial distinctions. She declared the Portuguese language was much easier to interpret in the south. She expressed her desire for Brazil to divide into two countries, separating the north from the south[8]. The different ways my body was read

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[8] The succession debate originated in the early 1990s. In 2016, thousands of people in the south of Brazil voted for succession in an unofficial referendum to separate from the north to become its own country. Promoters of "The South in My Country" movement argue the large southern states are economically and culturally distinct enough to be their own country. Importantly, the southern states involved in this movement largely consist of descents from

during this interaction is reflective of many of my encounters, however being marked as American wasn't always interpreted as favorable.

Scholars describe insider-outsider moments as common for American Black women examining women's experiences across the Black diaspora (Caldwell, 2007; Collins, 2000; Gillam, 2016; Joseph, 2016; Twine and Warren, 2000; Perry, 2019). Being a Black woman gave me unique insider access to the Black Brazilian collective, Akoma and other predominantly Black spaces, however, when I displayed markers of being an American, particularly when speaking English, I became a clear outsider. While certain aspects of my identity including my role as a student, gender, age, and race positioned me as an insider among my participants, my national origin and language often positioned me as an outsider. Caldwell (2007) explains the ways insider-outsider status push us to occupy "liminal positions, at different points and, at times simultaneously" (p. xv). I experienced this liminal position when I attended a community event discussing the violent gentrification in a nearby Black neighborhood. An older Afro-Brazilian woman approached me and introduced herself. I responded in Portuguese with an apparent American accent explaining I was a researcher from the U.S. As she walked away, she glanced back at me and whispered to a companion in Portuguese, "Ela é Americana." This instance and others like it made me very aware that my American nationality and language not only informed the ways I made sense of my research but also shaped the ways I was interpreted.

Germany and Italy and tend to be wealthier, while the rest of Brazil mostly consists of people from African, Asian, Indigenous and European descent.

Twine and Warren (2000) highlight a complexity within the insider-outsider status. The authors explain how racial insiders and race matching, when the research and the participants are of the same race, as a methodological tool may allow for increased trust between interviewer and respondents and enable marginalized researchers to examine race from a unique vantage point having experienced racism and discrimination. However, the authors explain it's not that simple. They show how marginalized researchers' social categories outside of race, including nationality, class, gender, age, language may interfere with their insider status. Further, the authors argue not all marginalized researchers share similar racial standpoints. "Racial subordination does not mechanistically generate a critical stance vis-à-vis racism anymore that colonialism created anticolonial subjectivities" (p. 15). I experienced this during an interview with a MWU student. She explained she knew she experienced racist encounters in the past, but it wasn't until recently that she realized those interactions were racist. Hence, I had to continuously be aware how my experiences and understandings were informing my interactions and follow-up questions during data collection and analysis.

Racial Epistemology

In addition to considering how my positionality shaped my interactions with my participants, it was critical that I examined how my racial epistemology informed my research design (Hunter, 2002; Twine and Warren, 2000). Hunter (2002) explains our racial epistemology or "racial 'ways of knowing' affect the creation of research questions, choice of analytic categories, selection of sociological theories, analysis of data, and ultimately, the knowledge and power relations we produce" (p. 119). As an American researcher socialized and racialized in the U.S. context, I constantly reflected on how my experiences in the U.S. system of racialization have shaped my understanding of Blackness, race, and racism. The 'one-drop rule'

has been my reality and guided my understanding of race (Omi & Winant, 2015) throughout much of my life. As a lighter-skinned Black American, I also understand the ways colorism and anti-Black conceptualizations of beauty position me in places of privilege in specific contexts and situations in the US and Brazil (Caldwell, 2007; Greenridge, 2019; Morrison, 2017; Reece, 2020; Telles, 2004; Wahi, 2020). Therefore, I was aware and constantly reflected on the ways my positionality and racial epistemology shaped my interpretations throughout the research process.

Limitations

All studies have limitations that impact the quality of the study (Price & Murnan, 2004). For this study, two different interview protocols were used for MWU participants and UFM participants. There was variability between the protocols because of each site's distinct nature. For example, the UFM protocol incorporated specific questions to understand the women's experiences with Akoma. Due to preliminary research, I already understood Akoma as a space of resistance for Black women. My questions were geared toward better understanding how the women understood Akoma as a space to resist. At MWU, there was no one predetermined site of resistance. For this reason, my questions around resistance incorporated probing questions to understand what spaces women were defining as spaces of resistance. This difference may have limited UFM participants' conceptualization of spaces of resistance to Akoma. It would have been useful to incorporate an additional question to inquire about the other ways UFM resisted.

Although I used different protocols across sites, I used the same interview protocol across academic levels at each location. For example, I used the same protocol for all of the participants at UFM regardless of academic level (staff, students, faculty). While this enabled me to analyze the consistencies and inconsistencies across responses, I may have missed opportunities to more

deeply attend to how Black women's level of power and academic rank specifically informed their experiences at each university. In future follow-up interviews, I will include different questions depending on the academic ranking to more closely understand how increased power may shift the experiences of Black women in academia. Further, this study only included cis-gender women. I acknowledge the incorporation of non- cis women may have provided additional layers of analysis to this study.

Chapter 4: Black Women's Experiences with Visibility in Higher Education in Brazil and the US

Today, among people of color, African Americans are the most visible in media, formal education, and public history. The minimal visibility of non-Black people of color is ambiguous. On one hand, it creates significant difficulty in garnering interest or outrage in conditions of profound inequality or simple suffering faced by those groups. On the

other, limited visibility has the benefit of allowing more space for self-identification or self-fashioning without the influence of the powerful forces of media representations and ubiquitous, popular narratives of the group (Perry, 2019, p. 7).

Imani Perry (2019) highlights the benefits and challenges of visibility by calling attention to its ambiguous nature. Using an interdisciplinary lens to examine race and inequality, Perry challenges the notion that visibility is intrinsically positive for people of color. Perry (2019), an interdisciplinary scholar of race and African American culture explains while limited visibility for non-Black people of color makes it difficult to challenge claims of inequality, invisibility simultaneously creates space for marginalized groups to self-create and self-define. Visibility has been positively associated with representation. There is a widespread social notion that we have achieved racial justice or are at least, heading toward racial equity and progress if BIPOC are visible in media, large corporations, and higher education (Perry, 2011). Situated in contemporary discourses of multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion, visibility is often used to portray an image of social justice and racial equality.

Critical inclusion scholars challenge the notion that inclusion and exclusion are mutually exclusive (Ferguson, 2012). Hence, Black women experience heightened visibility yet remain invisible in higher education (Mizra, 2009). In other words, the politics of inclusion, through representation or redistribution, can essentially be a way to sustain and reproduce a politics of exclusion (Ahmed, 2007; Ahmed, 2012; Collins; 2009). Further, Bourassa (2019) describes *productive inclusion* as an "attempt to make inclusion productive for the maintenance and expansion of capitalism and its novel forms of valorization" (Harney 2006). He continues to explain that productive inclusion maintains and expands capitalism "by preserving and operationalizing forms of exclusion right alongside practices of partial and conditional inclusion"

(p. 4). I build on critical inclusion studies in education to examine different and similar ways visibility gets operationalized in disparate policy articulations of inclusion at UFM and MWU.

In this chapter, I draw on in-depth interview data and visual analysis of university marketing materials and websites to show how Black women's experiences with visibility in Brazil and the US are shaped by disparate policy articulations of inclusion. I argue distinct policy articulations of inclusion—affirmative action policies (redistributive) in Brazil compared to contemporary policies of diversity and inclusion as rhetorical symbolism (representation) in the U.S.—contribute to the different ways Black women's bodies are made hyper-visible in academia. Further, both policy articulations fail to disrupt the structural and ideological practices which make women invisible at UFM and MWU.

Chapter Outline

In the first section, The Paradox of Visibility, I draw on critical inclusion studies of education to theorize how contemporary discourses around diversity inform the experiences of marginalized groups across corporate and educational spaces.

In the second section, Black Women and Hyper-visibility, I show how Black women are used as commodities for MWU to symbolically portray an image of diversity. Further, findings show how Black women's knowledge and labor are used for diversity related initiatives without compensation. This section also examines how Black women at UFM experience hyper-visibility by often being the only Black women in higher educational spaces.

In section three, Black Women and Invisibility in Academia, I demonstrate how Black women at MWU and UFM are rendered invisible. While Black women at MWU specifically. reported feeling unrecognizable and illegible, Black women at both UFM and MWU explained being invisible in the curriculum.

The Paradox of Visibility

"They wanted to have my presence, but not me exactly. They wanted to have the idea of

me being at Google, but not the reality of me being at Google" (Timnit Gebru[9].)

The power of visibility lies in its complexity. Visual images shape our meaning-making

processes and inform how we understand ourselves and others (Hall, 1997). Images shape how

we 'see' our world both literally and figuratively. Cultural theorist and Black Marxist sociologist

Stuart Hall (1997) examines how representation constructs meaning. He argues language,

particularly visual language, is a signifying practice. Through examining the different ways of

producing and communicating meaning, Hall shows how 'languages' and other discursive

productions 'working like languages' operate as a 'representation system' (p. 4). He writes,

"These elements: sounds, words, notes, gestures, expressions, clothes – are part of our natural

and material world, but their importance for language is not what they *are* but what they *do*, their

function. They construct meaning and transmit it. They signify" (p. 5). Visual images construct

ideas and can be used to portray real or perceived realities. In particular, visible photos tell us a

story. This story is often told from the perspective of patriarchal whiteness in higher education.

Visual images and representations directly contribute to how we understand and make sense of

people, organizations, corporations, and state institutions. To this end, photos of Black women

smiling in class or cheerfully walking on campus on websites and brochures act as a signifying

practice to portray academia as diverse and welcoming for marginalized groups.

Timnit Gebru is a Black woman well-known for building a unique ethnically and gender

diverse Artificial Intelligence (AI) team at Google. Her groundbreaking co-authored paper

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[9] Allyn, 2020

presented at the 26th ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining exposes the gender and racial biases embedded in commercial face recognition systems. As of December 2, 2020, she is also the former team lead of Google's Ethical Artificial Intelligence team. Gebru was fired from Google after co-authoring a research paper that exposed inconvenient truths about the risks of large language models, which are an instrumental and profitable aspect of Google's business. Notably, one of Gebru and her co-authors' critiques was that researchers often use large language data sets collected from the internet to train AI. Problematically, there is a high risk that racist, sexist, and often forms of oppressive language is part of the training data resulting in AI models being programmed to view racist language as acceptable (Gebru, 2020; Hao, 2020).

As a Black woman, Gebru's sentiment expressing that Google only wanted the idea of her explained a perspective commonly experienced by other Black women across various contexts, including sports, entertainment, corporations, and academia. Her statement highlights a theme that several women in this study described as being 'tokenized' or as 'having a price tag on their skin,' signifying that their presence provides a particular image and specific type of labor for the university. Gebru's quote exemplifies how the visibility of her body and presence at Google was commodified as a tool to represent an idea of diversity. I center Gebru's experiences as an entry point to analyze the commodification and tokenism of Black women in academia.

Contemporary Discourses of Diversity

Scholars have highlighted the contradictory nature of diversity policies revealing how policies and programs which aim to increase the number of historically underrepresented students within higher education institutions fail to address the various forms of systemic racism

experienced by students of color (Ahmed, 2012). Mizra argues (2009), "The visibility/invisibility distinction that characterizes Black women's presence in higher education must be contextualized within the pervasive, all-consuming discourse of 'diversity and higher education'"(p. 120). Universities aim to avoid being perceived as racist, particularly considering contemporary discourses around diversity and multiculturalism (Sexton, 2008). Mizra (2009) explains, "… 'diversity' has become an all-consuming discourse that no right-minded university, old or new, would dare be without as an intrinsic part of its identity and image" (p. 120). Hence, universities' efforts at diversity are less about being racially diverse and inclusive and more about sustaining marketability, presenting a valuable progressive image of diversity within a competitive neoliberal marketplace. Despite universities' ongoing claims of diversity and inclusion, Black students and faculty continued to be the target of hate crimes and treated as out of place in academia.

Two Black women in academia, Dr. Shardé Davis, an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut (Storrs), and Joy Melody Woods, a doctoral student at the University of Texas Austin, started #Blackintheivory in June 2020 (Subbaraman, 2020). During the weekend of the weeklong Black Lives Matter protests incited by ongoing police brutality against Black and brown bodies and the publicized murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, Davis and Woods decided to expose the reach of white supremacy in academia. #Blackintheivory is an ongoing Twitter conversation for Black students and faculty to share their stories of what it means to be Black in academia. Davis and Woods designed this virtual space to break the silence of Black students' racial abuse and faculty experience in higher education institutions.

The day after initiating the Twitter conversation, Davis and Woods reported an overflow of comments describing student and faculty experiences with racism and sexism in the academy.

Dr. Jessica Ware, an assistant professor at Richard Gilder Graduate school, wrote a post describing a troubling encounter with her former senior professor. Ware explained that a white male professor asked her to stay after a faculty meeting. Once everyone had left, the senior professor explained he watched a documentary about Black women 'sewing on other people's hair' and proceeded to pull Ware's hair and asked, "Is this real?!" (Twitter post as cited in Freund, 2020). Another post by Kareem Carr, a Black doctoral candidate, illustrates what it means to be Black in academia situated in the discourses of diversity and inclusion. He writes, "Being Black in academia is constantly seeing people who've excluded you promoting themselves as leaders in inclusion and diversity. It's watching people use the success you've achieved in spite of them as evidence that they support Black people" (Twitter post as cited in Freund, 2020). These narratives exemplify the racist and sexist encounters that Black students and faculty experience despite aims at diversity and proclaimed inclusivity.

Ware and Carr's encounters also highlight the irony of visibility. Carr demonstrates two critical facets of being Black in academia. He shares the frustration of regularly seeing people who proclaim inclusivity continuously exclude people of color. Notably, he also demonstrates an understanding of the capitalistic nature of diversity politics. Universities benefit from Black students' achievements by portraying an image that they support Black students while upholding practices that render them invisible daily. Ware's encounter highlights the paradoxical nature of visibility and power. During the above encounter, the senior professor used his power as a person in the dominant group, hence spectator magnifying Ware's body as a Black woman in a predominately white male-dominated space. The moment the white male professor reached out to grab Ware's hair to inspect if it was "real or sewed in," Ware's humanity, intellectual contributions, and presence were made invisible and reduced to her body and hair.

Similarly, several women in this study shared their experiences with the paradox of visibility. Visual images do cultural and meaning-making work to present an idea of a diverse and progressive university. However, a different story emerges when we center the voices of Black women from MWU. A close examination of their experiences underscores women's keen and critical analysis of their hyper-visibility as well as their counter-stories. In the next section, I use in-depth interview data from two students and three faculty members at MWU to show how students and faculty understood how their bodies were commodified and tokenized by MWU.

Black Women and Hyper-Visibility in Academia

Hyper-visible and Commodified at MWU

Jada discussed her understanding that her body and intellectual contributions are used as a token within the university. Jada is a 37-year-old doctoral candidate in a social science department at MWU. Jada explained she had many different Black experiences as the daughter of her Caribbean immigrant parents. She explained that she rejected the notion of Blackness as homogenous and embraced the multiplicity of Blackness, including Black Caribbean and African American. Raised mostly in New York City, Jada described some of her favorite childhood memories as nights spent reading with her father after returning from working two jobs. She attributes becoming an early reader to her father, often exhausted from long days at work, falling asleep during reading time. As a result, Jada would gather the remaining books and read them to her father. Her early reading skills and overall academic abilities contributed to her skipping kindergarten and being successful throughout her educational career. Jada exemplified her reflective and analytical nature throughout the interview. She was very aware of how systemic racism and sexism intersected to shape her childhood and her recent experiences as a Black

woman in academia. Jada's keen analysis enabled her to articulate how her body as a Black woman was used as a mechanism to portray diversity at MWU. Jada explained,

> The university benefits from having students who are recognized either locally or nationally, especially students of color who are recognized as being contributors. I am very aware that there have been a number of spaces in which I've been commodified. If I see my face on the university website one more time, I'm going to scream. They come into the class, take pictures, and plaster them on the website. And so, I am very aware of being tokenized in a space where I am shown through the actions of the university that I am not welcome. I'm only welcome to the extent to which it can be monetized for the university.

Jada explained how the university uses her picture to represent an image of inclusivity. However, the actions of administrators, professors, and colleagues uphold exclusionary practices. Similar to Carr's above quote, Jada reflects on the university's contradictions and the specific ways they use her presence to present an image of diversity.

Commodification is not unique to the graduate student level. When asked to describe a formative educational experience, Sara, a 20-year-old undergraduate student in her sophomore year, reflects on a time in her predominantly white high school when her teacher asked her to write an essay for a Martin Luther King Jr. writing contest. Sara expresses her dissonance when her (Sara uses air quotes to emphasize) 'motivated' and 'well-intentioned' English teacher took a particular interest in her work. She explains, "I was working on it, and I submitted it to my teacher, and I could tell he had the best intentions. I know he was motivated to win this competition, so he would spend extra time with me. I submitted it to him, and he was like, 'This is good. This is really good!'" She expresses confusion with the teacher's enthusiasm after reading about her painful experiences as a Black student in a white school and city. Sara reflects,

"I was talking about how much it sucked to be Black in this school, and he was like, this is great work!" Sara and her suffering were constructed as objects. Her pain became an object to be read, edited, revised, and submitted to win an award. Sara's success at writing a beautiful essay becomes interpreted as the institution's success at diversity and inclusion.

Sara's example highlights an instance when Black suffering is made into a spectacle (Sharpe, 2016; Spillers,1987). Spillers discusses the continuity of viewing the Black body as a captive, hence object. She writes, "…the procedures adopted for the captive flesh demarcate a total objectification, as the entire captive community becomes a living laboratory" (p. 68). In other words, despite being free, the once captive Black body remains an object to be observed and examined. While describing Black literary critic and scholar, Barbara Christian's critical analysis of the incorporation of Black literature into the academy, Rodrick Ferguson (2012) reiterates the how Black women and Black literature become objectified: "..the moment by which subjects minoritized by race, ethnicity, and gender become both the subjects and objects of representation.." (p. 35). Further, as a high school student, Sara was made to feel powerless. By relishing in Sara's suffering, insisting that she edit and submit her essay for an award honoring Martin Luther King, Jr's legacy, the teacher's actions demonstrate the racialized and gendered intersections of power, privilege, and oppression. Although Sara may not have had the words to articulate the latter in high school, she clearly understood how her teacher's "well-intentioned" and "motivated" actions placed a price tag on her pain. Sara shared,

> So that shaped me because it shows how, sometimes, my skin color comes with a price tag. I feel like people like to mark that I'm Black because it shows diversity. Because I remember, I won, but I didn't see any money. It all went to the school. So, they got the cash prize, yet I was the winner

Sara went on to explain how her traumatic experiences and story only mattered to the extent that it could win a prize for the school. Again, the school didn't see Sara, only her pain.

> She expresses an awareness that this commodification persists at MWU. She shares,
>
> I feel like they include women of color to make it seem like they are including women of color. But it doesn't come from a genuine place. We're put on pamphlets or websites for aesthetic purposes and to keep up a good front, but in all actuality, if you really go. to these universities, they're not there.

Sara and Jada's experiences demonstrate how their bodies magnified and commodified to promote an idea of diversity. Sara describes a sense of despair with universities for portraying an image of a diverse university that is inconsistent with its reality. She states,

> The university should not market diversity because I know now that it's a PWI….But they market diversity so heavily. It's all over the website. But it's such a lie. If you're going to have someone be a part of your school, be honest about who you are because I could have made a different choice. I talk to my friends all the time; if I lived in this alternate universe and went to an HBCU, how different my life would be.

Sara highlights a critical aspect about universities' ethical obligation to market the university for what it is instead of portraying the university as a diverse utopia. Sara's comment illustrates a similar point made by a MWU alumni in 2000 when he learned his face had been Photoshopped onto an admission booklet's cover in 2013. His face can be seen alongside a group of all-white students cheering at a MWU football game (Prichep, 2013). During a visit back to MWU in 2013, an employee made the alumni aware that he was on the admissions booklet's cover. Confused, the alumni explained he had never been to a MWU football game. Upon receiving backlash for another missed attempt at diversity, MWU explained it was one person's wrong

decision and did not reflect the institution's aims. He declared, universities should portray the type of diversity they would like to create. However, he elaborated, universities have a responsibility to be engaged in creating diversity on campus that goes deeper than adding diversity to marketing materials. In the following section, faculty's experiences highlight the stress associated with tokenism.

Hyper-visibility and Faculty's Experiences with 'Token Stress' at MWU

> And in the university, that is certainly no easy task, for each one of you by virtue of your being here will be deluged by opportunities to misname yourselves, to forget who you are, to forget where your real interests lie. Make no mistake, you will be courted, and nothing neutralizes creativity quicker than tokenism, that false sense of security fed by a myth of individual solutions (Lorde, 2007, 153).

Faculty of color and particularly women of color who are in the gender and racial minority experienced increased stress due to their heightened visibility as a marginalized group in academia (Settles, Buchanan, and Dotson, 2018). Faculty reported experiencing performance pressure and were often deemed to be representatives for their group. Similarly, faculty in this study, two associate and one assistant professor, overwhelmingly reported experiencing high levels of stress and being asked to keep others 'racially aware'.

Naya, an associate professor, shares how her positionality led her colleagues to presume it was her responsibility to use her knowledge of race and diversity to keep them up to date on issues related to diversity, race, and racism. She explains an instance during a faculty meeting where she encouraged her colleagues to consider the harmful experiences that students of color might be experiencing when she received an email. She stated,

> I remember getting an email during a faculty meeting from one of my white women colleagues, but she didn't say anything in the meeting. She didn't back me up in the conversation, but she sent an email that said, you're so brave.

Naya further explains that despite not supporting her during the faculty meeting, two colleagues asked her to inform them if they ever say anything "out of line." Naya's encounter reflects what has been termed the Black tax (Palmer & Walker, 2020). Black tax is the psychological burden Black people experience when they have to deal with racism daily and carry the load of being the one to inform their peers and colleagues of their racist behaviors (Palmer & Walker, 2020). Palmer and Walker further explain Black tax as a price Black people pay when situated in predominantly white spaces. This burden includes continually being questioned, doubted, and disrespected as a person in authority. Unfortunately, this was only one of the countless instances where Naya experienced the effects of being the only 'visibly Black body' in her department. She worked with other Black women, however they were visibly not Black and were able to 'pass' as non-Black women. Naya's analysis that she was the only visibly Black body shows her analysis of race as a complex and fluid social construct. Naya described a different moment where she was required to be on a job search committee. She explains, 'I was the Black voice - the only Black voice.' Naya described the implicitly racist comments she had to endure when Black applicants were asked to provide additional information and when women of color were talked about differently compared to white applicants. She recalled,

> Women of color candidates are not talked about in terms of their intellectual contributions or scholarship. Instead, they are described as 'such a nice person. It's shit like that. Unfortunately, the white men are the ones who are the most silent and hold the

most power. Everyone else tiptoes, and there are definite hierarchies. So, whether you're

the assistant professor, women, or women of color, there are various power dynamics.

Naya continues to explain how 'being a professor as a Black woman and navigating those kinds

of politics have been very hard.' She shares how these moments accumulated to the point where

she decided she was ready to leave:

> At that point, I was ready to leave. I was like, I'm leaving. I don't want to be here. I don't
>
> want to be here. I think for me, it was the beginning of the souring I felt about the
>
> academy in general. And what it felt like to be a Black woman here and the ways that you
>
> see Black people's research get treated.

As Mizra (2009) explains, visibility comes with costs. As the only Black woman in her

department, Naya discussed being asked to keep her colleagues up to date on racial politics, and

she had to navigate 'nice' racist comments. Like Naya, Joanna, an assistant professor in a

medical field, explicitly names her experiences educating her colleagues around race and

intersectionality as an additional burden. She described,

> I have to give an education on intersectionality, which is not my role. It's the Black tax –
>
> minorities are always called to be on diversity panels or do diversity work – having to
>
> educate and enlighten our non-minoritized colleagues on intersectionality, which is not in
>
> my job description, but I am constantly doing it. I'm happy to do it, but it's an additional
>
> burden always to have to do that.

Both Naya and Olivia discuss the exhaustion they experience as Black women often asked to

contribute the additional labor of representing diversity and dealing with the psychological stress

of educating their colleagues. Olivia, an associate professor, further discusses the emotional

stress of having to work 'five times harder' than her white male colleagues. She explains her mixed emotions of being a Black woman in academia,

> I have mixed emotions about being a faculty member, and I think it's because I'm a minority, or I think it's because I'm a woman. Who knows? Unfortunately, both are seen as negatives in education. My experience is there have been a lot of highs for sure…..And there's been some lows. Not getting recognized or valued for what you believe in. When you're not treated the way you expect to be treated by other faculty members just because of who you are, and that has happened to me. And even senior faculty when I was a junior faculty, not regarding me and trusting that I actually have a voice or something tangible to say during faculty meetings. So that is hard as a faculty member.

Olivia expressed uncertainty if she was mistreated due to being Black or being a woman and settled on the fact that both are devalued identities in the academy. She describes the emotional stress from having to work harder than her colleagues. She discusses her reality of being disregarded and perceived as not having a voice. All of the faculty members noted the ways power operates to create hierarchical differences between senior and junior faculty and white men compared to women and women of color.

Notably, the students' and faculty's experiences highlight the nuanced ways power and visibility can operate in academia. Students experienced frustrations with commodification of their bodies while many of the faculty expressed the ways their time, knowledge and experience was commodified by asking them to perform additional labor in academia.

Contemporary discourses of diversity and inclusion rely on the representation of marginalized bodies to portray an image of diversity. Situated within contemporary policy

articulations of diversity and inclusion the findings show how Black women at MWU experience hypervisibility through tokenism and commodification. Ahmed (2007) describes how an open-ended term like diversity, "means that the work it does depends on who gets to define the term and for whom. Diversity can be defined in ways that reproduce rather than challenge social privilege" (p. 240). Further, the notion of productive inclusion illuminates the ways inclusion can operate as a form of capital for universities, extracting free labor from marginalized visually portrayed by the university compared to their lived experiences in academia. Although images of Black women as faculty members are often used to portray and uphold progressive ideals of US universities, Naya, Joanna, and Olivia emphasized the additional unpaid labor and Black tax associated with navigating heteropatriarchal and anti-Black systems of oppression in academia. Black women at UFM experienced a different form of hyper-visibility.

Hyper-visible and Alone at UFM

Black women at UFM discussed visibility in the context of being the only Black woman in their classes. Individuals and groups experience visibility in diverse and nuanced ways. Hypervisibility and invisibility are not mutually exclusive and can be experienced simultaneously. Being one of the only Black students in their classes made Black women at UFM simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible. Several students, faculty and staff shared their experiences.

Maria, one of the few Black women faculty members at UFM talked about her experiences as a student,

I've always been in a place where I rarely had Black classmates. All of college, I had one Black classmate. Me and another Black girl. In my master's, I had one Black classmate.

And in my PhD, I had none. That was important because my educational experience was mostly as the only Black person all the time.

This experience of being one of a few continues for Maria as a faculty at UFM. Maria is part of the less than 1% of Black women employed as professors at UFM. She explained how being 'the only one' as a faculty member often left her having to explain the importance of quotas to other professors who didn't always understand the importance.

Dina also a faculty at UFM shared how being one of the few Black women meant many students would rely on her when they encountered racist incidents in the university. Due to the limited number of Black faculty, Black students depended on her for social support but also for support related to navigating racism in academia. She shared,

Many of my students, and those that are not my students and are the first in their family to attend a federal university depend on my. They are still learning how to get along with their studies and readings. But they also have to experience intense racism from their professors, administrators, and other students. Our numbers [faculty] are so few, we are invisible at UFM.

I met with Dina several times during my study and often she was supporting a Black student. Several times Black students would find her just to talk and enjoy her company. Other times students would seek her guidance regarding navigating social interactions in classes or in the broader university space. Dina explained to me the need for a course or additional support for students. Dina was hyper-visible among her predominately white colleagues, yet Black women faculty as a whole remain invisible at UFM.

UFM students often discussed invisibility and hyper-visibility in the context of being the only Black student in their classes and in relation to discussions around race and racism.

Ana, a graduate student at UFM elaborated,

> I spent five and half years at UFM in international relations and there were four or five
>
> Black students, including me out of 100. And even when we were studying with other
>
> majors like international law where we had people from law and international relations I
>
> was the only one. I took an introduction to law class and there were students from two or
>
> three majors, with 50 students in the classroom. I was absolutely the only Black student.

Ana shows an evident attentiveness to the overall invisibility of Black students in her courses
and her hyper-visibility as the only Black student.

> Adriana, an undergraduate student at UFM shared a similar understanding related to not
>
> only the invisibility of Black bodies but also certain "subjects." She declared,
>
> I am one of the few Black women at the university. The university is a space where there
>
> are things we need to think before speaking about because there are subjects that don't go
>
> to the university. Especially considering the way the university functions, being a place
>
> of knowledge transmission, but only western [knowledge]. And I think my experience is
>
> a common experience of being a Black student in a space that is whitened such as a
>
> university.

> Historian, anthropologist, and professor, the late Léila Gonzalez, also a Black Brazilian

woman, describes the paradoxical nature of Brazilian politics around race as a "Brazilian

Cultural neurosis." She explains that Brazil aims to sell an idea of a country that celebrates racial

democracy presenting Samba and carnival as representing the mixed culture of Brazil while

simultaneously maintaining the groups that produce this culture in a position of subordination. In

an interview, Black Brazilian feminist and professor Djamila Ribeiro explains, "The absence of

Black people in places of power in Brazil is evident and frightening" (Affricott, 2020). The

following section continues to explore another form of visibility that Black women in academia encounter: invisibility.

Black Women and Invisibility in Academia

Despite having distinct experiences with hyper-visibility, Black women at UFM and MWU all discussed experiences with being rendered invisible in the curriculum. In this section, MWU students and faculty discuss instances where their contributions or bodies are rendered illegible. A faculty member reflects on her experiences where colleagues would walk by her without recognizing her. A graduate student shares how her Black body's hyper-visibility makes her authority invisible to her predominantly white students. UFM and MWU students discussed invisibility in the context of curricular exclusion.

Unrecognizable and Lacking Authority at MWU

For Naya and others, invisibility comes in the form of being unrecognizable by her colleagues. She shares,

> I felt very unseen. I have been in all kinds of campus committee meetings for years now; we're talking about an hour or two hours, even some department faculty meetings. I've had the same people walk right by me on campus and not recognize me. There are times, and I want to give people credit like maybe I looked different that day or perhaps people are in their own world. But I know who a person is. I know who they are. And I've never not known who my colleagues are, and so that's always felt very much like I'm just some random Black girl to them.

Naya's experience reiterates how Black women's bodies are legible when they uphold diversity politics or are commodified to present a progressive university. Yet, their bodies become illegible during day-to-day interactions. Joanna reflected on a similar instance when she was disregarded

and confused as a cleaning person. Joanna explains, 'I'm not heard. I'm disregarded. I've been confused with being a cleaning person or a food delivery person by colleagues.' Naya and Joanna's experiences exemplify how visibility and power are inherently intertwined.

Ava, an advanced graduate student, explains how her authority was undermined as a Black woman when she was a classroom instructor for an undergraduate course. While reflecting on the ways her positionality as a Black woman shaped her experiences at MWU, Ava described two encounters when students in her class explicitly challenged her authority. During a class presentation, one student said, "We are going to talk about this in our presentation because Ava failed to address this issue all semester." Ava explained she knew they would not have said that, especially in front of the entire class, if she was a white male professor. She described a separate encounter when another student accused her of being incompetent at using an online platform such as Blackboard. When Ava explained to the class that she could track who downloaded the readings, the student emailed her after class, questioning her ability to use the system effectively. The white male student explained that he was a teaching assistant and argued that Ava could not know who downloaded the readings. Ava explained, "He was one of the students who was not opening up the articles, so I understood why he was combative. However, if I was a male, I know he would have reacted differently."

Black women's intelligence, abilities, knowledge, and skills are frequently under attack and challenged in academia and society (CITE). At that moment, Ava's hyper-visibility as a Black women instructor in an all-white undergraduate course made her authority invisible. In a racialized world, power and visibility make authority legible on white male presenting bodies and illegible on Black female-presenting bodies.

Invisible and Erased at UFM and MWU

Many of the women described institutional practices that contributed to the absence of Black thought in the university. Students at UFM and MWU shared the lack of course options and described exclusion at the course level when professors excluded Black intellectual thought.

Patrice, currently an employee at an extension of UFM, attended the university for undergraduate studies in economics before quotas existed. She explained that the lack of representation during her time as a student was only one dimension of the exclusion she experienced. She described the violent curriculum as contributing to her difficult experience navigating UFM as a Black woman. She reflected,

> I graduated with a degree in economics. I was a student in a time where there was no affirmative action at UFM. Economics was a very white major and very male as well. I had very few classmates who were women, and almost no Black classmates. Closer to the end of my time, I had two or three Black classmates. But this is not an issue of representation only, it's also about the curriculum. It's an extremely white curriculum, Eurocentric, without authors from other countries other than American or European. The way of dealing with Brazilian economy, with aspects of the economy, as the period of slavery, was extremely… today, from my perspective, I think it was a curriculum that was very violent. ….. It was a poor and violent curriculum for a Brazilian student, especially for a Black woman.

Patrice highlighted two challenges of being a Black woman in academia: the loneliness of being a Black woman in a 'very white major and very male" field and the lack of diverse perspectives in the curriculum.

Similarly, Ana explained all the courses in her international relations department were about the Global North:

> I used to say that International Relations drove me a little white, you know. Not only
> because of the authors and the topics we were studying, I can't remember reading one
> Black author. But at the time I didn't mind it, because you know, that's normal. I was
> learning how it was. I was becoming kind of like them.

Ana discusses only finding one course on Africa and Asia and this was a combined course. She explains how the institutional norms around curriculum and research in higher education often exclude Black intellectual thought. Importantly, she notes that she didn't mind studying predominantly white authors because she thought that was normal. Her next sentence is telling as she mentions 'becoming kind of like them'. She continues by describing a moment that eventually contributed to her decision to transfer to the History Department.

> But though I graduated in international relations, I only had one class about Africa and
> that was together with Asia. I got pretty mad about it at the time. I wanted to do
> something, but my colleagues didn't give me support. They were like "whatever, it's one
> class less to take." So, I really wanted to learn a lot more about Africa. You always study
> like Europe and the United States. I created a hate for the United States and Europe at the
> time. Even without considering the whole thing about colonization and neo-colonization
> and stuff. But, because I wanted to learn more…..There are countries out there but they
> just study Australia. This is a fucking international relations course, we need to learn
> about everywhere, not just the Global North.

Ana and Patrice's reflections demonstrate how critical Black scholarship of the diaspora is systematically locked out of knowledge production by not including diverse authors, texts, and ideas from various countries in the curriculum (Carty, 1991). Ana continued,

But okay, it didn't happen. I wrote my thesis about the Palops, which are the African countries that speak Portuguese and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Then, I discovered lots, but there was one thing that got me concerned, but at the time it was not a huge problem for me. Most of the literature I used was written by white people. Even from UFM, there is a professor who knows a lot, but where are the Black people? Even when I'm studying Africa where most people are Black. I can't really reach Africa, I need someone in the middle from the United States or someone somewhere in Europe, or even in Brazil, for me to reach that African knowledge. My essay, I got the maximum grade and I was happy but things started to change, and I started to see that I had a lot to learn.

Ana explains despite the lack of courses about Africa at UFM, she was able to independently conduct research to learn more about African countries. In the latter quote she explains she was dissatisfied that most of her literature was from white scholars. Here I note, a shift from her earlier comment when she said her reading of all white authors was normal. James Baldwin (1963) calls this the "paradox of education" explaining, "as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated" (page). As I further discuss, in Chapter 6, Ana's engagement with Akoma and increased awareness about systemic racialized and gendered structures in academia shifted her understanding of herself, community and experiences in the university.

Cali, a graduate student at MWU reflected on how her hyper-visibility at MWU made her invisible. She expressed confusion at the way race manifests differently across different spaces making her hyper-visible in one context and invisible in another. She declared,

You experience racism and everything from the day you're born. And you become aware

of it as you get older. And I guess in my hometown, which is predominately black, my

sense of racism was white people are always looking at me whenever I'm in white spaces.

So, I'm like, okay, well, when I get to MWU, I'll be prepared for that because that's how

they treated me in my hometown. ……But coming to MWU, I was invisible, and I'm

like, well, this is weird. I wasn't prepared for this. I thought I was going stand out. It was

just weird, and I felt really lonely.

Cali's reflections highlight how race can operate differently across contexts (Omi and Winant,

2015) and demonstrates that invisibility and hyper-visibility are not mutually exclusive and can

exist simultaneously. The social effect of invisibility was Cali felt alone. Cali's experience

highlights the relational and contextual nature of visibility and racism. Cali experiences with

invisibility extended beyond her social interactions to her encounters with the curriculum. She

explained she had to 'draw herself in' to textbooks in order to feel reflected in the curriculum.

She described,

But it was just so weird because I wasn't seen. I wasn't seen in the curriculum. Even

looking in the textbook, I had a STEM textbook, and I would read through, and it would

have little comics, and I'm like, all the ppl in here are white. Sometimes I draw little afros

on them. I was procrastinating. Okay. (laughing) But it's just, you know, small things

like that. It just goes to show, like, dang, I can't see myself in people on campus, or even

in the textbook. Like, I gotta draw myself in. So, in short, being a black woman on

campus at MWU feels invisible.

In order for Cali to be seen, she had to draw herself in. In order to feel visible and legible she had

to make herself seen in this way. As I discuss in the upcoming chapters, the women in this study

continuously resisted the subtle moments and encounters that tried to erase and silence them. Her statement is powerful because it touches on the expansiveness of invisibility and unbelonging.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how Black women in Brazil and the U.S. experienced hyper-visibility in unique ways during distinct time periods of policies of inclusion and under disparate policy articulations of inclusion. Aligned with Bourassa's notion of productive inclusion, Black women's bodies were made hyper-visible through commodification and tokenism at MWU. Black women's bodies were valorized within policy articulations of inclusion demonstrating how policies of diversity and inclusion can appropriate differences and make them available for capitalism (Bourassa, 2019). In other words, MWU used Black women's labor and pictures on their website toward their "series of aims and objectives" which profited MWU by enabling them to uphold the idea of diversity.

Importantly, regardless of the distinct policy articulations of inclusion, Black women in both countries experienced invisibility as being unrecognizable, erased or illegible. These findings reiterate how dominant structures of oppression remain constant despite different policy articulation of inclusion. Regardless of the policy articulation, Black women in both contexts still navigated institutions upholding heteronormative, patriarchal, and white supremacist ideas and ways of being. The women's encounters with invisibility in this chapter also reiterate the need to continue to ask how inclusion operates to maintain structural and institutional change (Bourassa, 2019; Ferguson, 2012; Lowe, 1996; Patel, 2016). The next chapter continues to critically examine inclusion by centering the women's experiences with social, cultural and institutional exclusionary practices in academia.

Chapter 5: Black Women's Experiences with Limited Belonging and Social, Cultural, and Institutional Mechanisms of Exclusion in Higher Education

"Structural racism - a racism that structures the university's base and a racism that is also institutional." Dianna, UFM graduate student

"We may need new forms of anti-racist resistance because we confront a new form of racism, which is organized around a politics of *inclusion* rather than one of *exclusion*" (Collins, 2000, p. 89).

Dianna is a 27-year-old graduate student in biology who entered UFM through the quota system. In the above quote, Dianna reflected on her experiences as a Black woman at UFM. She explained her "everyday experiences" are shaped by "a racism that structures the university's base and a racism that is also institutional." Sara Ahmed (2012) explains, "Perhaps the habits of the institution are not revealed unless you come up against them" (p. 26). The findings in this chapter demonstrate the women's experiences with institutional, social, and cultural mechanisms of exclusion to show 'the habits of the institutions.' Specifically, I draw on data from in-depth interviews and artifact analysis to examine how exclusionary practices at UFM and MWU are embedded in a politics of belonging that situates university spaces as white, heteropatriarchal and anti-blackness spaces.

In discussing explicitly racist incidents targeting marginalized groups on university campuses, Patel (2015) argues such backlash to inclusion is common and predictable as universities are "borne of stratified racist settler colonialism that relies on myths of meritocracy and the rhetoric of diversity to maintain the underlying social order" (p. 658). In this chapter I show how 'backlash' to inclusion does not only happen in explicit forms at MWU and UFM. I argue, backlash to diversity happens through social, cultural, and institutional exclusionary practices. In showing the layered exclusionary practices Black women experience at UFM and MWU, I demonstrate how Black women mitigate and resist exclusionary practices. Further, I examine how Black women make sense of their belonging in heteropatriarchal and anti-black

institutions by offering the concept of *limited belonging*. Limited belonging describes the complex and nuanced ways Black women contest, resist, and reimagine norms of belonging in academia that are deeply embedded in anti-blackness, heteropatriarchy, and the notion of meritocracy.

Chapter Outline

The first section explores Black women's exclusionary *social* interactions with peers and colleagues. I examine the women's experiences of being 'the only one' and how they navigate social exclusions in higher education at UFM and MWU. The second section explores *cultural* mechanisms of exclusion. I examine a marketing video used to promote homecoming at MWU to analyze how notions of belonging and entitlement are upheld through cultural practices in academia. I define cultural exclusionary practices as aspects of academia that are so ingrained in the fabric of society and higher education that they are often invisible.

The third section attends to institutional exclusion. I define institutional forms of exclusion as policies and practices operating at the institutional level. These include practices and decision-making processes at university, school, department and classroom levels. This section also explores how the women in this study understood the limits of the institution and the inability for subaltern knowledge to fully exist within the constraints of educational institutions. Finally, drawing on Yuval -Davis' (2011) notion of belonging and politics of belonging, I conclude the chapter examining how Black women conceptualize what I call limited belonging at MWU.

Student's Experiences with Exclusionary Social Interactions: Burden to Legitimize their Existence: "I Often Have to Prove Myself"

Despite the variances between UFM and MWU's policies aimed at inclusion, students across both spaces share similar and different experiences with discriminatory and exclusionary practices. When asked how the unique intersections of being Black women shaped their experiences at MWU and UFM, the women shared social interactions that left them feeling excluded and isolated.

Black women, students, at MWU and UFM shared social encounters where they had to prove their intellectual ability to be at the university. MWU students, in particular, shared their experiences in classroom settings where their classmates explicitly excluded them in various ways. UFM students also shared experiences with social exclusion, however their experiences were often related to being stigmatized because they were accepted through the UFM quota system.

Black women at MWU shared encounters where they had to prove their intelligence to their classmates. Cali a MWU graduate student shared,

> I was shut out numerous times….I would try and work with the two guys next to me and they would literally turn in a way where I couldn't join them. And it's like, well, if you're like this *(gesturing to show how the group turned away from her to face the other direction)* and the people over here are like this *(gesturing that the group turned in the opposite direction)*---I can't work with either group.

Similarly, Penny, also a MWU graduate student explained,

> Okay, so it's hard to tell whether or not this is just my own insecurity or if it's something sort of external. But oftentimes, I've noticed in classes and particularly when there is group

work or the teacher… and I hate those 'turn to a neighbor' or whatever because everybody turns away from me. I don't know if you've ever had that experience in group work, and so it always gives me pause of, well, do they think I can't do the work or what?

Penny's final question demonstrates the risk of internalizing oppression. Paulo Friere (1968) discusses how oppressed groups may begin to internalize the messages of the oppressor. Penny described another experience when a group member was taken aback and offended that Penny knew something that they did not.:

I was in a statistics course last semester, and we were doing group work and talking through the answers, and I was like, oh, I think this is the answer. And then one girl was like, no, it's not, you don't know what you're talking about. And I said here are the reasons why I think it is, and she's like, well I have experience. So sure enough, the professor came around and was like, oh, Penny is right! So, the whole time this woman was just like, I don't know how I could have gotten that wrong. Like, I can't believe I got that wrong and, like, she was just like, so upset, like, destroyed that I could know something.

As Black women, Cali and Penny were perceived as not being smart enough to work with or know the correct answer. Cali recalled a time she had made one small mistake on her math assignment and her peer corrected her. She jokingly responded that she was "so bad at math." She recalled her classmates wouldn't let it go. She described this moment as making her realize the type of jokes she made around your friends in terms of being bad at something, she couldn't do in front of classmates. She stated, "They already view you as not being smart. So, you're just confirming it for them."

From then on Cali explained she became selective about revealing academic struggles with classmates who may already view her through a deficit lens embedded in patriarchy and anti-

Blackness. Cali showed an understanding that some of her classmates have preconceived notions that she is not smart. Cali's encounter demonstrated how the burden to prove one's legitimacy can also leave Black women feeling that they can't ask for help or express academic struggles for fear of being perceived as not smart.

Like other women in this study, Lucy, a graduate student in a STEM department, shared several encounters where she was excluded from conversations because she was perceived as not having anything 'substantial to contribute.' She described how her experiences of always being the only Black woman in a predominantly white, male-dominated STEM field taught her that she needed to have a strong voice in order to be heard. Lucy explained,

> I feel like it is giving me a lot of confidence. I realized I had to grow really quickly. Like in undergraduate school, being in the south with mostly white males from the middle of nowhere…I quickly learned that I needed a voice, and it had to be strong. So I feel like it comes off as bitchy at times, but that's the way I feel like I can be heard. When I'm direct and just straightforward.

When writing about her experiences as a Black woman in higher education, Carty (1991) explained, "There is little difference between what we experience in the streets as Black women and the experiences we have inside the university. In both environments those experiences are structured by the same racist impulses and work to objectify and marginalize us" (p. 15). Lucy and Cali's responses to the burden to legitimize their existence in academia and in their distinct fields demonstrate that Black women are aware of this burden and respond in different ways in order to protect themselves and to be heard. Lucy and Cali's experiences also highlight how their peers racialized and gendered, deficient understandings of Black women inform their daily social interactions. Cali and Penny's experiences exemplify how gender and racial disparities in

institutions are often attributed to negative, deficient oriented stereotypes, such as lack of

intelligence about women and racialized groups, rather than systemic inequalities as the reason

for their underrepresentation (Block et al. 2019).

As the only Black women in their classes at UFM, Dianna and Natalie explained how

they had to prove themselves because they entered the university through the quota system.

Dianna, a 27-year-old graduate student at UFM described how she was further marginalized

when students learned she entered through quotas. She explained the importance of "finding

other Black women:"

> We are discriminated against, from our hair to our skin color. In biology, for example, we
>
> are very discriminated against when they know that we got in through quotas. Because
>
> like I told you, it's not everybody, but a vast majority of people in biology don't
>
> understand the importance of racial quotas. When they know you got in through quotas,
>
> they are like… (gestures). You know?

Tatianna, a 30-year-old graduate student shared a similar sentiment explaining,

If you get in through quotas, I think it can be very cruel because there are many professors who

discriminate against you. They already expect you to be an inferior student. You have to always

prove yourself, showing that you're capable, that you can do it. Dianna and Natalie's experiences

exemplify how quotas provide access for marginalized

groups to enter academia yet fail to dismantle heteropatriarchal anti-Black ideologies that uphold

and sustain understandings of belonging in academia (Ahmed, 2012). Natalie and Dianna's

experiences with professors and peers reflect a constructed politics of belonging in higher

education that is embedded in anti-blackness and patriarchy—a politics of belonging that construct

higher educational institutions as white spaces. Dianna names "finding other Black women" as a

way to resist social exclusion and isolation in academia. Forms of resistance will be further explored in the next chapter.

Faculty's Experiences with Exclusionary Practices: Social Exclusion Leading to Professional Exclusion

Joanna, a faculty member at MWU, described how policies and programs that financially support and recruit women of color into *unwelcoming* institutional atmospheres. She shared, MWU has taken incredible strides and added policies that are not just saying but actually providing resources to expand inclusion of underrepresented groups. However, it's not inclusive. Once you recruit all of these women of color, give them the salary support and once you get them here, the experiences we have with colleagues, administrators within hospitals, clinics, in our department and everyone else is not as welcoming. That's something that the higher up administration can't really control.… the atmosphere. Joanna's statement calls attention to the relationship between institutional policies and social interactions. She highlighted the limited reach of policies of inclusion and showed how inclusion and exclusion can and do co-exist. She continued by sharing her experiences with the frequent slights and microaggressions she encountered as a Black woman on campus,

> It's very difficult. It's related to implicit bias and even when I was a trainee I felt it in some of my experiences. It would be things that would happen to me. You always hear of that analogy, when there are a lot of small cuts, individually they are not life threatening, but if you have one million tiny cuts you can bleed out and that is happening. It is very subtle things – nothing quote on quote outright, but just a lot of subtle things.

Joanna noted how subtle interactions shape Black women's everyday experiences in academia and Ella shared how she mitigated such subtle interactions, such as being socially excluded by her colleagues.

      Ella, an assistant professor at MWU who self-identifies as a Black, queer woman, explained. challenges that come with being a Black woman in academia and some of the ways she is able to overcome them. She explained how being left out of informal social events may or may not matter when it comes to advancing in her career yet directly shape her day-to-day experiences. Ella explained,

> As a Black woman, as a Black queer woman, I'm left out of a lot of informal socializing, which doesn't matter. Right? It really doesn't matter career wise, but it's still a felt thing, right? I would say in the long run, it never ends up mattering, but it can feel like it does and it's still a felt thing.

Ella shared an internal debate as she grappled to understand if and how being left out of informal socializing would have long term consequences toward her career. Ella's questions concerning how social exclusion may shape her career are valid as organizational scholars explain processes perpetuating racial discrimination are embedded in interlocking systems including social, political, economic, and institutional (Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). Additionally, Settles et al. (2018) show how social exclusion can lead to professional exclusion. Ella demonstrated her understanding that to be successful in the academy, she had to 'produce' by publishing. She explained she mitigated how social exclusion could impact her professional goals by continuing to publish. When asked about her long-term goals, she explained "to be untouchable, so no one can mess with me in the academy." Although Ella shared uncertainty regarding the impact of

social exclusion on her professional growth, she understood her ability as an assistant professor to take some control by producing publications.

Importantly, as a Black queer woman, Ella's experience with social exclusion highlights the need to understand how intersecting identities including race, gender, and sexuality converge with intersecting systems of domination. An intersectional approach requires us to examine Ella's socially marginalized identities and the institutional, cultural and social mechanism of exclusion as interconnected and unable to be pulled apart as "distinct and isolated" (Brah and Phoenix, 2004, p. 80). Ella's exclusion at the social level may have institutional consequences. Being left out of informal socializing events may prevent her from advancing in her career despite her publications. For example, later in the interview, Ella also stated how her positionality has made it more difficult to get others to "invest in her career aims."

Interestingly, similar to the students in the previous section, Ella experienced social exclusion, but pushed back. While Cali and Lucy contested social exclusions by adjusting the ways they interacted with peers, Ella understood her ability to publish as a tool to mitigate the impact of exclusionary practices on her career goals. This highlights an important difference between the ways faculty are able to resist compared to students. Ella had power to publish to mitigate some of the ways exclusion may shape her career, however students may need to find ways to work with their peers in order to complete group work or get a passing grade in their courses.

Black feminists have noted aw experience compared to Black men (Collins, 2000). Hull and Smith (1982) explain, white women don't consider racial politics and Black men fail to consider the sexual politics Black women face). Black women in this study discussed how

patriarchy operated to position more Black men as knowledge producers compared to Black women.

Similar to society, the patriarchal nature of higher education maintains notions mirrors larger society by upholding men as more knowledgeable, resourceful, and 'objective' than women (Lorde, 2007). Naya and Ella shared related encounters regarding differential treatment of Black men in academia. Naya explained how she noticed the difference with the ways men were treated in graduate school and as a faculty member. Naya shared,

> This is how I think gender works in the academy. When men open their mouths people listen. People listen a little bit more. I also think the same is true for Black men in relationship to Black women. That's just my feeling. It was true in graduate school. Many of my women friends would make a comment and a Black man would say the same thing and the professor would gush. So, sometimes I feel like there's a bit of…. I don't know this reverence I think for particular kinds of Black men. I do think it has to exist within some respectable, sort of way of carrying yourself, a palatable kind of masculinity that I'm often outside of as a Black woman. But I've noticed with our Black male colleagues in faculty meetings, he could say the sky is blue and people would say that is such a thoughtful observation. Oh, my gosh thank God you are here.

Similarly, Ella explains

> You have to really fight to get people to pay attention to you, to be invested in you. But, I think that's true for everybody who's not a white dude. No, I think Black dudes too, they can find investment too. People really fetishize them, especially if they're smart.

Ella further explains how finding colleagues or mentors to invest in them is less of a challenge for Black men. The next section turns to examine how politics of belonging is (re)constructed

through cultural mechanisms of exclusion.

Homecoming Video In 2019, a homecoming committee created a promotional video to celebrate homecoming at MWU. The ninety-eight second video showcased many aspects of campus life that made it feel like home for some students. The video proclaimed MWU as a place of belonging for all despite the absence of students of color and students with other visible socially marginalized identities in the video. The video consisted of an all-white student body with students walking, dancing, biking, eating, and enjoying campus life while the narrator made several statements about what it means to call MWU home. During the opening part of the video the narrator stated, "We represent 127 countries and all 50 states….It's welcoming everyone into our home." This narration continues by describing MWU as home to many explaining "home is were we sing camp songs" or "home is friendly competition." However, the narration describing MWU as diverse and welcoming drastically contradicted the images as no marginalized students were represented in the video.

In an article published in a prominent and well-known newspaper, three students, all Black and multi-racial women, condemned the video. Despite being asked to participate and spending much of her day recording scenes for the video, a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. posted a statement on her Facebook page explaining how the sorority was asked to participate in the video and spent hours recording and were not ultimately featured in the video.

Another student expressed her pain and shared that she was not surprised by the homecoming video. She explained how much it hurt to see a video that made her feel like she didn't belong at MWU, but also described exclusion as just another thing that happens to people of color on university campuses. The student's sentiment of 'this is just another thing that

happens' highlights Black students' everyday and routine experiences with white supremacy as an ingrained reality in educational institutions.

Another student in the response video explained their frustration and confusion regarding MWUs ongoing failed efforts toward inclusivity. She explained she knew MWU at least tried to be inclusive and equitable. She shared she was frustrated by their trying because trying was not enough. The student expressed dissonance because of MWU's ongoing diversity initiatives and the fact that students of color were not included in the homecoming video.

The homecoming video calls attention to the ways whiteness is understood as normative and belonging in academia while marginalized groups are considered outside of the norm, hence not represented in the video. Leigh Patel (2015) describes a clash between white settler entitlement and universities' conflicted desire for diversity. In line with Patel's theorization of entitlement, I argue that the all-white homecoming committee's deeply rooted understanding of MWU as white property resulted in a conflicted desire to ask marginalized students to participate in the making of the video but included an all-white cast in the final video.

Importantly, a student inclusion coalition responded by creating their own video which included a range of diverse students. The narrator noted they "will not be erased and they will be seen." This example also highlights the paradoxical nature of visibility and the limited reach of diversity policies. In chapter four, Black women's visibility on promotional flyers and the university website was used to present an image of diversity. Yet, when students made a video to represent who 'belonged' on campus, all marginalized students were excluded. The university responded by offering an apology and a statement acknowledging the lack of representation in the video. The next section takes a closer look at how institutional responses to racial incidents

and administrator's decision-making uphold constructed boundaries around who belongs in academia.

Institutional Responses

Institutional responses can (re) produce narratives about who belongs on university campuses and whose knowledge belongs in the university. Jada, a graduate student at MWU explained the importance of not only attending to what a university does but also, what a university deems as unimportant and fails to respond. Jada recalled an incident when a white graduate student requested to start a pro-white group at MWU. Jada explained,

> There was a graduate student who was trying to start a pro-white group on campus. And it turned out he had committed arson against multiple Black churches and was a convicted felon behind this. I remember the chancellor responding to that by saying, I'm paraphrasing here, 'This is an unfortunate incident but we don't use criminal records. Obviously, we don't want to support this sort of thought, but we're giving the latitude for this to exist.

Jada interpreted the chancellor's inaction to prevent an "alt-right" student group as promoting racism and white nationalism at MWU. She explained how complicity maintains and ultimately enables racist and exclusionary ideas and practices.

The MWU spokesperson used diversity and inclusion to justify why they were considering allowing the student group to exist explaining: "Our campus values are clear: We believe diversity is a source of strength." Notably, the spokesperson explained inclusion of different perspectives and beliefs as justification to allow an alt-right group to exist on campus. Further, when the chancellor of MWU was made aware of the violent crimes committed by the

student group leader, she was "appalled" yet she explained distributing political information and expressing objectionable, even hateful, viewpoints is not illegal nor a violation of campus policy.

Ultimately, as a result of student led protests and fierce resistance by MWU students and faculty members, the alt-right group did not officially become a registered student group, however the group continued to actively recruit members. Jada's analysis of institutions exemplifies how policies aimed at inclusion that attempt to pierce through practices of exclusion might provide moments and spaces of accessibility but they leave intact heteropatriarchal and anti-black structures and logics. (Bourasa, 2019). In examining how inequality persists despite political and institutional aims to dismantle racial inequality, Perry (2019) explains that "People engage in practices of racial inequality in a wide range of contexts, including individual, interactive, collaborative, and administrative decision making" (p. 31). While upholding policies of inclusion and diversity, the chancellor's decision-making processes to embrace "hateful" viewpoints as acceptable on campus upheld racialized exclusionary practices. These findings demonstrate how institutional inaction toward racist ideas uphold structures of white supremacy. The following section examines how the absence or limited value placed on subaltern knowledge in academia is communicated through decision-making at classroom and institutional levels.

Whose Ways of Knowing Counts as Knowledge in Academia?

Ana explained how institutional norms around the way knowledge is communicated is geared toward Eurocentric ways of knowing and being. She explained unlike many of her white peers, she didn't have family members who attended universities and could help her understand institutional norms. She shared,

> So the process is very hard. The academic stuff, the academic models of production, of
> intellectuality, it's so fucking different from what we know. We know orality, we know

music, we know other types of expression. In academia you have to write a text in Times

New Roman 12.

Ana described the norms around valued ways of knowing and behaving in academia. She

continued describing how institutional norms also shape whose knowledge is valued and deemed

acceptable in academia.

I can't put something in an academic text that I know is true because my grandma told

me. Though I know it is true, maybe it was something quite important, but how are you

going to make the citation?

Ana is describing how Eurocentric ways knowing and expressing knowledge are deemed

acceptable in academia. Nola, a graduate student at UFM described a similar encounter when

she was asked to present about differences between popular culture and classical culture in one

of her courses. She described popular culture as often understood to be Black culture and

classical culture as considered to be white culture. She explained that she knew what the

professor was hinting toward and intentionally highlighted how both forms of art had the

capacity to teach and contribute knowledge. For popular culture, she shared a musical piece from

her father alongside a classical poem to show how both works had intellectual rigor. She

expressed pride in navigating the professor's assignment and frustration that she had to prove

that her culture produced knowledge.

River, a graduate student at MWU expressed a similar sentiment. She explained as a

Black woman in higher education, "your opinions aren't going to be valued in class if you're not

speaking in theory." River's experience in higher education settings taught her the expected

ways of knowing and expressing knowledge in higher educational classrooms. Specific theories

are valued in academia, particularly theories by white men. For example, women of color

theorize their experiences and life situations all the time, however their theories are not considered valid in academic settings. Theory as knowledge is perceived as objective where experiences as knowledge are seen as subjective and less of a contribution (Mitchel -Walthour & Hordge-Freeman, 2016; Patel, 2015; Smith; 2012; Rowe & Tuck, 2017).

Similarly, Ava shared an experience where a white male professor tediously critiqued her written work which she described as leading her to question her ability as a writer. She shared,

I had a professor who was very strict with language and wording and how you write papers. I remember one day I had to go to their office to talk about my writing and they were literally going word for word. It didn't feel helpful. It felt very counterproductive because at that point, I had just got published. I was feeling like OK I know how to write and now I have this professor telling me my word choice isn't good enough.

Ana, River, and Ava's narratives highlight the transcendent nature of norms around knowledge production and expected ways of expressing knowledge in higher education and the fact that the norms tend to favor white men.

Black Women's Awareness of Institutionalization in Higher Education

Maria, a professor at UFM shared several formative moments throughout her academic and personal trajectory that brought her into a deeper understanding of race, Blackness across the diaspora, and colorism and how all of these aspects converge in complex ways to inform her day to day experiences in academia and society. She shared moments from her undergraduate studies when she met Black historians at a conference who introduced her to Black intellectuals who "existed and were producing academic work." She described attending lectures from Angela Davis and Patricia Hill Collins when they visited Brazil. Importantly, she described attending a course at the Black, Latin American, and Caribbean Women's Festival designed for women of

the Black diaspora. The course had 60 participants, all Black women from across, Latin

American, Caribbean and the US. She explains her excitement after returning from the course.:

> When I came back from that course, I decided that I needed to share everything with
>
> people. People need to know that we produce so much, that we debate…… So a year
>
> later, Mariana [co-founder of Akoma] reached out to me. She was a substitute professor
>
> at UFM, and she wanted to create a Black Feminisms course at UFM for Black students
>
> only. And I told her, it's not going to work because the university is not going to allow it.

When approached by a colleague to offer a course examining Black feminist thought with Black

students, Maria immediately expressed doubt around organizing the class within the university.

Maria, a 35-year-old professor at UFM and a co-founder of Akoma, demonstrates an

understanding of how institutional practices privilege whiteness, maleness, and Eurocentric ways

of knowing and being (Evans-Winters & Love, 2015). Within this understanding and her

understanding of the hierarchical nature of race and knowledge production, Maria doubted the

structures of the university would consider the value in a class about Black feminism for all

Black students. She understood the university would not be a conducive space to develop a

Black feminisms course for Black students. Further, through reflection on her past experiences in

educational institutions, she showed an understanding that a class centering subaltern thought

needed to take place outside of the structural constraints of the institution.

Ella, an assistant professor at MWU shared a similar understanding of institutions. Ella

explains how institutional spaces feel less genuine. She explained,

> The few formal spaces that were created by the university. The heads of them are deans
>
> of diversity or whatever. And that means that they have an obligation to the university
>
> that they don't have to the employees of color, so I'd say that's the main difference. I say

when we create a space outside of the institutions, we don't have an agenda except being

together.

Ella demonstrated an understanding that organic spaces created for and by marginalized groups

are structurally different than institutional spaces which often hold participants accountable to

specific organizational agendas. Naya demonstrated how a syllabus can be an example of the

ways an institutional agenda gets carried out.

Naya, a faculty member at MWU described a department policy requiring faculty to

submit their course syllabi for approval. Naya described such policies as 'silly shit.' Further, she

explained how a syllabus can be used as a structural mechanism to surveil and control what is

taught in courses, particularly for Black and marginalized professors. Naya explained,

In the last couple of years, with right-wing attacks on... liberal professors.

There's a sort of fear around that. I've been really vocal with the Dean as well as my

department about having us do silly shit like turning in syllabi for approval. Okay, but I'm

going to redact all this stuff. If the university gets targeted for any sort of liberal bias,

they're going to find me.

For Naya, submitting her syllabi for approval was used as a tool to monitor and control what

ideas were being taught and by whom. Similar to Maria and Ella, Naya understood institutional

practices as situated within structures of heteropatriarchy, settler colonialism, and white

supremacy. Ella, Maria, and Naya demonstrated a similar understanding of the constraints of

institutions.

This awareness of the constraining nature was not limited to faculty. Many students at

UFM and MWU were also aware of the institutional constraints in higher educational

institutions. Ava, a graduate student at MWU shared a sentiment that many of the women in this

study shared. She expressed the feeling of being surveilled and only feeling like she can be her fullest self in spaces outside of the university.

This study's findings and historical backlashes against Black students at both universities show patriarchy and anti-blackness as facets contributing to the politics of belonging at UFM and MWU. In the following section, I explore how Black women's understanding of higher education institutions as white spaces inform the ways they make sense of their belonging at at UFM and MWU. Overall, Black women, both students and faculty at UFM and MWU describe a concept I name as *limited belonging*.

Black Women's Conceptualizations of Limited Belonging at MWU

A comprehensive understanding of Black women's conceptualizations of belonging must be contextualized within the mechanisms of exclusion Black women navigate in higher education. Nirwal Puwar (2004) details how the arrival of marginalized groups into historically white spaces shines light on "how spaces have been formed through what has been constructed out" (p. 1). While women in this study had a deep understanding that the university was not designed for them, and while many had no desire to belong to an institution that was not intended for them to belong, Black women still understood themselves as belonging in academia by expanding the terms and conditions for what it meant to belong, a process I term limited belonging. The progression of limited belonging looked differently for each woman, but they all had a consistent starting point: each woman had a profound awareness that the university was not created for them to survive (Alexander, 2005; Lorde, 2007).

Yuval-Davis (2011) explains the politics of belonging are always being remade and contested. While dominant groups set boundaries delineating who is included or excluded, marginalized groups can and often do contest those limits. Yuval-Davis explains,

"The politics of belonging also include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of such a community. As such, it is dialogical and encompasses contestations both in relation to the participatory dimension of citizenship as well as in relation to issues related to the status and entitlements such membership entails" (p.20).

The process of boundary making is always incomplete and always contested (McKittrick, 2006). Many of the women in this study at MWU had a deep understanding that higher education institutions were not designed for their survival. Puwar (2004) describes women and racialized minorities as 'space invaders' when they enter spaces where they have "historically and conceptually been excluded" (p. 1). Under liberal thought and neoliberal logics, educational spaces and discourses uphold anti-Black, meritocratic myths of education often through equity aims (Baldridge, 2020; Diamond, 2018). However, many of the women contested the "participatory dimensions of citizenship" in the academy by redefining the logics of belonging in academia. *Limited belonging* is used to show how Black women in this study, mostly graduate students and faculty "reconstructed the boundaries" for their belonging at MWU. Many of the women at MWU shared a deep understanding of the unbending racist and patriarchal nature of their institutions and they conceptualized their belonging in nuanced ways including an understanding of their belonging because they knew how to 'navigate the space' or because they had a 'right' to be there. Further, participants' feelings of belonging varied from context to context or from situation to situation. To put it succinctly, their feelings of belonging had its limits.

After describing her trajectory through undergraduate school and into graduate school at UFM, Nola explained how her experience and age contributed to her being less affected by

exclusionary practices and racism stating: "When I got into university, I was 39-years-old. Racism and machismo didn't impact me as much." As a co-leader of Akoma, she described the importance of creating spaces for other Black women to deconstruct their experiences with racism and misogyny in the academy and society.

Cali, a graduate student at MWU shared how her sense of belonging evolved from an undergraduate to a graduate student. She explained how a sense of knowing and an understanding of how to navigate academic spaces contributed to her sense of belonging. When asked if she felt like she belonged at MWU she replied,

> Well, when I first started, No! But over time, now as a graduate student I definitely feel like I have a sense of belonging, but I feel like a large part of that, has just come from time. I've been here long enough. I know the building. I know how to get to all of my rooms. I know professors' names. I know what research is being done in which department. I've been here long enough.

She reflects for a moment and continues,

> So, if you were to ask me, do I feel like I belong today? I would say, I belong in the sense of I graduated from here. I earned my degree here. I know the classes. I know how to navigate the space. It's not, do I belong as in this campus was meant for me? No, but I belong in the way that I know how to navigate this space now, I've created communities for myself. I know how to get through a day and feel comfortable, I can get through the microaggressions and still have a smile on my face at the end of the day. That's the simple answer….. I can navigate the space.

Cali challenged the notion of patriarchy and whiteness as the criteria for belonging in academia. Instead, Cali explained that conquering navigation of campus contributes to her limited

belonging. By declaring she belongs Cali is resisting and contesting MWU's politics of belonging.

At UFM, Gabriela, a Chemistry graduate student, described how many of her classmates understood their belonging in higher education as a way to contribute to their community. She described,

> We have Black people in law and nursing and these types of majors. Because for a lot of
> Black people, they feel like I want to go to the university to be able to support the
> community. The ways that are more obvious to give back to the community are law,
> nursing, and social services.

Gabriela elaborated on the ways she still understood her work as contributing to the community though in less obvious ways. She described her challenge of navigating the Chemistry department because it was a predominately white and male field, which in part contributed to her decision to change her major but continue to pursue a graduate degree.

Naya, a faculty member at MWU, expressed a similar awareness of the university as a space not designed for Black women, yet Naya conceptualized belonging in academia as a right and less as a sentiment of endearment or means of attachment. She explained institutions are not designed for marginalized groups and expresses her hesitation toward Black people who imagine themselves as belonging in academia. When asked how she conceptualizes belonging at UFM, Naya said,

> I don't. If a Black person says they feel like they belong to any university I would
> probably raise eyebrows. It's not because they don't deserve to be there, but because I
> don't think these institutions have the capacity to love us. Educational scholar Gloria
> Ladson-Billings says that all the time and I believe it. They [institutions] are not designed

for us. Do I think we can take ownership, demand space, create space, and cultivate new

spaces? Yes! Absolutely! Do I have a right to be here? Hell Yes! But do I belong? Well,

I'm here and you can't do anything about it.

Naya differentiates feelings of belonging compared to a right to exist in the space of higher

education. She continues to elaborate on the ways power is rarely disrupted in institutions. She

explains,

I know the space isn't for me, but I also know that I'm here and I deserve [to be] here. I

think in terms of belonging, I had been comforted in the spaces that I've created within

the broader institution. Because I don't think these institutions can change. I don't think

they change as an institution. I think certainly the culture of certain spaces on campus

change. I think people with power can infiltrate and make some changes and make things

more comfortable, but as soon as those people leave, things change again. So, these

institutions will perpetuate themselves and they'll always be the same. But I absolutely do

think and believe in the power of creating spaces within.

Naya describes the persistent nature of culture and power in institutions and the futility of

marginalized groups seeking or expecting care in higher educational institutions. However,

similar to hooks (1990), Naya notes the possibility of cultivating moments and spaces of

belonging within systems of domination.

Laila and Joanna understood their limited belonging at MWU as a means to an end. Laila

explained, "I conceptualize belonging as an academic belonging because, once I'm done with my

program, there are very few relationships that would take me back there. My sense of belonging

is as a student." Laila defined her belonging as that of a student only. She explained that once she

graduated, she didn't have any connections to MWU that would make her to return for any reason. Similarly, Joanna described how her sense of belonging as a faculty member is constructed through her alignment with the mission of her department. She shared,

> I feel that I belong because of the mission of the school. My goals are in direct alignment with the goal of looking at medicine and identifying ways to incorporate that in the community. So that's why I feel like I belong here.

Laila and Joanna understand their sense of belonging as limited to their unique programs and roles. While some of the women described their limited belonging in academia, others described not having any desire to establish a sense of belonging. Some women, both faculty and students, explained their purpose for being in the academy in relation to their research and teaching goals.

River and Laila, two graduate students and Ella, a professor at MWU explain they have no desire to create a sense of belonging at MWU. Laila is a fifth-year doctoral student at MWU stated, "I feel like I'm on the periphery, so I don't feel like I belong in the university, but it doesn't bother me." Similarly, River explained how her age and where she is in life impacts her relationship with the university. She asserts,

> I don't know if age and where I am in life actually helps with not needing to be attached to this big institution. It isn't as prevalent for me now. Compared to when you're an undergraduate student, you're very much attached to 'I'm a student here.' But I feel like as an adult with work experiences outside of the university, the university is just a place that I kind of treat like a job.

Laila and River constructed their sense of belonging in spaces outside of academia. River shared how her identity outside of being a student contributed to her not seeking belonging in

higher education. River explained finding a sense of belonging among a select group of peers. Other women in the study who described their lack of desire to find a sense of belonging at MWU shared finding a sense of belonging in certain spaces in the community. These findings align with Yuval-Davis' notion that not every 'belonging' is important to people in the same way and to the same degree. The importance of belonging can also shift in different times as Cali shared when her sense of belonging shifted from her undergraduate to her graduate years.

Similarly, Ella, an assistant professor shared her understanding of her belonging as limited to a means to an end:

> I don't, I think of myself as belonging at MWU. This is the beginning of my career. I'm using my time at MWU and I'm mostly left alone which I guess is a curse and a blessing. I get a lot of time in my work to think and grow. I'm trying to throw myself into experiences that will be useful for me later on. I see it as the beginning of my career. That's it.

Ella, Laila, and River explained they didn't have a desire to belong in academia. They understood MWU as a means to an end.

Conclusion

Overall, Black women, both students and faculty at MWU and UFM described their understanding of belonging at their institutions as limited belonging. A comprehensive understanding of Black women's conceptualizations of belonging must be contextualized within MWU and UFM's anti-black and patriarchal politics of belonging. Throughout this chapter, I examined how women contested exclusionary practices and reconstructed the boundaries of the politics of belonging in higher education. The next chapter explores the spaces of resistance Black women created at UFM and MWU to (re)learn, self-define, imagine, heal, and survive.

Chapter 6: The Repetitive Flight for Sovereignty

"Black folks coming from poor, underclass communities, who enter universities or privileged cultural settings unwilling to surrender every vestige of who we were before we were there, all 'sign' of our class and cultural 'difference,' who are unwilling to play the role of the 'exotic Other,' must create spaces within that culture of domination if we are to survive whole, our souls intact" (hooks, 1990, p. 148).

"The repetitive flight for sovereignty must be considered, even if it is squelched repeatedly, in the cumulative. It is in the cumulative that its relentless expression of freedom can be viewed" (Patel, 2016, p. 400).

Nola, a graduate student at UFM and one of the co-leaders of Akoma sat quietly smiling at the group. As the chattering came to silence, Nola asked us to stand and hold hands. She took several moments to make eye contact with each person while expressing her joy at seeing each of us. Minutes later, she detailed the events for the day, which included discussing multiple assigned readings. She invited another member of Akoma, Mariel, to lead us in an opening activity. Mariel asked us to find another Black woman in the room and hold their hands while looking into their eyes. While making steady eye contact with our partner, Mariel guided us through a series of affirmations that we spoke to our partner: I see you. You are enough. You are supported. You are guided. I see your light because you are light. (Fieldnotes, Akoma meeting on August 9, 2019).

Women in Brazil and the US designed and participated in spaces created for and by Black women. The spaces included writing groups in the US and a collective for Black women

in Brazil named Akoma. Each of these groups were similar to the spaces bell hooks (1990) terms, spaces of radical openness (hooks, 1990). hooks (1990) describes several processes that occur in spaces of radical openness: including refusal, resistance, remembering, re-writing, and discovering new ways of seeing reality through creativity and imagination.

The spaces women created and participated in across borders manifested in different ways. However, my findings demonstrate that many of the spaces center around sisterhood, self-definition, freedom to be themselves, and engagement with subaltern knowledges that provide the frameworks to deconstruct their lives as Black women in their families, communities, and world. As I show, spaces of resistance do not just oppose oppressive forces; they are also spaces to self-define, heal, unlearn, and self-discover (hooks, 1989, Collins, 2000; Lorde, 2007; Kahn-Perry, 2020; Kelley, 2002). To this aim, this chapter transports the reader to select spaces that Black women, both faculty and students at UFM and MWU, create to self-define, build sisterhood, engage in political knowledge, and to rest, restore, and heal.

Collins (2000) describes the relationship between oppression and activism as dialectical. A dialectical relationship between oppression and activism implies that increased acts of oppression result in increased acts of resistance. Similarly, Patel (2016) demonstrates the dialectical relationship between the oppressive structures of schooling and acts of resistance and survivance. Patel (2016) argues, "Pedagogical practices of resistance and survivance" are under examined and must be "set still temporarily in order to be viewed" (p. 400). She declares, structures of oppression cannot truly be understood without theorizing practices of resistance.

I argue that there is a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with (in)visibility, hyper-visibility, exclusion, limited belonging and other habitual encounters with heteropatriarchal anti-Blackness and in creating "spaces of radical openness" (hooks, 1990).

Through centering Black women's spaces and acts of resistance, this chapter exposes the economic, ideological, and social practices of domination women navigate in academia and imagines the possibilities within spaces of resistance.

Spaces within Spaces: Cultivating Openings for Resistance

"This is an intervention. A message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer….We greet you as liberators." (hooks, 1990, p. 152)

Black women at UFM and MWU cultivated and participated in spaces to counter and name the racist and misogynist encounters they experienced in their universities and society. UFM students particularly described Akoma as critical for them to name their oppressive experiences in higher education and their childhood experiences with anti-Blackness. MWU students' described writing groups and other spaces of resistance as essential to their healing and restoration in order for them to survive in the university. While faculty across both sites expressed similar sentiments related to space of resistance as places to center joy and creativity and foster relationships, faculty and staff were often creators or cultivators of these fugitive spaces (Baldridge, 2019; Sharpe, 2016). Their reasons for fostering these spaces for themselves and other Black women were closely related to their personal experiences and awareness of the university as unwelcoming for Black women and their desire to create alternative spaces. The following section centers the women's voices to take a closer look at how they cultivated, experienced, and nurtured spaces of resistance.

Akoma

Patrice invited me to a monthly Akoma meeting. Patrice arrived in a taxi around 7:30am to pick me up on a cool Saturday morning when the sun was just beginning to stretch across the city. There were a few people shuffling around however, the streets looked empty compared to the weekday mornings when crowds flooded to work and school. After exchanging greetings, she proceeded to advise the taxi driver to our next stop. She pointed to her phone and read aloud, "Africanamente – Escola de Capoeira" (African Thought - Capoeira School).

I met Patrice during my first visit to UFM during the summer of 2018. She is an administrative assistant at the extension unit of UFM. Most of the students I interviewed mentioned how Patrice took them 'under her wing'.. Some of the women I interviewed learned about Akoma through Patrice. Upon entering Africanamente, I immediately noticed the colorful walls, artwork, and flags that adorned the space. One woman was in the back room preparing

coffee while three women were preparing the space for the group by setting up chairs and setting out breads, cheeses, cakes and other types of food on the table.

Akoma is a Black Brazilian women's collective centering intellectual thought from across the Black Diaspora with an emphasis on the work of Black women. The monthly meetings were held at a community-based Capoeira school named, Africanamente[10]. Africanamente is a space where community members, adults and children meet to learn and practice Capoeira – a Brazilian martial art form that originated primarily from Angola, and combines elements of African spirituality, honoring ancestors, dance, music, and singing. The building also serves as a lending library to the local Afro-Brazilian community where they can find books written by authors from across the Black diaspora.

Akoma meetings are held within these vibrant and colorful walls where the women collectively support each other and learn from one another. Annually, the collective offers a six-month course where they meet one weekend out of every month on Saturday and Sunday for five to six hours each day. The women collectively read and analyze literature and texts by Black women from across the globe. The group examines economic, political, cultural and social oppressions experienced by Black women in/out of the academy at the local, regional, national and global levels. Further, the collective engages in local and global activism. During my visit, three Afro-Uruguayan women were in attendance to learn more about the collective and use their knowledge to begin a similar collective in their country. Further, although Akoma is separate from UFM, the group is actively engaged with Black students at the extension program at UFM and hosts seminars sharing scholarship from African scholars examining issues around race and

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[10] English translation: African thought.

politics.   For example, one seminar centered the work of several African history scholars to examine local issues such as generational poverty, gentrification, and the global economy.

The idea of Akoma started with a professor who wanted to start a course on Black Feminist Though for Black women at UFM. As previously discussed in Chapter 5, Maria explained due the restrictive nature of the university, the existence of this collective needed to happen outside of academia. Hence, in 2016, four Afro-Brazilian women, one community member, two professors, and one graduate student from UFM created a collective that I name Akoma. Akoma provides a space for young women to meet monthly to discuss historical and contemporary writings authored by women from across the Black diaspora and use their readings to analyze their daily experiences with raced and gendered oppressions in and out of the academy.

All of the UFM students and faculty except for Marcela and Adriana participated in Akoma. Marcela and Adriana were aware of Akoma but they participated in other local Black Brazilian collectives. During my interviews, I asked the women to discuss their experiences in Akoma. The following section highlights themes found among their responses.

A Space to Self-Define and Self-Express

Ana, a graduate student at UFM described Akoma as a space where she was able to grow intellectually while being herself. She did not need to conform to academic norms or language. Ana shared,

> It's funny how I hate to wake up in the morning. I don't exist in the morning. But when we have meetings, I wake up smiling. I take my bus, 1 hour and 10 minutes, then I walk 10 more minutes, smiling. Because it's somewhere where I really like to be. We are developing our intellectuality without the need of academic language. I can talk slang.

Throughout the interview, Ana explained the Eurocentric norms of the university as limiting who she could reference as a site of knowledge and the type of language she could use to express herself. She explained if she wanted to cite her grandmother as a knowledge producer she couldn't because of academic norms. Here again, Ana mentions that she values Akoma as a space where she can share her full range of knowledge while unapologetically using slang and academic language. hooks (1989) describes language as a site of struggle. Citing Adrienne Rich, hooks writes, "This is the oppressor's language, yet I need to talk to you." hooks' continues, "This language that enabled me to finish graduate school, to write a dissertation, to talk at job interviews, carries the scent of oppression" (p. 28). Ana's uses slang to express her knowledge as an act of resistance. At Akoma, she intentionally (re)centers subaltern ways of knowing and speaking. hooks (1990) explains, "The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves—to rewrite, to reconcile, to renew. Our words are not without meaning. They are an action – a resistance" (p. 28). Akoma offers a space for Ana and other Black women to not only challenge ways of knowing, but also to deconstruct our uses of language and its ability to "take us away from the boundaries of domination" (p. 28).

Ana and Gabriela explain how Akoma provides them with a critical lens to analyze how racialized and gendered systems of oppressions shaped her personal lives. Ana declares,

> Actually, by attending Akoma meetings and working with a Black therapist, I am getting closer to my mom for example. When I was a child, I used to get sad because my father was unemployed, he lost job opportunities, including two government jobs, because of drugs. So, he was the one who was home with me and my brother. And I only saw my mother at bedtime. My grandma told me that after my mom was done with her day job, she cleaned houses. She worked other jobs just to keep the standard life we had when my father

worked for the government. We were always poor, but when my Dad lost his job we were poorer. She worked double for us. Through Akoma, I got closer to my mother and I understand her position better. And I have an intimate connection with her as a Black woman.

Ana's reflection of her grandmother and mother highlights a key feature of Black women's acts of resistance, strategies of survival in the midst of oppression, and their acute ability to theorize their life circumstances (Lorde, 2017). Ana's mother had to work to provide for her family, however Ana as a young child, didn't understand her mother's absence as necessary for their survival at the time. Ana's grandmother played a key role in helping Ana understand how economic, political, and personal processes converged to shape her mother's life experiences. Gabriela also reflected how Akoma provided her with insight to understand how systems of domination, namely racial patriarchy shape her day-to-day decisions and the ways she understands herself.

The university is very cruel to us. You believe that you have to be the best, but often you don't believe in yourself. And that's okay. Akoma allows us to understand that. It was a very important space for me because I could make sense of so many things in my mind. So, it gave me more confidence in my actions, and in my academic choices in the university. It was me being in the group that allowed me to understand that it is okay for me to leave chemistry now and try what I really want to do. It doesn't mean that I failed.

Akoma offered Gabriela a different viewpoint of failure. In fact, she recognized that changing her mind to pursue a discipline that is more aligned with her personal goals doesn't equate to failure. Gabriela further declared the readings and discussions from Akoma began to help her identify and name both childhood and recent experiences with racism. She reflected,

> Because the understanding of myself is always in progress. I don't think it ever stops, but Akoma was a good start because I was always the only black person in spaces, the one or two. If there are 10 people here it was always like 1 or 2 out of 10 were Black. Akoma provides a type of experience that helps me name this. I started to understand some things that happened to me as a teenager only after Akoma.

Gabriela continues to make sense of her childhood experiences of being the only Black student among her classmates and peers:

> They said like ok you are beautiful, but you are Black. You are nice, but you are Black. I understood that I was not like the other girls. I was not like them and I knew that at the time, but I wanted to be like them. I wanted to straighten my hair, but I never did. Why is my nose this way? These types of things you do.. right? I did it unconsciously, but I wished I wasn't who I was. But when I could name this process, it was different. I knew it was a tactic.

Akoma created a space for Ana and Gabriela to identify and name larger systems of domination, namely how racist patriarchy and anti-Black notions of beauty and success shaped their lives. This knowledge equipped them to begin to oppose these systems. Akoma provided Ana with the language to define herself and understand her capabilities to be a change agent in her community. hooks (1990) declares that it is through spaces in the margin and marginality, where oppressed groups learn a "counter-language" to oppose oppressive forces in order to self-define and renounce who the world declares them to be. Through Akoma, Ana and Gabriela gained deeper insight into the ways systems of oppression including racism, sexism, and economic disenfranchisement inform their personal lives and relationships.

A Space to Center Black Feminist Thought

Five UFM students Dianna, Luara, and Bruna, Tatiana, and Ana shared how reading

Black feminist authors and scholars in Akoma allowed them to understand Black feminist

thought (BFT) as not only a valid paradigm to theorize their research, but as an essential lens for

them to critically analyze how political, economic and social systems are shaped by capitalism,

racial patriarchy, and other systems of domination.

Dianna described the challenges of centering Black feminist scholars as knowledge

producers in academia:

> I also think reading Black feminist scholars is very important. It is very difficult to read
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> Black authors in the institutional environment. Both because the university doesn't
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> acknowledge Black authors as legitimate sources of knowledge to be studied in the
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> classroom and because the lack of knowledge of the professors. Many professors don't
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> know Black authors to recommend.

While noting the challenges of centering BFT as a valid knowledge source in academia, Dianna

highlighted its importance. Luara shared how Akoma affirms the value of BFT:

> Akoma made me realize that there are other kinds of knowledge beyond what there is in
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> the university. I already knew that, but I came to realize the importance of it in Akoma.
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> That I can bring other kinds of visions inside the university, other types of knowledge
>
> that I can build.

Bruna further attributed reading Black Feminist Thought as important for her to understand the

validity and worthiness of her research and her identity as a Black woman scholar:

> Akoma helped me better understand my academic journey because having this space
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> where I could read other Black women, made me realize that I am producing very
>
> important work that is worthy of being shared and being thought about. In the university I

would question if what I was studying was important and if it made sense and through the

readings and the space of Akoma I realized that the work I am doing is important.

Reading Black feminists from across the diaspora showed Ana and Tatianna that their research

interests and questions around Black women's experiences were valid and important. Lorde

(2007) asks, "What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the

fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are

possible and allowable" (p. 110-111). Tatianna explains how reading BFT gave her a lens to

analyze her research. She expressed,

> It makes a huge difference now that I know there are Black references for whatever I
>
> want to study. If I only depend on the university, I won't be able to think certain things, I
>
> won't be able to elaborate certain questions the way I do with Akoma. Because our
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> experiences are so similar, the knowledges we share, complement each other. If I want to
>
> ask questions about race in Brazil, Akoma provide a different vision that which aligns
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> with my own, compared to the university.

Unlike the university and overall nation which constructs race through the myth of a racial

democracy and anti-racial ideology (Caldwell, 2007; Twine, 1998; Lebon, 2007), Akoma teaches

the women about the realities of racism in Brazil. In addition to providing the women with a

subaltern lens to examine their research, Ana explained how centering BFT in Akoma changed

the way she understood herself as Black women in academia and her community.

> It's like my whole life has changed. The way I see politics, the way I see myself in
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> academia, and the way I see myself in my own neighborhood. For example, after
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> attending Akoma I started giving talks to children and adolescents in my elementary

school, about Africa, about studying, about whatever I had the opportunity to talk about.

Gates were opened. Actually, I am opening the gates. Actually, let me show you.

Ana took off her jacket and rolled up her long sleeve shirt to reveal her tattoo. She continued to

describe its meaning:

I have this tattoo. I put together two symbols of West Africa. One means looking for our

ancestors -- looking back. The other means femininity -- Black womaness. Because I

believe these are the symbols that open doors: remembering and Black womaness. This is

how I open doors in my life. Because I really feel like family with most Black women I

know. Even if we only met once in life. This is my key to open doors and gates in my

life. I begin to realize this after the first meeting with Akoma.

The symbols Ana discussed are Adinkra symbols. Adinkra symbols originated in Ghana and

represent different concepts. As Ana discussed, she combined two concepts. Sankofa is a word in

Akan Twi and Fante language and symbolizes, "go back and get it". Sankofa can also be

represented as a bird reaching back and representing the importance of reaching back to gain

knowledge from the past and bringing it to the future to make positive change. The second

Adinkra symbol is the Duafe which means "wooden comb" and symbolizes femininity and

qualities such as patience, prudence, fondness, love and care. Ana emphasized her value of

sisterhood and desire to understand her ancestrality throughout the interview. Akoma provided a

space for both.

Tatianna, Dianna, and Gabriela—all undergraduate students at UFM—describe Akoma

as providing sisterhood among other Black women who are encountering similar experiences in

academia. Further, the women share how centering Black Feminist Thought has contributed to

their ability to name and counter institutional oppressions and silencing in academia. Tatianna

also explained the importance of the sisterhood she found through Akoma stating "Akoma

helped me realize I'm not alone. Through Akoma I met other Black women who experience

racism and sexism too. We are a support system for each other." Echoing Tatianna, Gabriela also

shares how she thought Akoma was a study group but was actually so much more. She shared,

> I thought it would be a study group, because we are a study group but we are so much
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> more than that. And that's what we discovered together. Akoma is so much more than a
>
> study group. We share experiences, we share emotions, and it's very important to share
>
> love.

Dianna, an undergraduate student, discussed the importance of Akoma creating a space for

sisterhood to read and learn together. Dianna asserted,

> My experience in Akoma contributed, and is still contributing, it was not an isolated event.
>
> I believe in the after and what continues to reverberate from these meetings. The group has

been contributing especially for our empowerment as people, as Black women. It empowers me to be with them and at the same time we learn a lot. We learn through our experiences, from our conversations and exchanges. We also through our readings. We read other Black women, who are not read nor encouraged to be read in the university.

Dianna discussed the sustaining nature of the energy she gains through Akoma. By noting the importance of "the after," Dianna explained how the knowledge and energy she gained through reading and being in community with the other Black women enabled her to continue to resist oppression in academia. hooks (1990) explained the process of moving from a small Black town in Kentucky to a predominantly white university as moving out of the margins into the center. While the margins may be understood as a concrete space, hooks describes marginality as providing those on the margin with an "oppositional world-view – a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and solidarity" (p. 149). hooks differentiates the margins from marginality explaining, "I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as sites of resistance – as location of radical openness and possibility" (p. 153). Similar to the way Dianna describes Akoma as reverberating through her long after she is out of that space, hooks explains marginality as "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (p. 150). Akoma provided Dianna and other women with an oppositional world-view that enabled them to deconstruct their position as Black women and resist systems of domination.

Tatianna, Dianna, and Gabriela discuss how their participation in Akoma contributed to them finding their voice, understanding their identity as a Black women, and using their knowledge to oppose systems of domination in academia and more broadly. Tatianna explains

how reading the work of Black women in the diaspora gave her a voice to counter the silence

academia imposed on her:

> My participation in Akoma changed the way I understand and resist challenges within the
> university. There is [a] collection of poems and essays by Audre Lorde, Your Silence
> Will Not Protect You. I think this phrase defines how Akoma changed my way of
> resisting. My silence, that is imposed on me in the academic environment, will not
> protect me. So, being with Akoma reminds me that in the university I need to have a
> counter position. Because there are still professors and the university as a whole that
> needs to be reminded that there are more voices than just theirs.

Similarly, Dianna explains how Akoma helps her to understand that intersectional oppressions

on individual and systemic levels. She expressed,

> Akoma helped me comprehend my identity as a Black woman and resist the difficulties
> within the university environment. I am learning to comprehend structural and
> institutional racism, to understand that me and my sisters, we as Black women will
> oppose them. The system will not change by itself, we have to pressure the door.

Gabriela also discusses how the readings through Akoma, namely Black women of the

diaspora helped her identify and name the intersectional nature of oppressions and shows her the

collective nature of Black people across the globe. Gabriela reflected,

> We always read bell hooks "All About Love." She talks about how we need to be
> affectionate with our fellow siblings, Black people. She explains how that is often denied
> to us. So, for me, every time I read it, she is talking about how racism impacts us, but she
> talks from the perspective of love. And she talks to us - to Black people. She talks about

> how important it is for us to demonstrate this, and the reasons we don't. Because we feel
>
> like we have to be tough.

Gabriela's realization of the importance of love demonstrated how Akoma simultaneously provided a space to oppose and push back against oppressive structures while centering love and care. The importance of this is in understanding that spaces of resistance open up other sources to (re)create, (re)imagine, and to exist outside of opposition.

Lorde (2007) amplifies sisterhood as a pathway for Black women's survival and collective action toward social change. During a speech at the Black Women Writers for the Diaspora, Lorde (1986) explains what it would have meant for her to meet Angelina Weld Grimke, another Black feminist lesbian poet as a young Black lesbian navigating isolation. Lorde explains, I think of what it would have meant to in terms of sisterhood and survival for each one of us to have known of each other's existence, for me to have had her words, and for to have known I needed them! That we were not alone!" (p. 5). In addition to reminding Black women they are not alone in the struggle, Lorde (2007) declares that sisterhood enables Black women to overcome the fear to speak up. Lorde describes transforming silence into language and action as pivotal to breaking the machine that "will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak" (Lorde, 2007, p. 42). Lorde writes, "And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength and enabled me to scrutinize the essentials of my living" (p. 41). Aligned with Lorde, for Dianna, Tatianna, and Gabriela, Akoma is a space of sisterhood and a space to deconstruct institutional and systemic intersectional oppressions. Akoma further allowed the women to understand they were not alone in the struggle against racism and sexism in academia.

Overall, the above narratives show how Akoma, as a collective space of resistance, enabled the women to center language that pushes against the boundaries of domination. Through the readings and community with other Black women, they were able to self-define and use BFT as a lens to deconstruct systems of domination, to transform silence into action.

The next section explores Black women's experiences with spaces of resistance at MWU. The spaces include a national organization designed for Black students in STEM programs, in-person and virtual writing groups, and affirmations as metaphysical space. While the spaces of resistance ranged at MWU to include writing groups, home, and national organizations, Black women also described these spaces as providing a space to deconstruct knowledge, self-define, un-learn how the world has defined them, and to heal and survive (hooks, 1990).

Black Women's Spaces of Resistance at MWU

Lucy and Cali, both graduate students in STEM fields talked about the ways an organization designed for Black students in STEM created a space to resist isolation and invisibility. Lucy describes another organization designed for Black graduate students in STEM as her "saving grace" for getting her through graduate school. As an academic coordinator of the STEM organization, Lucy explains that making students feel welcomed at MWU is her aim. She describes the organization as,

> ..a close group of friends that school. These are the people that you come to whenever you are feeling down or whenever you have something you want to celebrate. I would say the organization is my close group of friends. People I can be myself around. I can let my guard down. We can laugh and joke and have fun. Whereas you may not feel comfortable doing that everywhere in the university.

Cali explained how she was made to feel invisible and alone. She expressed how the STEM organization provided a space for her Blackness to be recognized and valued. She further reflected how the organization soothed the loneliness she was experiencing at the university:

> I didn't feel lonely anymore after attending the meetings. I had people to talk to and I felt seen. Being a Black person, I want my Blackness to be recognized. I don't want to be ostracized for it. I'm Black, and I want people to see that. I don't want to be treated differently for it, but I want people to see the beauty in it as well.

Cali describes wanting her Blackness to be seen but not through a stereotypical deficit lens. Lorde (2007) describes Black women's paradoxical experiences with visibility. She explains "…Black women on the one hand have been highly visible, and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalization of racism" (p. 42). Cali and Lucy described the STEM organizations as a space where they could be seen and be themselves.

Writing Groups

Three graduate students and a faculty member emphasized establishing writing groups as a space to be themselves, heal and foster sisterhood, joy, and creativity. Jada, Ava, and Penny, three graduate students, also describe writing groups as spaces where they can be themselves and engage with other Black women. During our interview, Jada discussed how her writing group gave her the opportunity to be around other Black people,

> A space that is important for me is my writing group, which is a Black writing group and in order to be a member of the writing group you have to identify as Black. So, there would be times when I would go straight from my apartment to wherever my writing group was meeting and sometimes I wouldn't even have that pressing of work to do but

just being around other Black people in an intellectual space was something that I was

craving in that moment.

Ava contrasts here experience in Black organic writing spaces as with the writing formal spaces

in academia where she feels surveilled and pressured to limit her identity to the role of a student:

I feel like at some point there is always some sort of oversight within university spaces. It

feels like we are surveillanced and it also has to do with professionalism. I don't feel

completely comfortable in predominantly white spaces. The first thing that everyone

says is not how are you doing? It's more like how is your research doing or what are you

doing now? It's always a professional entry into those conversations. I think the main

difference between the spaces we create compared to formal spaces in academia is

feeling like I always need to have my graduate student/ research hat on and be a

professional student. I can't let my hair down.

While Ava described writing spaces sponsored by the university as too controlled and formal,

writing spaces created for and by Black women functioned as spaces of refuge. Ava reflected,

I would describe these spaces as spaces of healing and survival and Black. Black spaces

where you can be yourself and joke and say things you wouldn't say in public but feel

safe saying in those spaces. Just really talk about difficult stuff. You don't have to be an

academic with a deep analysis, you can really just say no I don't agree with that or that's

messed up. That's why I think it's survival because you can vent. You can say I'm not

feeling my research right now or grad school right now. I just want to be back home with

my family.

In addition to survival, Ava explained how she would enter into these writing and social spaces

to heal. She reiterated, "The space is healing." Jada and Ava explain their writing groups as

helping them survive and sustain in academia.

For Black women faculty, writing groups also served as a space of survival, however, faculty members also described writing groups as opportunities for joy and creativity. Naya, an associate professor at MWU describes her writing groups as a space for sisterhood, accountability, and joy. She created two writing groups with friends. Naya began an in-person writing group with other Black women as graduate students and continued this practice virtually into their tenure track positions. However, one of the women later decided academia was toxic for her well-being and eventually left for an alternate research position. Naya also discusses her virtual writing group consisting of mostly Black women from her graduate school and one non-Black Latina who later joined the group. At the beginning of her tenure-track position, Naya joined another writing group with Black women faculty. Naya explained her in-person writing group (now operating virtually) as significantly contributing to her progress in academia. She shares,

> In this particular space we did everything together. We would write. We cultivated habits to which I owe my success in academia. Our group introduced me to timed writing and the importance of self-care for the long game.

Further, and similar to Dianna, Tatianna and Gabriela's description of Akoma, Naya explains her writing group as much more than a writing group. It is a form of sisterhood. Naya continues to discuss the sisterhood she finds in her virtual writing space. She describes it as a space of joy and creativity. She explains,

> I have cultivated a virtual writing space. We use the virtual space as accountability. And again, that space is not just about work. It becomes space for joy and laughter. I love that about our space. Some of us connected as graduate students. We call it a writing group, but

it isn't really a writing group, it's a support group where we share each other's work. We have a text thread because we're all around the country and we support each other with devastating news around what's happening in the academy and teaching tips. So, it's a space where they are multiple things happening. There are only very few people that I can do that with. And I love doing that with Black women.

Naya further describes the levels of social and emotional support she receives through her virtual writing group. Similar to Dianna in Akoma, Naya describes how she carries the energy she gathers through her virtual writing group with her even when she is not in that space:

When I'm not in the space I miss it. That space with folks is joyful. I can be driving or walking down the street and fall over in laughter because of something someone said. It's joyful, creative, and innovative. It gives me joy and a familiarity. I have a sense of family and sisterhood.

Naya explains her efforts of creating more spaces such as her writing group for other Black women in academia, especially those who are new to her campus, where they can show up just as they are without feeling like they can't be themselves. She shares,

I'm in the habit of creating more spaces, especially as new Black women come to Parkwood. I never want to leave them out there on their own. I always try to organize a lunch or a coffee or a get together to invite them to. Hopefully it's a place where they don't feel like they have to codeswitch. I hate those types of places.

Naya continued,

I think it's important for people to be comfortable and know it's okay to be who they are. I think that's the main thing. I want people to know they could be themselves. They can be

all of who they are. There are not many spaces like this in the academy so you need a

space where you can be yourself.

Naya demonstrates an understanding that many Black women in academia feel isolated and often

feel forced to assimilate to academic norms, a sentiment expressed earlier by Ava, a graduate

student. As faculty, Naya shares her intentionality of creating spaces for Black women to be

themselves and to be in community with other Black women.

Faculty Feel a Need to Foster Spaces of Resistance at MWU and UFM

Importantly, faculty and staff members at UFM and MWU echoed many of the

sentiments of UFM and MWU students. They described Akoma, writing groups and other spaces

of resistance and sites to self-define, heal, center BFT to (un)learn, (re)member and deconstruct

their day to day realities with oppression. However, many faculty members and one graduate

student, Nola who is a co-founder of Akoma expressed their desire to create spaces for other

Black women. Naya, a faculty member at MWU previously shared her desire to create spaces

where other Black women could be themselves. Patrice, a staff member at UFM described her

lonely experiences at UFM before quotas. She explained she didn't have a "critical stance" on

race at the time. She "believed in the meritocracy idea and thought she just needed to keep her

head down and work harder at the university." She expressed not wanting other Black women to

deal with similar experiences. Maria, a faculty at UFM and co-founder of Akoma explained

gaining so much knowledge at a conference she attended and wanted to share it with other Black

women. Maria declared,

What led me to create Akoma was the idea that we needed to share, more than just

readings. My goal was to share, and what led me to create it was the readings. Because I

understand that readings are possibilities for us to see ourselves. It's just a text, it's paper,

but it is a possibility for us to see ourselves and share with each other. I knew it could be

powerful [to have] so many Black women together, sharing and reflecting similar things.

Because that had already happened to me before, but I was not in spaces where I knew

people, they were not my friends. So I kept thinking if I can make this happen among

people who already know each other, that would be even more powerful. So it's the text,

but also what comes from each one of us. The text that is from one woman, but it is the

thoughts of all of us that are going to embody that text.

Similarly, Nola asserted,

That's how I treat all of them, like a mother. Sometimes I have serious talks with them.

Some of them feel intimidated, they say I'm scared of Nola (laughs). Sometimes I am

angry, but I'm always smiling. I care about discipline, but I have a caring approach.

Ella, a faculty member at MWU described how she fosters spaces for Black women who were

students in the academy to be able to learn from Black women faculty members. The amount of

time spent in the academy and the women's academic levels correlated to the ways they

conceptualized their role in cultivating spaces for survival and resistance for Black women.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter explored the dialectical relationship between oppression and

resistance. I examined Black women's "repetitive flight for sovereignty"—the continual

practices and spaces of resistance Black women cultivated—in order to theorize the hallways,

corners, and classrooms within the structures of oppression in higher education in Brazil and the

US. The findings in this chapter showed Black women at UFM and MWU cultivated and

participated in spaces to counter and name the racist and misogynist encounters they experienced

in their universities and society. By centering the Black women's spaces of resistance, this

chapter highlighted the oppressive forces they actively resisted including: silencing, invisibility, and Eurocentric ways of knowing and expressing knowledge. I demonstrated that there is a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with (in)visibility, hyper-visibility, exclusion, limited belonging and other habitual encounters with heteropatriarchal anti-Blackness and in creating "spaces of radical openness" (hooks, 1990).

UFM students particularly described Akoma as critical for them to name their oppressive experiences in higher education and their childhood experiences with anti-Blackness. MWU students' described writing groups and other spaces of resistance as essential to their healing and restoration in order for them to survive in the university. While faculty across both sites expressed similar sentiments related to spaces of resistance as places to center joy and creativity and foster relationships, faculty and staff were often creators or cultivators of these fugitive spaces. Their reasons for fostering these spaces for themselves and other Black women were closely related to their personal experiences and awareness of the university as unwelcoming for Black women, and their desire to create alternative spaces.

Chapter 7: Discussion & Conclusion: "It's Heavy Having to Carry Around that Armor all Day"

In all of these places, being Black has a detrimental, offensive characteristic. But at UFM it means living in a space where they claim we don't exist. We are always seen as outsiders here (Maria, faculty at UFM).

It's sad that you almost have to arm yourself before you walk into predominantly white spaces. You have to arm yourself and get into a certain mindset to protect your mind, emotions, and heart. It's a sign of relief when I leave and come home. I get to take my armor off. It's heavy having to carry around that armor all day (Joanna – faculty at MWU).

I met Ana at a coffee shop across the street from UFM on a sunny and chilly afternoon in downtown Almeida. She just finished class and arrived shortly after me. She smiled and greeted me with a hug and a kiss on the cheek, a common greeting in Brazil. We both ordered a cup of coffee and briefly chatted about her day before I began asking questions to learn more about her and her experiences as a graduate student at UFM. Ana attended a private university for her undergraduate education where she studied international relations and became fluent in English. Ana explicated the quotas made it possible for her to be the first in her family to attend college. She described herself as opening the door for her family members to attend UFM.

We spoke for nearly two hours about her life growing up in Lado do Rio, a community within Almeida about an hour outside of downtown (where UFM is located) by bus. Ana guided me through her childhood describing the economic, social, and structural impacts of disenfranchisement on her community including houselessness, violence, and drugs. She explained Lado do Rio was created during the 1950's and 60's throughout the restructuring of

downtown Almeida. During this time, many poor descendants of enslaved African people were pushed to the periphery.[11] Ana elaborated, "the city had an architectural plan for Almeida and for them it was very ugly to see Black people around so they removed them to a new place outside of the city."

Ana continued to describe her town by discussing that one of her grandfathers created the first samba school and community soccer team. Ana elaborated,

> It takes an hour and ten minutes by bus to get here. Actually, talking about buses, there was a joke back when Lado do Rio was first created that was like… "What is white outside and black inside? The white Lado do Rio bus, full of Black people." You know, it's these kinds of jokes. They change over time, but they still exist. If you say, "I'm from Lado do Rio. Someone may say, "Oh I'm going to hide my purse. Hide your wallets!! A Lado do Rio person is there."

Ana's reflection demonstrates how Black women's experiences with heteropatriarchy and anti-Blackness in academia parallel their experiences in society (Alexander, 2005; Carty, 1991). The same heteropatriarchy and anti-Blackness that contributed to the descendants of enslaved African people being pushed to Lado do Rio is the same heteropatriarchy and anti-Black racism that persist across borders. For example, Ella's—an assistant professor at MWU who self-identified as Queer—daily hostile encounters with her neighbors every time she left her home reflects the ongoing heteropatriarchy and anti-Black racism that women experience. Conversations such as

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[11] In some ways, similar to the ongoing gentrification of cities in the United States, People of Indigenous and African descent are pushed to reside in the periphery of the cities. This is a historical phenomenon that continues to exist today in Brazil.

this, with Ana, Ella, and other study participants, amplified several factors: (1) the pervasiveness of heteropatriarchy and global anti-Black racism that is operationalized at social, cultural and institutional levels and (2) the ways heteropatriarchy and anti-Black racism is used to construct a politics of belonging that always already excludes Black women, people, families, and communities in society and in educational institutions across the globe. Through this lens, the question then becomes: What is the role/aim/possibilities of policies of inclusion that are embedded in a global system of heteropatriarchy and anti-Black racism?

Proponents of affirmative action and diversity and inclusion policies argue such policies are essential to ensuring marginalized groups gain access to higher education in the U.S. and Brazil. Educational policies aimed at creating access opportunities for historically underrepresented groups are crucial in societies deeply embedded in white supremacy. However, findings from this study show that we must remain critical of the ways policies of inclusion aimed at redistribution and representation uphold patriarchy and keep anti-Black structures intact. Social, cultural, and institutional mechanisms of exclusion and the maintenance of anti-Black politics of belonging in higher educational institutions contributed to Black women's experiences with silencing, hyper-visibility and invisibility at UFM and MWU. Black women's stories at UFM and MWU demonstrate the need to continue to ask, inclusion into what and for whom?

Women across both universities experienced ambiguous forms of (in)visibility and social, cultural, and institutional mechanisms of exclusion. Importantly, throughout each chapter describing women's experiences in universities in Brazil and the U.S., I demonstrated the various ways they understood the university as a space not designed for them and named the ways they

resisted. I discussed the specific spaces women created to oppose exclusionary practices. These spaces were notably more than spaces to contest systems of oppression. They were spaces to heal, unlearn who educational systems and society declared they were, and self-define (hooks, 1990; Harney & Moten, 2013, Alexander, 2005; McKittrick, 2006).

Invisibility and Hyper-visibility

Women at UFM and MWU discussed distinct experiences with hyper-visibility. Findings from this study demonstrate how Black women's bodies and labor are commodified and made hyper-visible in specific ways in contemporary policies of diversity and inclusion and discourses around multiculturalism. These findings are aligned with Bourassa's (2019) notion of productive inclusion, showing how inclusion is productive for the university enabling higher educational institutions to benefit from inclusion by upholding an image of diversity while extracting free labor toward diversity work.

Graduate student, Jada and Sara, an. undergraduate, both at MWU were keenly aware that their bodies were being used to profit the university. Diversity politics as a "politics of representation" upholds an image of multiculturalism while keeping systems of domination intact (Ahmed, 2012; Ferguson, 2012; Sexton, 2008). The politics of representation provides insight into Jada's statement: "And so, I am very aware of being tokenized in a space where I am shown through the actions of the university that I am not welcome. I'm only welcome to the extent to which it can be monetized for the university." Jada and Sara's experiences exemplify the importance of attending to the ways visibility is used as a mechanism to portray equality. These findings illuminate that inequality is not only perpetuated through explicit forms of racism or violent incidents of backlash, instead inequality and systems of oppression persist through seemingly harmless mechanisms such as visibility (Hall,1997). Future critical inclusion studies

in education should further examine how policies of inclusion operationalize the hypervisibility and in visibility of Black women and other marginalized groups.

This transnational study provided a multi-layered analysis of Black women's experiences across academic levels and national contexts. Through examining the experiences of women across national contexts, this study demonstrated the persistence and distinct specificities of heteropatriarchy and global anti-Blackness. This study showed how women encountered disparate experiences with hyper-visibility and experienced various forms of exclusion that were embedded in heteropatriarchy and anti-Blackness. Importantly, Black women in this study across borders and academic levels explained the different ways they experienced exclusionary practices and how they conceptualized belonging at their university. The differences were the most distinct across academic levels with undergraduate students most likely to express feeling isolated and excluded. As the academic level increased, the women navigated exclusion and understood belonging in more nuanced ways.

"I Had to Draw Myself In"

Despite distinct cultural and political contexts and amidst disparate policy articulations of inclusion, Black women across academic levels and geographic spaces experienced unique and overlapping encounters with invisibility. At both sites, Black women discussed having to draw themselves into the curriculum.

In Chapter 4, Cali, an undergraduate student at MWU reflected on a moment when she drew afros on the characters in her textbook in order to feel seen on campus, in her curriculum, and as a person. This was a common theme throughout my findings. When they were erased, Black women literally and metaphorically drew themselves in. When they were silenced, they found and cultivated spaces to critically analyze their experiences to transform silence into

action. When constructed outside of the universities' and nation states' politics of belonging, Black women declared limited belonging. They redefined and reconstructed the heteropatriarchal anti-Black, and meritocratic delineations of belonging in higher education.

Many of the Black women in this study, particularly the faculty and staff members and some advanced graduate students conceptualized limited belonging in spite of and perhaps because of their deep understanding of the construction of universities as white property (Patel, 2015). Black women in this study opposed the constructed politics of belonging in higher education by declaring they belonged because they knew how to navigate institutional and cultural aspects of the university or because they had a right to be there as much as their white peers and colleagues. Despite Black women's ongoing experiences with social exclusion, the heavy burden of having to prove their legitimacy, being silenced, erased, and made unrecognizable, women in this study conceptualized their belonging. The women were acutely aware that the institution was not made for them and understood they were considered as what Nirwal Puwar (2004) refers to as 'space invaders' to describe the presence of marginalized bodies in predominantly white spaces, yet they proclaimed their limited belonging. Hence, the women's conceptualization of limited belonging had little to do with desiring to be a part of the institution. Instead, the women understood their belonging as limited. They found belonging in the spaces they created and cultivated. Black women in this study proclaimed they belonged because they understood how to navigate the institution that was not intended for them. It was within these understandings that the women conceptualized their belonging as limited. With this understanding, faculty and staff members were more likely to describe the need to cultivate spaces for other Black women at UFM and MWU. In other words, faculty, staff and advanced graduate students' rooted awareness of universities as inherently heteropatriarchal anti-Black

institutions pushed them to foster spaces inside and outside of the university. The findings showed a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with oppression and the spaces of resistance women created.

Spaces of Resistance as Sites of Possibility

Importantly, this study demonstrated a dialectical relationship between Black women's experiences with invisibility, hyper-visibility, exclusion, limited belonging, and other habitual encounters with heteropatriarchal anti-Blackness and the "spaces of radical openness" they created (hooks, 1990). Observing and theorizing the women's spaces of resistance illuminated the nuances of the structures of oppression Black women come up against in higher education institutions across the diaspora: silencing, hyper/invisibility, and the Eurocentric ways of knowing and expressing knowledge that explicitly erased Black women and other marginalized groups as knowledge producers. However, as witnessed throughout the data, Black women at UFM and MWU relentlessly and continuously resisted erasure and silencing through drawing themselves in, redefining the politics of belonging in higher educational spaces by pushing back the constructed boundaries of belonging in higher education.

While the spaces of resistance discussed in this study created spaces to push back and oppose economic, ideological, social, and political practices of domination, these were also fugitive spaces and sites of possibility for Black women to (re)imagine, (re)member, and (re)define. Akoma and the spaces of resistance Black women created at MWU were able to operate outside of the logic and structure of the university. Scholars such as Barbara Christian, Jacquie Alexander, Leigh Patel and Eve Tuck have cautioned against the ways universities distort and appropriate subaltern knowledges. Lisa Lowe's (1996) examined the limits of institutionalizing ethnic studies. Lowe (1996) explained, "….yet the institutionalization of any

field or curriculum that establishes orthodox objects and methods submits to the demands of the university and its educative function of socialized subjects of the state" (p. 41). I keep this understanding in mind as I look ahead to the implications for this study for research, policy and practice.

Recommendations: Research, Policy, and Practice

This current political and cultural moment during the COVID-19 global pandemic and ongoing global uprising against the public executions of Black women and men across the globe at the hands of police officers, is a crucial time for scholars, activists, community members, and policy makers to examine policies aimed at equity and inclusion, and importantly the politics of exclusion/belonging. This dissertation highlights this importance by showing the ways contemporary policies of inclusion both as redistribution and representation fail to dismantle anti-Black and patriarchal higher educational institutions. Black women and other marginalized groups who are objectified and "plastered" on websites and pamphlets continue to be conceptually, intellectually, and physically excluded and disregarded. At the same time, it should not be overlooked, that Black women are actively reimaging and cultivating spaces of resistance outside the wall of academia.

Future researchers examining Black women's conceptualizations of belonging in educational institutions should consider a phenomenological or life story approach which would enable a more textured and nuanced understanding of how Black women make sense of belonging in the midst of exclusion in educational institutions and society.

Further, understanding how policies of inclusion and practices of exclusion can and often do co-exist in institutions, anti-racist policies should have approaches to ensure policies are translating into practice. A concrete example of this are equity audits. Equity audits require

educational institutions to intentionally access for signs of systemic and social inequity. Equity audits also expose how social structures and institutional practices are shaped by larger structural and cultural systems. These findings also have implications for anti-racist leadership. The findings show the importance for anti-racist leaders to understand how power operates in different ways for different people in their institution. The women's experiences with exclusion and how they were able to navigate exclusion was directly shaped by their level of power. This is where I think feedback loops are critical. With an understanding of how power operates to silence certain voices, anti-racist leaders can create feedback loops to assess how people are experiencing the institution in such a way that all groups can share honestly without fear of backlash.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings in this study contribute to educational policy studies, critical inclusion studies in education, gender and women and Black diaspora studies in two ways: (1) The findings from the study challenge policies of inclusion as an inherent good that leads to social and racial equality. In fact, the findings show that despite policies of inclusion redistributive or representative, institutions maintain anti-Black and heteropatriarchal practices. (2) This study contributes to understanding how anti-Blackness and patriarchy operates to discriminate and oppress Black people regardless of the racial systems and policy articulations of inclusion (Hernandez, 2019). This study demonstrates the need for more research examining the experiences of marginalized groups in varying policy articulations of inclusion. In closing, as critical scholars, educators, community members, activists and policy makers continue aim for justice we must continue to challenge the idea that policies of inclusion are inherently the way toward social justice.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Scripts

UFM - Recruitment Script

Hello,

My name is Tarsha Herelle and I am a PhD student from the Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin Madison in the United States. I'm calling/writing to ask you about participating in my research study. This is a study about learning spaces that center Afrocentric and cultural knowledges. You're eligible for this study because of your involvement with UFM.

If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to take part in one interview (approximately 1 hour) with the possibility of a follow-up interview (approximately 30-45 minutes). The interview will be conducted by Tarsha Herelle. During the interview, you will be asked about your experiences at the UFM.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate, we can go ahead and schedule a time for me to me with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call, email me with your decisions.

Thank you so much.

Tarsha Herelle
herelle@wisc.edu

MWU - Recruitment Script

Hello,

My name is Tarsha Herelle and I am a PhD student from the Educational Policy Studies department at the University of Wisconsin Madison in the United States.   I'm emailing to ask you about participating in my research study. This is a study about understanding how women of African-descent experience diversity and inclusion policies at the MWU You're eligible for this study because of you are a female who self-identifies as African-American and/or Black and attend the MWU.

If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to take part in one interview (approximately 1 hour) with the possibility of a follow-up interview (approximately 30-45 minutes). The interview will be conducted by Tarsha Herelle. During the interview, you will be asked about your experiences as a woman of African-descent who currently attends or attended (recently graduated within 1 year) from the MWU You may also be asked to participate in a 1 hour focus group to better discuss your experiences in a group setting.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate, we can go ahead and schedule a time for me to me with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call, email me with your decisions.

Thank you so much.

Tarsha Herelle
herelle@wisc.edu

Appendix B: Research Timeline

Phases	Objectives	Tasks
Phase One *(June 2018)*	Pilot study – data collection	• Received IRB approval for dissertation study • Conducted a pilot study *(June 2018)* • Conducted pre-dissertation data collection in Brazil including 9 interviews with students, 2 with faculty and 2 with university administrators and conducted 12 observations at the Federal

		University of Rio Grande do Sul *(June 2018)*
Phase Two *(AY 2018-2019)*	Data collection and data analysis	• Began data analysis of the data collected in phase one *(September 2019)* • Designed the research study
Phase Three *(Summer 2019)*	Data collection and data analysis	• Recruited UFM participants • Conducted interviews at UFM in Brazil (June – August 2020) • On-going data analysis
Phase Four (AY 2019-2020*)*	Recruited MWU participants Data collection and data analysis	• Recruited MWU participants • Conducted interviews at MWU • On-going data analysis • Participant observation at MWU
Phase Five *(2020-2021)*	Complete data collection Ongoing data analysis Write dissertation	• Completed data collection March 2021 • Finalized organizing and transcribing all data • Made edits and submit full draft of dissertation to committee (April 2021) • Made final edits submit final version to dissertation committee (April 2021) • Defend and deposit dissertation (April/ May 2021)

Appendix C: Consent Forms
UFM - Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Experiences of Afro-Brazilian Women in Higher Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Kathryn Moeller (phone: 415-624-5385) (email: kathryn.moeller@wisc.edu)

Student Researcher: Tarsha Herelle (phone: 860-334-2679)

You are invited to participate in a research study about the ways Afro-Brazilian female-identified students and/or faculty create and participate in critical student groups and organizations and the ways their participation inform how they navigate UFM.

You have been asked to participate because of your involvement with Akoma.

The purpose of the research is understand how Afro-Brazilian women make sense of their identities in counter-spaces and how that knowledge informs the ways they navigate and resist oppressive structures within higher education. This study will include UFM students who self-identify as Afro-Brazilian and female. The research will be conducted at a central location that is most convenient to the participant. The location should be in a quiet space with minimal background noise.

Audio tapes will be made of your participation. The audio recording will heard by the research team and transcription personnel. The audio recordings will be kept indefinitely unless otherwise requested by the participant.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to take part in one interview (approximately 1 hour) with the possibility of a follow-up interview (approximately 15-30 minutes). The interview will be conducted by Tarsha Herelle. During the interview, you will be asked about your experiences at the Akoma and UFM.

Your participation will last approximately 1 hour per session and will require 1-2 sessions which will require up to 2 hours in total.

Participants who agree to be interviewed face minimal risks. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions and may stop taking part in the study at any time. The research team will follow all appropriate measures to ensure confidentiality is protected. There remains a slight risk of a confidentiality breach in the event of a data breach.

We don't expect any direct benefits to you from participation in this study.

While there will probably be publications as a result of this study, your name will not be used. If you participate in this study, we would like to be able to quote you directly without using your name. If you agree to allow us to quote you in publications, please indicate your oral consent.

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact the Principal Investigator Dr. Kathryn Moeller at 415-624-5385. You may also call the student researcher, Tarsha Herelle at 860-334-2679. If you are not satisfied with response of research team, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you begin participation and change your mind you may end your participation at any time without penalty.

Your consent verbally indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate.

UFM Informações para o Participante da Pesquisa e Termo de Consentimento Informado

Título da pesquisa: Experiências de mulheres afro-brasileiras no Ensino Superior

Pesquisadora principal: Dr. Kathryn Moeller (telefone: +1-55415-624-5385) (e-mail: kathryn.moeller@wisc.edu)

Aluna pesquisadora: Tarsha Herelle (telefone: +1-55-860-334-2679)

Você está convidado/a a participar de uma pesquisa sobre como estudantes identificadas como mulheres afro-brasileiras participam e criam em grupos de estudantes e organizações críticas. Examina também as formas como sua participação informa como elas navegam a UFM.

Sua participação foi solicitada por causa de seu envolvimento com UFM em contra-espaços e como este conhecimento informa sobre as maneiras como elas UFM que se auto-identificam afro-brasileira e mulher.

A pesquisa será conduzida em uma localização central, de forma a ser conveniente ao/à participante. A localização deverá ser um espaço silencioso, com a menor interferência sonora externa possível.

Fitas de áudio serão gravadas com sua participação. As gravações de áudio serão ouvidas pela entrevistadora, Tarsha Herelle. As fitas serão mantidas para indefinitivamente, a não ser que requisitado de outra forma pelo/a participante antes de o material ser destruído.

Se você decidir participar desta entrevista, você será solicitado a participar de uma entrevista (aproximadamente 1 hora), com a possibilidade de uma entrevista complementar (aproximadamente 15-30 minutos). As entrevistas serão conduzidas por Tarsha Herelle. Durante a entrevista, você será questionado sobre suas experiências na UFM.

Participantes que concordarem com serem entrevistados encaram riscos mínimos. Sua participação na pesquisa é voluntária. Você pode se recusar a responder qualquer pergunta e pode parar de fazer parte do estudo a qualquer momento. O time de pesquisa vai seguir todas as medidas apropriadas para assegurar que a confidencialidade seja protegida. Permanece um pequeno risco de quebra de confidencialidade no caso de eventual vazamento de dados.

Não é esperado nenhum benefício direto para você por causa de sua participação.

Enquanto seja provável que haja publicações como resultado desde estudo, seu nome não será usado. Se você participar deste estudo, nós gostaríamos de poder usar citações diretas de suas falas, sem usar seu nome. Se você concorda em permitir que usemos citações suas em publicações, por favor coloque suas consentimento ao final deste formulário.

Você pode fazer qualquer pergunta sobre a pesquisa a qualquer momento. Se você tiver perguntas sobre a pesquisa após ir embora hoje, você pode contatar a pesquisadora principal, Dr. Kathryn Moeller, no email no kathryn.moeller@wisc.edu. Você também pode contatar a pesquisa estudante, Tarsha Herelle, no +1-55-860-334-2679.Se você não se satisfizer com a resposta do time de pesquisa, se tiver mais perguntas ou se você quiser falar com alguém sobre seus direitos como participante de pesquisa, você deve contatar Educação and Social/Behavioral Science IRB Office, no +1-55-608-263-2320.

Sua participação é completamente voluntária. Se você começou a participar e mudou de ideia, você pode terminar sua participação a qualquer momento sem prejuízos. Sua consentimento verbal indica que você leu este termo de consentimento, teve a oportunidade de fazer perguntas sobre sua participação nesta pesquisa e voluntariamente consentiu em participar.

MWU - Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Educational Borders: An Examination of Higher Education Policies of Inclusion in the United States and Brazil

Principal Investigator: Kathryn Moeller (phone: 608-262-1760) (email: kathryn.moeller@wisc.edu)

Student Researcher: Tarsha Herelle (phone: 860-334-2679)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study about the experiences of female, African-American students and faculty at the MWU

You have been asked to participate because you self-identify as an African-American female who attended or worked at the MWU.

The purpose of the research is to examine how policies of inclusion are experienced and the ways women resist gendered racism within higher education.

This study will include graduate students and faculty who self-identify as female and African-American and/or Black and who work or have worked or are enrolled or have been a student at the MWU within the past 3 years.

This study will take place at a central and public location that is most convenient to the participant. The location should be in a quiet space with minimal background noise.

Audio tapes will be made of your participation. The audio recording will be heard by the research team and transcription professionals.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to take part in one interview (approximately 1 hour) with the possibility of a follow-up interview (approximately 30-45 minutes). The interview will be conducted by Tarsha Herelle. During the interview, you will be asked about your experiences at the MWU. You may also be asked to participate in a 1 hour focus group. Your participation will last approximately 3 hours in total.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

Participants who agree to be interviewed face minimal risks. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions and may stop taking part in the study at any time. The research team will follow all appropriate measures to ensure confidentiality is protected. There remains a slight risk of a confidentiality breach in the event of a data breach.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

We don't expect any direct benefits to you from participation in this study.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

While there will probably be publications as a result of this study, your name will not be used.

If you participate in this study, we would like to be able to quote you directly without using your name. If you agree to allow us to quote you in publications, please initial the statement at the bottom of this form.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact the Principal Investigator, Kathryn Moeller at 608-262-1760. You may also call the student researcher, Tarsha Herelle at 860-334-2679.

If you are not satisfied with response of research team, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you begin participation and change your mind you may end your participation at any time without penalty.

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Name of Participant (please print):_____

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____   I give my permission to be quoted directly in publications without using my
                           name.

Appendix D: Interview Protocols
MWU - Interview Protocol with Explanations

Interview Questions	To Understand	Why is this important?
(A) Opening Question		
Can you tell me about yourself? If someone were to ask who are you, how would you answer? (childhood experiences, life goals, passions, hobbies, pastimes)	To learn more about their personhood, life trajectory, childhood. (Descriptive)	This is important because it gives me a snapshot of who they are and provides an opportunity for the interviewee to talk informally and get comfortable with me.
(B) Educational Experiences		
What are your educational/professional goals? Why is education important to you?	To better understand why they chose to purse higher education and to situate how they understand the purpose of education (career focus, social justice etc.) (Descriptive)	This is important because I am interested in understanding if/how some women understand their pursuit of education in

		and of itself as an act of resistance.
(C) Experiences in Higher Education		
Can you talk about your experiences as a student at MWU both in and out of the classroom? How does the intersection of being a Black women shape your experiences at MWU? How would you describe MWU as being inclusive and/or exclusive for women of color? Examples? How do you see yourself represented in your courses, curriculum, syllabi?	To understand how the women in the study describe their experiences in HE alongside the literature. (Descriptive) To more closely examine how women reflect on their experience from the specific perspective as a BW at MWU. (Descriptive and Task-Related Grand Tour) To better understand how inclusive policies specifically aimed at fostering belonging at MWU are being experienced by Black women. (Example and Structural) Literature shows that women often feel hypervisible AND invisible by their lack of representation in courses and course materials. This questions addresses the aspect of the literature. (Structural)	These questions will help me understand women's experiences at MWU, specifically if they have feelings of isolation and exclusion. To determine how policies of inclusion are experienced by Black women. To understand how women experience courses and course materials.
(D) Acts/Spaces of Resistance		
(if applicable) How do you react/respond to some of the experiences you mentioned above? What types of places or spaces do you create and or participate in to counter the messages you receive in HE? Can you explain if and why you center theories/readings from Black diasporic theorists and scholars in your research?	To understand their acts of resistance? (Task-Related Grand Tour) To understand how space is conceived of as a means of resistance? (Structural) To understand if/how centering subaltern knowledges often undermined in HE is/is not used/understood as an act of resistance. (Structural)	Since there is no specific site of resistance at MWU, these questions will help me understand if/how women resist? The role of space and centering subaltern knowledges within their acts of resistance.

Interview Questions	To Understand	Why is this important?
(D) Demographics		
How do you self-identify? Where were you born? Age: Gender: Education Major/Degree: Year: Single? ____Married?_____ Children?_____ Current profession:	To contextualize the participants in this study.	To contextualize the participants in this study.

The interview protocol consists of *descriptive* (questions used to generate conversation around a particular topic), *task related grand tour* (questions designed to gain insight into participants everyday experiences within a particular setting), *example* (participants are asked to provide examples to describe their experiences) and *structural* questions (questions designed to understand the participants context and the social and cultural *structural* questions (questions designed to understand the participants context and the social and cultural structures of the environment which they are making meaning of their experiences)

Universidade Federal de Montañhas - Interview Protocol with Explanations

Interview Questions	To Understand	Why is this important?
(A) Opening Question		
Can you tell me about yourself? If someone were to ask who are you, how would you answer? (childhood experiences, life goals, passions, hobbies, pastimes)	To learn more about their personhood, life trajectory, childhood. (Descriptive)	This is important because it gives me a snapshot of who they are and provides an opportunity for the interviewee to talk informally and get comfortable with me.
(B) General Educational Experiences		
What are your educational/professional goals? Why is education important to you?	To understand why they chose to purse higher education and to situate how they understand the purpose of education (career focus, social justice etc.) (Descriptive)	This is important because I am interested in understanding if/how some women understand their pursuit of education in and of itself as an act of resistance.
(C) Experiences in Higher Education		
Can you talk about your experiences as a student/faculty at UFM.	To understand how participants differed based on	These questions will help me understand

	their role as staff, faculty or students.	women's experiences at UFM, specifically if they have feelings of isolation and exclusion.
In what ways does Akoma create an educational space that is different from the educational spaces within the university?	To understand the ways Akoma provided a different educational space for the women.	
(C) Akoma		
How did you learn about Akoma? How long have you been involved? What led you to be a part of this organization? How has your participation with Akoma contributed to your academic journey?	Contextual information and to understand what events led up to them seeking out a space like Akoma. To continue to understand how participation in Akoma informs their experiences at UFM.	
(E) Political Climate		
How, if at all, has the new political climate/presidency shifted your experiences as a Black women in Porto Alegre? Has anything shifted with the new regime?	To situate participants experiences with the larger political context.	
(F) Subjectivity		
How has learning about your heritage and history through Akoma contributed to your understanding of yourself? Has your participation with Akoma changed the way you understand/resist hardships within the university setting?	To better understand how participation in Akoma contributes to subject making and their understanding of themselves as Black women. To understand how participation in Akoma shapes their acts of resistance at UFM.	To understand if/how subject making took place through Akoma.
(D) Demographics		
How do you self-identify? Where were you born? Age: Gender:	To contextualize the participants in this study.	To contextualize the participants in this study.

Education Major/Degree: Year: Single? ____Married?_____ Children?_____ Current profession:		

UFM - Interview Protocol (English)

Interview Protocol:
- Check audio
- Read description/oral consent
- Hit Record
- Begin

Personal Background
1. Can you tell me about yourself? If someone were to ask who are you, how would you answer? (childhood experiences, life goals, passions, hobbies, pastimes)

General Educational Experiences
2. What are your educational/professional goals?
3. Why is education important to you?

Experiences in Higher Education
4. Can you talk about your experiences as a student/faculty at the university?
5. In what ways has Akoma contributed to your experience as a university student/faculty at UFRGS?
6. In what ways does Akoma create an educational space that is different from the educational spaces within the university?

Akoma
7. How did you learn about Akoma?
8. How long have you been involved?
9. What led you to be apart of this organization?
10. How has your participation with Akoma contributed to your academic journey?

The Current Political Climate
11. How, if at all, has the new political climate/presidency shifted your experiences as a Black women in Almeida? Has anything shifted with the new regime?

Subjectivity

12. How has learning about your heritage and history through Akoma contributed to your understanding of yourself?
13. Has your participation with Akoma changed the way you understand/resist hardships within the university setting?

Demographics

14. How do you self-identify?
15. Where were you born?
16. Age:
17. Gender:
18. Education Major/Degree:
19. Year:
20. Single? _____Married?_____ Children?_____
21. Which university do you attend? _____
22. Current Profession:

UFM - Interview Protocal (Portuguese)

Protocolo de Entrevista:
- Verifique o áudio
- Leia a descrição / consentimento oral
- Registro de ocorrências
- Início

Questões de Entrevista

Educação Geral Experiências (General Educational Experiences)

1. Quais são seus objetivos educacionais/profissionais? (What are your educational/professional goals?)
2. Por que a educação é importante para você? (Why is education important to you?)

Experiências no ensino superior (Experiences in Higher Education)

3. Você pode falar sobre suas experiências como estudante na universidade? (Can you talk about your experiences as a student at the university?)
4. De que forma Akoma contribuiu para sua experiência como estudante universitário na UFM? (In what ways has Akoma contributed to your experience as a university student at UFM?)
5. De que maneira o Akoma cria um espaço educacional diferente dos espaços educacionais da universidade? (In what ways does Akoma create an educational space that is different from the educational spaces within the university?)

Atinuke

6. Como você aprendeu sobre o Akoma? (How did you learn about Akoma?)
7. Há quanto tempo você está envolvido? (How long have you been involved?)
8. O que o levou a se separar dessa organização? (What led you to be apart of this organization?)
9. Como sua participação com Akoma contribuiu para sua jornada acadêmica? (How has your participation with Akoma contributed to your academic journey?)

O clima político atual (The current political climate)

10. Como, se em tudo, tem a nova política do clima / Presidência mudou suas experiências como mulheres negras em Almeida? Alguma coisa mudou com o novo regime? (How, if at all, has the new political climate/presidency shifted your experiences as a Black women in Almeida? Has anything shifted with the new regime?)

Subjetividade (Subjectivity)

11. Como a aprender sobre sua herança e história através Akoma contribuiu para sua compreensão de sua auto? (How has learning about your heritage and history through Akoma contributed to your understanding of yourself?)

12. Sua participação com o Akoma mudou a maneira como você entende / resiste a dificuldades dentro do ambiente universitário? (Has your participation with Akoma changed the way you understand/resist hardships within the university setting?)

Demografia (Demographics)

13. Como você se auto-identifica? (How do you self-identify?)
14. Onde você nasceu? (Where were you born?)
15. Idade (Age)
16. Gênero (Gender)
17. Principal / Licenciatura em Educação (
18. Ano (year):
19. Casado (married?) _ _____ Crianças? (Children?)_____
20. Qual universidade você frequenta? (Which university do you attend?)
21. Profissão atual (Current profession)