A Grounded Theory Investigation of Tenured, Women of Color Faculty at Predominantly White, Public, Research Institutions in the Southeastern United States

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A GROUNDED THEORY INVESTIGATION OF TENURED, WOMEN OF COLOR FACULTY AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE, PUBLIC, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership - Higher Education

by
Stacey Diane Garrett
May 2017

Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Faculty evaluation processes that lead to tenure and promotion are biased against Women of Color (WOC) and impact their persistence in their positions, limiting their retention, and reducing diversity in departments across discipline (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013; Park, 1996). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of successfully tenured, WOC faculty in order to isolate the institutional structures and climates that supported or hampered their success. The primary research question was how do tenured, Women of Color faculty describe their experiences in the tenure and promotion process at their current and previous predominantly White, public, research institutions. The secondary research question was what, if any, structures or climates of their department or university aided in the ability to achieve tenure. Using constructivist grounded theory methods and critical race feminist theory, findings informed a new theory describing the roles of individual characteristics, institutional structures and climates, and societal systems of oppression and privilege in the success of WOC faculty at predominantly White, public, research institutions. Data from 23 participants was collected through semi-structured interviews and written reflections. The findings of this study indicated that WOC faculty members utilized various forms of community cultural wealth and other strategies to persist in the tenure process within environments influenced by privilege and oppression. In order to remove the burden from Women of Color faculty members, the findings of this study informed a series of recommendations describing how institutional leaders can alter the predominantly White institutional environment to support Women of Color faculty in the tenure process.
DEDICATION

To my nieces and nephew, Emily, Lindsey, Teca, Aurora, Lenore, and Lucian, and all the little girls with a dream, remember: You are good enough, smart enough, and strong enough to face any obstacle that comes your way. You are enough.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The United States (U.S.) higher education system has existed as a microcosm of the larger society since its creation. U.S. society was founded upon systems of power meant to separate and subdue (Haney Lopez, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). With a history of oppression and marginalization, the field of higher education has remained a racialized and gendered environment (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2011; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Because women and Faculty of Color experienced academia differently than their White, male counterparts, Women of Color (WOC) experienced additional stress and pressures associated with their multiple, marginalized identities (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, & Agiomavritis, 2011; Campbell & O’Meara, 2014; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). The body of literature shows that diversity in educational environments was a benefit to institutions, students, faculty members, and society (Bollinger, 2003; Hurtado, Milam, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998; Smith, 2015). However, contemporary literature primarily has focused on describing the environments Faculty of Color and women faced, and outlined the strategies they employed to navigate this system (Turner et al., 2008). The goal of this study was to find evidence of ways to alter an oppressive system and remove barriers to tenure for WOC faculty.

Background of the Study

Higher education in the U.S. has been in place since the early 1600s (Thelin, 2003). Chartering universities for the purpose of educating and creating an upper-class
elite society, admission was limited to White men who would go on to lead the burgeoning new country (Dayton, 2015). With clearly established roles based on the societal norms of the colonial era, education was not extended to women or People of Color during this time. However, as the nation grew, the U.S. Constitution was amended and the rights and privileges reserved for White men were extended to women and People of Color. The 14th Amendment, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, along with various motions from the Supreme Court (i.e., Brown v. The Board of Education, Gratz v. Bollinger, Grutter v. Bollinger) and executive orders, expanded access to educational opportunities for People of Color, war veterans, and women (Dayton, 2015; Thelin, 2003). Higher education has since become a matter of public good, bringing into question who should be taught, what should be taught, and who should be teaching (Pasque, 2010; Smith, 2015).

In a system that was designed for White men, WOC have found themselves existing primarily in the margins (Gonzales & Rincones, 2012). Moreover, with education being a microcosm of the larger society, faculty representation by race and gender needs to mirror that of larger society. Women of Color make up 35.3% of the population, not including Native women, according to Catalyst (2016). As of 2013, only 22.2% of full-time instructional faculty members were WOC. Women of Color comprised just 6.7% of faculty members at the Full Professor and Associate Professor ranks. In the Southeastern U.S., only 5.4% of tenured faculty members at research-level institutions were WOC (NCES, 2015a). While the U.S. has come a long way, the
findings of this study show that more can be accomplished on the journey to embrace diversity among faculty in higher education.

**Statement of the Problem**

Data from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES, 2014) demonstrates the increase in educational attainment for Women of Color. For the 1976-1977 year, NCES (2014) reported 11.8% of Bachelor’s degrees were awarded to Women of Color. The number of WOC receiving Bachelor’s degrees in the 2012-2013 year increased to 32.7% (NCES, 2014). While WOC may have matriculated as students at post-secondary institutions at higher rates over time, they continued to be far less represented in the faculty realm (Smith, 2015). A diverse professoriate must be achieved to prepare students to succeed in a more global society (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Turner et al., 2008; Smith, 2015). However, with current conditions, WOC have been left with two options; (1) to leave the academy for other personal or professional ventures, or (2) persist in an environment where they feel unsupported and isolated (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Sanchez-Hucales & Davis, 2010; Turner et al., 2008).

Turner, González, and Wood (2008) completed a 20-year literature review of articles focused on the experiences of Faculty of Color in the academy. Turner et al. (2008) found Faculty of Color experienced challenges with scholarship, teaching, and service, which contributed to issues in the tenure and promotion process. Institutional challenges included a lack of recruitment or retention of underrepresented faculty,
tokenism, and other “isms” such as racism, classism, and sexism (Turner et al., 2008, p. 140).

Additional literature showed that WOC experienced higher education in ways that were different from their male and White female colleagues. Women of Color were faced with combating racial and gender stereotypes that dictated or defined how they should act in the workplace (Collins, 1986; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Women experienced an increased pressure when deciding between making use of family leave policies and being taken seriously as scholars; pressure that was reportedly not experienced by their male colleagues (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). Additionally, as women were underrepresented in faculty positions overall, they were overrepresented in lower-paying positions such as lower ranks at less prestigious schools, and in less prominent disciplines (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Considering this “de facto segregation” of higher education, this study focused on public, research universities to explore the conditions in which WOC faculty have successfully obtained tenure in hopes of increasing the number of tenured, WOC faculty in these institutions (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 170).

Tenure and promotion have become the cornerstones of retaining faculty members. Current literature around success for WOC faculty was focused on providing tips and information on how they can overcome real or perceived barriers (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011; Campbell, 2012; Turner et al., 2008). However, issues with tenure and promotion policies generally have more to do with the organization than the individual (Ponjuan, Conley, and Trower, 2011). Unclear requirements, unfair valuing/devaluing of
scholarship, and a subjective review process, made the tenure and promotion processes difficult to navigate (Ponjuan et al., 2011; Gonzales & Rincones, 2012). Researchers described the process for WOC as a labyrinth or sticky floor, whereby women have to go through a series of lateral moves as they attempt to advance, or experience delays that inhibit progress (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). My goal was to identify the characteristics and actions of institutions where WOC faculty have successfully navigated the tenure process.

With retirement rates of senior faculty rising, an opportunity to diversify the professoriate has emerged, filling these vacancies with underrepresented faculty members, i.e., women faculty and Faculty of Color (Ponjuan et al., 2011). In order to successfully hire more women faculty or Faculty of Color, departmental and institutional leaders must consider the current climates, cultures, practices, and policies of their respective institutions. Pre-tenure workplace satisfaction was determined by peer relationships, relationships with senior faculty, role clarity, and support. Workplace satisfaction in the pre-tenure years aided persistence and success in acquiring tenure status (Ponjuan et al., 2011). Thus, if WOC attained tenure, we should investigate the structures and climates they experienced throughout that pursuit in order to create similar environments to support more WOC faculty. Additionally, women and Faculty of Color have demonstrated an extreme commitment to persisting based on cultural and personal characteristics (Yosso, 2005; O’Meara and Campbell, 2011). The findings of this study were used to create a theory to describe the individual and institutional characteristics
that contribute to WOC faculty obtaining tenure at predominantly White, public, research institutions (PWIs).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the structures and climates of public, predominantly White, research institutions, primarily in the Southeastern region, through the experiences of tenured, WOC faculty. Secondly, the purpose of this study was to create a theory regarding how those faculty members achieved tenure. Research literature showed WOC have the ability to succeed and possess the resilience to persist in environments where they are challenged or discriminated against (Yosso, 2005; O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). The findings of this study identified the individual and institutional characteristics that contributed to the success of WOC faculty who participated in this study.

I was motivated to conduct this study in order to give voice to a population that is rarely heard from or studied (Stanley, 2006). Over time, the accepted narrative in academia has focused on the Eurocentric, patriarchal ideology, i.e., White, male ways of knowing (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Yosso, 2005). My work focused on the counter narratives of WOC in higher education. Additionally, I developed a model based on the collective experiences of my participants that illustrated the connections between various elements of one’s career path and their achieved tenure. I explored lived experiences in order to ascertain a more true assessment of the reality of a situation and how WOC faculty navigated a historically exclusive environment.
In order to achieve these goals, this study was framed by critical race feminist theory and the concept of faculty evaluation, and was situated in the constructivist epistemology. Little has been researched about Faculty of Color in predominantly White settings due to the potential for identification, the repeated invalidation of this research when conducted by other Faculty of Color, and a lack of value for this knowledge in the academic community (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Gonzales & Rincones, 2012; Stanley, 2006). To add to the currently limited body of knowledge, I presented a theoretical model, grounded in lived experiences, that describes the individual and institutional characteristics of successfully tenured, female, Faculty of Color.

**Significance of the Study**

Turner, González, and Wong (2011) highlight a gap in the literature that addresses the experiences of WOC. Often these stories are masked under research on People of Color or women. However, the specific experiences of WOC faculty are too far from the norm and are invisible in most research related to underrepresented faculty (Turner et al., 2011). Moreover, there is a lack of research into WOC faculty at predominantly White institutions (Stanley, 2006). The racialized and gendered environment of a public, predominantly White, research institution can be a hostile work environment for WOC faculty and a difficult environment in which to thrive (Griffin et al., 2013). Findings from this study will inform the policy and practice of universities in the southeastern U.S. with the goal of diversifying their faculty ranks by supporting and promoting more Women of Color. Pasque (2010) and Dowd and Bensimon (2014) discussed educational leadership and change from a higher level than just an individual
faculty person. With this perspective in mind, underrepresented individuals cannot address the issues of diversity and university climate change alone. The university leadership must attend to institutional and department level policies, practices, and climates in order to create lasting change for a more inclusive environment (Smith, 2015; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Turner et al., 2008). In the pursuit of diversity, this study will provide information to bolster university efforts to recruit, retain, and support WOC faculty.

**Theoretical Framework**

Critical race feminism (CRF) provided the framework for this study. Evolving from critical race theory (CRT), CRF takes into consideration the experiences of women that are not reflected in CRT and the experiences of WOC that are not reflected in feminist theory (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Evans-Winters & Esposito (2010) indicated five ways in which CRF can and should be used in educational research:

1) Critical race feminism as a theoretical lens and movement purports that Women of Color’s experiences, thus perspectives, are different from the experiences of men of color and those of White women;

2) Critical race feminism focuses on the lives of Women of Color who face multiple forms of discrimination, due to the intersections of race, class, and gender within a system of White male patriarchy and racist oppression;

3) Critical race feminism asserts the multiple identities and consciousness of Women of Color (i.e., anti-essentialist);

4) Critical race feminism is multidisciplinary in scope and breadth; and
5) Critical race feminism calls for theories and practices that simultaneously study and combat gender and racial oppression. (p. 20)

This study sought to carry out the aims of CRF in order to acknowledge and improve upon career environments for Women of Color faculty.

Constructivism is the epistemological lens I adopted for this study. I situated this study in the constructivist paradigm because of the emphasis on an individual or group’s creation of reality based on experiences (Hatch, 2002). I believe that perception is reality and one’s experiences are their truth, their reality in the situation. As a researcher, I believe that we can identify, interpret, explain, and construct a larger truth for a group of people based on the individual group member experiences (Hatch, 2002). This research study was a qualitative exploration of individual, tenured, WOC faculty experiences in higher education. The findings of this study highlight and give voice to this population with the hope of understanding and responding to their unique opportunities and challenges (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Utilizing constructivist grounded theory, I explored the lived experiences of tenured, WOC faculty in order to construct a theory that described their reality in the tenure and promotion process at Southeastern, U.S. research institutions (Charmaz, 2014; Hatch 2002).

**Research Questions**

The research questions were designed to explore a particular aspect of the experiences of tenured, WOC faculty. I looked specifically at the intersection of race and gender and how those identities impacted and were impacted by the individual’s
environment. Given the complexity of the topic, this study sought to answer two specific questions:

- How do tenured Women of Color faculty describe their experiences in the tenure and promotion process at their current and previous predominantly White, public, research institutions?
  - What, if any, structures or climates of their department or university that aided in the ability to achieve tenure?

**Organization of the Study**

The proposed study was a qualitative, grounded theory investigation of the experiences of tenured WOC faculty. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection technique. Follow up interviews or written reflections provided specific information related to the interpretation of data collected. Participants were recruited from direct email communication and national association list serve advertisements. Twenty-three participants were selected from WOC faculty that voluntarily completed an online, demographic survey. This survey collected information related to their faculty status, rank, institution type, race/ethnicity, and citizenship status. The target population of this study was domestic WOC. Based on the historical implications of higher education in the U.S., the study was focused on U.S. citizens rather than international faculty members that may have been intentionally recruited to a university.

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, I used the following definitions to frame my work.
Agency is defined as the perspectives and actions that an individual adopts in pursuit of an explicit, personal goal (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). Agency is a particular tool used by WOC to overcome barriers in the academy and may emerge as a theme in the data analysis process, explicitly or implicitly (Charmaz, 2014; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Climate refers to the racialized and/or gendered environment within a department or university. This study sought to identify descriptions of the environments WOC faculty operated within during their tenure and promotion processes (Gonzales et al., 2008). The structures of a department or institution impact the climate. See structures.

Faculty refers to full-time instructional members of higher education institutions in the U.S. as categorized by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Grounded theory is a methodological approach to qualitative research in which a theoretical model emerges from data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). In Constructivist ground theory, the researcher is a more intimate part of the study from design to interpretation of findings. Data are collected in the form of lived experiences, used to construct a description of the phenomenon of interest (Charmaz, 2014).

Predominantly White institutions describes colleges and universities with a White student population of 50% or greater and that are not classified as a historically Black college or university (HBCU) or a Tribal college by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS, Brown & Dancy, 2009; NCES, 2015a).

Pre-tenure faculty are junior faculty members working toward tenured status, also known as faculty on the tenure track. See tenure track.
Public, research institutions are colleges and universities that hold Carnegie classification of doctoral/research university, doctoral/research university (high research activity), or doctoral/research university (very high research activity) as reported by IPEDS (NCES, 2015a).

School/institution refers to predominantly White, public, research colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. References to other institution types or the field of higher education will be explicitly conveyed.

Southeastern United States includes the states and commonwealths of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Structure is an overarching term meaning the people, policies, and practices that influence one’s environment (Smith, 2015). These structures often influence the department or institutional climate. See climate.

Success refers to achieving tenured status, receiving promotion to Associate or Full Professor level, or acquiring a leadership position in the department, college, or division (such as department chair, dean, or provost level).

Tenure track is the years faculty spend working toward tenured status and preparing for the tenure review process. This includes the submission of materials for review. See pre-tenure faculty.

Tenure review process refers to the evaluation of tenure materials at the department, college, and university levels as well as the decision issued at each institutional level.
Tenured status is the designation for faculty members that have met standards established by one’s department or university signifying the earned right to continued employment (Lawrence, Celis, & Ott, 2014).

Women of Color is used to describe U.S. citizens that identify as American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and women of two or more races (NCES, 2015a).

Positionality

Consistent with constructivist grounded theory, as the researcher I was connected to this study in various ways. I was connected to participants through both gender and racial identities. I was personally motivated by the topic of this study based upon my career goals and aspirations to be a faculty member. My role as researcher was to serve as an instrument for data collection and analysis. Throughout the course of this study, these connections and any potential bias were noted and disclosed to preserve the validity of the study and the findings.

From my experience as a practitioner in higher education, problem solving became a central part of my work. I bring a problem solving mindset to my scholarship and seek to conduct research that addresses specific problems. With every research project, my objective is to provide specific, action-oriented recommendations that will inform policy or practice to respond to those problems. As a scholar-activist committed to social justice, I desire my scholarship to create or to incite change where inequity exists.
I chose to assert my voice as a Black woman in racialized and gendered environment of higher education by writing this dissertation in first person, active voice. My primary motivation for this study was to create a space for the voices of others to be heard and to shine light upon an under-investigated population in higher education (Turner et al., 2011; Yosso, 2005). I intentionally chose to not situate the design or findings of this study in comparison to a White or male norm (Stanley, 2006). I hope to push against acceptance of a normal experience in higher education. The experiences of WOC faculty are different, but important to the advancement and diversification of the field of education (Yosso, 2005).

**Assumptions**

The primary assumption in this study was that WOC faculty succeeded, in part, because of certain climates and structures at their university as well as individual behaviors and attitudes (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014; O’Meara & Campbell, 2011; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Following that, I assumed that the target institutions in this study were racialized and gendered environments as literature describes as a trend at predominantly White, post-secondary institutions (Griffin et al., 2013; O’Meara & Stromquist, 2015). I assumed that these institutions were racialized and gendered environments because of the foundational tenet of critical race theory, “race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and a fundamental part of defining and explaining how U.S. society functions” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). The evolution of U.S. higher education was impacted by racism in the U.S. (Dayton, 2015; Smith, 2004; Smith, 2015). I believe that the experiences of Women of Color faculty working in PWIs are influenced by racism.
and sexism in the educational environment. Additionally, I assumed that the targeted schools in this study behave in similar ways to achieve above-average percentages of tenured, WOC faculty. I assumed the institutions in which WOC faculty achieved tenure were structured in ways that contributed to their success (Turner et al., 2008).

Women of Color faculty experience the field of education in different ways than their White female or male counterparts (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Turner et al., 2008). I assumed I would be able to identify specific traits, characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs that contributed to the success of my participants (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011; O’Meara & Stromquist, 2015). Overall, I expected participants to be willing to truthfully share their experiences.

**Delimitations**

I chose to narrow the focus of this study to tenured, WOC faculty. This allowed for a consistent investigation of those that have completed the tenure review process. I focused the study solely on WOC in order for their stories to stand alone as a counter-narrative. I did not want to compare their experiences to White women, which would reinforce the White woman’s experience as the norm (Stanley, 2006). I focused on predominantly White, research institutions where WOC faculty are underrepresented.

This study was concerned with providing institutional recommendations to remove barriers to tenure, barriers that most often stem from the biased perspective of members of the predominantly White institution. With societal oppression, marginalized identities are most often responsible for identifying and rectifying their oppression, despite lacking the power required to change the system (Lorde, 1984). Similarly, WOC
faculty members are challenged to solve the problems they experience in a system that they did not create. As such, my decision to focus on institutional remedies to institutional problems places the onus on individuals with the power to make change.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was identifying a sample with maximum variation across race/ethnicity, location of institution, discipline, and tenured rank. The population of tenured, WOC faculty at the target institutions was small, and purposeful and snowball sampling became necessary during the participant recruitment phase. While maximum variation was not achieved, a large sample of 23 participants was obtained.

Additionally, self-reported data was the primary source of data for this study. Participants were asked to recall events and perceptions of events that may have occurred years prior to participation in this study. However, this study was dependent upon construction of reality from a community of participants rather than an individual study. The findings of this study were an interpretation of various data points and a level of trustworthiness deemed appropriate for this design.

Finally, a limitation of this study was the lack of clear definitions for key terms prior to collecting data. Structures, climate, and culture were used interchangeably and left open for interpretation by participants during data collection. In the data analysis phase, I coded data based upon my assessment of the participant’s understanding of those terms, rather than a consistent definition.

Summary
This chapter provided a brief outline of the dissertation study focused on tenured, WOC faculty. In Chapter 2, I summarized the relevant literature explaining the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that are the foundation of this research study. Chapter 3 detailed the epistemology, methodology, and methods. I provided a recap of the theoretical framework as it relates to the intentionality of the research design. The findings of this study were presented in Chapter 4. I offered a model representative of the experiences of my participants and a theory for how institutional leaders can remove the barriers to tenure for WOC faculty. Finally, in Chapter 5, I provided implications for practice and recommendations for future research. Illustrative materials and relevant documents were included in the appendices at the conclusion of this dissertation.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of this dissertation study was the experiences of tenured, WOC faculty. In particular, I focused on how the participants of this study were able to achieve tenure in predominantly White, research institutions in the Southeastern United States. PWIs continue to show limited growth in the number of WOC faculty across disciplines. This study sought to describe the interactions WOC faculty have during the tenure review process with department leadership and colleagues, and the personal characteristics and sources of support that aided in their successful advancement.

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that provided the foundation for this study. I demonstrate the practical use of critical race feminist theory in this study. Next, I provide an overview of the concepts related to this study including the history of U.S. higher education and resultant predominantly White institutions, as well as concepts and issues related to tenure, promotion, and faculty evaluation. I give specific information demonstrating the impact of faculty evaluation on the advancement of WOC faculty.

In addition, I discuss the intersecting roles of WOC and the relationship to their career choices in the academy. I outline the tools WOC faculty employ for success in the racialized and gendered environment of higher education (Griffin et al., 2013; Solórzano et al., 2000). I conclude with a summary that highlights the contributions this study will make to the gap in the literature.
Theoretical Framework

Critical race feminist theory (CRF) provided the framework for this grounded theory investigation. CRF emerged in light of the absence of women’s perspectives in critical race theory (CRT) and the fact that feminist theories often highlighted only the experiences of White women (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). CRT in education started in critical legal studies, a branch of legal inquiry that seeks to evaluate laws and the legal system for evidence of oppression and marginalization of individuals and groups (Yosso, 2005). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) presented an early example of how CRT could be applied in the field of education, exploring the connections among race, property, and social inequity. Yosso (2005) utilized CRT to illuminate the cultural knowledge of People of Color and challenge the predominating ideas of cultural wealth.

The five tenets of CRT for use in education were articulated as: “1) the intercentricity of race and racism, 2) the challenge of dominant ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). The tenets provided foundational assumptions for research using CRT as a framework. The main tenet of CRT asserted U.S. society functions with race and racism at the core, along with additional layers of subordination of gender, class, phenotype, and other social identities (Yosso, 2005).

As CRT made its way into the field of education, scholars began to evaluate its utility. Supporters believed CRT allowed researchers to center race and racism in conversations of pedagogy and policy. Scholars were able to critique the historic
evolution of White Americans and whiteness as the standard in U.S. society (Parker, 1998). CRT interrogates the endemic nature of racism in the U.S. “despite the progress of civil rights laws and good intentions to eradicate racism” (Parker, 1998, p. 45). Most importantly, CRT provides an epistemological tool for centering race in research, which can “serve as a major link between fully understanding the historical vestiges of past discrimination and the present-day racial manifestations of that discrimination” (Parker, 1998, p. 46). Given the prevalence of CRT in educational research today, conversations of race and racism are still at the forefront in the U.S. more than 20 years after CRT entered the field.

Early critics of CRT argued that the theory did not add anything new to qualitative research conversations (Parker, 1998). Students with marginalized identities first wondered how CRT would serve to empower them or help them on campus (Parker, 1998). CRT scholars utilized the theory to analyze various policies, provide race-based solutions to emergent issues, and contribute a unique perspective on the law (Parker, 1998). Parker (1998) described an early critic’s assertion that CRT did not leave space for “sympathetic” White scholars that supported racial justice (p. 52). However, CRT was designed to be an evolving theory that would grow and change as it infiltrated the field of education research. Since CRT was built on a foundation of critiquing White privilege and whiteness, critical White studies became one of the practices that emerged from CRT, creating space for White scholars to engage in critical work (Parker, 1998).

The field of education and research institutions of post-secondary education have been described as gendered and racialized environments in which WOC experience
multiple marginalizations (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). The focus of this study inherently challenged the dominant ideology by exposing and refuting the education field’s claims of meritocracy, objectivity, and equal opportunity (Yosso, 2005). I illustrated the continued need for studies such as this by using CRT. However, CRT focused on race and failed to incorporate or represent the perspective of Women of Color. Thus, I adopted the more representative theory of CRF.

**Critical Race Feminism**

Evans-Winters & Esposito (2010) presented five benefits of CRF in education research:

1) Critical race feminism as a theoretical lens and movement purports that Women of Color’s experiences, thus perspectives, are different from the experiences of Men of Color and those of White women;

2) Critical race feminism focuses on the lives of Women of Color who face multiple forms of discrimination, due to the intersections of race, class, and gender within a system of White male patriarchy and racist oppression;

3) Critical race feminism asserts the multiple identities and consciousness of Women of Color (i.e., anti-essentialist);

4) Critical race feminism is multidisciplinary in scope and breadth; and

5) Critical race feminism calls for theories and practices that simultaneously study and combat gender and racial oppression. (p. 20)

Women of Color experience the world, specifically the academy, in different ways than Men of Color and White women (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Croom and Patton
reiterated that the academy was not built for Black women. I would contend that neither was the academy built for White women nor Women of Color (Turner, 2002). Accepting the endemic nature of racism, sexism, and classism in the U.S., WOC in the U.S. experience higher education as a raced, gendered, and classed environment (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010; Yosso, 2005).

CRF asserted WOC have an awareness of multiple identities and highlighted the lived experiences of WOC as they faced multiple forms of discrimination (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Most importantly, CRF called for theories and practices that study and work to address gender and racial oppression (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). The concept of intersectionality, the belief that individuals are located in and experience the world at the intersection of their identities, will be discussed later in this review (Crenshaw, 1991). Existing literature showed that WOC were subject to multiple forms of marginalization, experienced greater levels of stereotype threat, and were often judged by society’s conceptualization of who they are and what they should be (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Stanley, 2006). These realities had different consequences for how WOC experienced higher education as compared to Men of Color and White women. One of the motivations for this current study was to bring light to an issue in one area of higher education in order to make changes for a more inclusive field.

“Critical race feminism asserts the multiple identities and consciousness of Women of Color”, is multidisciplinary, and demands scholarship that studies and removes gender and racial oppression (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010, p. 20). This
study acknowledged the importance of various, salient identities WOC possessed and operated with when moving through the world. Education is an applied field and the use of CRF to conduct educational research was appropriate and necessary given the nature of the academy. I designed this study with a CRF foundation and, thus, was motivated to use the results of this study to develop a theory that highlighted the experiences of a marginalized group. Additionally, this study will inform practice to remove the sexist and racist systems that currently hinder WOC faculty in higher education.

While CRT paints a larger picture of the deeply rooted oppression in the U.S., the foundation of my research design rested on the assumptions and values of CRF. CRF is particularly germane to the population under investigation, exploring the experiences of Women of Color as compared to Men of Color or White women (Croom & Patton, 2011). There is a duality in identifying as a woman and Person of Color, which cannot be singularly explained as a raced or gendered experience. The intersection of these identities creates an experience that required additional scholarly attention.

**Community cultural wealth.** Complementing CRF in this study was Yosso’s (2005) concept of community cultural wealth. Yosso (2005) used CRT and asserted, “there are forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups bring to the table that traditional cultural capital theory does not recognize and value” (p. 77). Essentially, Yosso (2005) demonstrated that the standard for which knowledge, skills, and abilities are valued in the U.S. do not include things that are valuable to Persons of Color. Yosso’s (2005) work highlighted, in particular, six forms of capital that are distinctively valuable to Communities of Color:
1) *Aspirational capital* refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers…

2) *Linguistic capital* includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style…

3) *Familial capital* refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition…

4) *Social capital* can be understood as networks of people and community resources…

5) *Navigational capital* refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions…[and]

6) *Resistant capital* refers those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. (pp. 77-80)

The collective wealth of communities of color accumulated through these forms of capital was visible through the lens of CRT. This cultural wealth provided People of Color with the capital to navigate a society that values the forms of capital that it withholds from marginalized groups, maintaining systems of oppression and privilege (Yosso, 2005). Incorporating the theory of community cultural wealth with CRF in this study provided a critical investigation and interpretation of the experiences of WOC faculty seeking tenure in PWIs.

**Conceptual Framework**

The educational system in the United States is complex. I have developed a conceptual framework that highlights the various elements in the experience of WOC
faculty. In order to understand the problem, purpose, and significance of this study, the conceptual framework provides the context for this study. In this section, I outline the history of higher education, the history of tenure and promotion, and the key contexts of WOC faculty in higher education.

**History and Evolution of U.S. Higher Education**

Higher education in the U.S. has evolved in a multitude of ways since the first college was founded in 1636 (Thelin, 2003). As was true in England, the U.S. colonies witnessed an increased demand for education with the growth of its population. Despite the differences in location and institution type for the earliest colleges, these schools all had one thing in common. Access to these institutions was limited to elite, White men (Dayton, 2015).

The first universities were established in the 1600s with the purpose of educating young men in the new country to become proper society men. As the burgeoning new government made a commitment to education, leaders passed the Morrill Act of 1862, also known as the National Land-Grant College Act, to provide land to the states, on which the states were required to construct at least one university (Hurtado, 2003). The institutions established through the Morrill Act, also known as land-grant universities, were designed to focus on the agricultural and mechanical arts along with other scientific, classical, and military studies (Dayton, 2015). Legislation regarding land-grant institutions was expanded to require those schools to focus special attention on agricultural experimentation when Congress passed the Hatch Act of 1887.
When the rights of U.S. citizens were extended to more individuals (i.e., former slaves), funding was appropriated to states to establish universities for Blacks to provide access to further education. The Second Morrill Act (officially known as the Agricultural College Act) was passed in 1890 that allowed states to create separate agricultural universities for White students and Black students, in particular (Thelin, 2003). The idea of separate but equal service rang true for many years until the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education determined that separate but equal was not appropriate for use in education (Dayton, 2015). However, Brown resulted in a false narrative that the end of segregation was only a benefit to African Americans (Smith, 2015).

The poor implementation of Brown caused more harm to Black communities with the rampant firing of Black teachers and closing of Black schools (Smith, 2015). The situation continued to worsen with the introduction of various race-neutral, or color-blind, policies that “were essentially affirmative action for Whites” (Smith, 2015, p. 14). The GI bill, in particular, was a large-scale public policy enacted in 1944. It was written to not exclude anyone on the basis of race. Unfortunately, with the benefits being distributed at the local level, many African American and Latino veterans were denied access to home loans and education (Smith, 2015). In the Southern U.S., Whites feared shifts in power if Blacks were to gain too much access. The implementation of public policies allowed Whites to maintain power through denied access in a way that has hampered the evolution of American society to this day (Smith, 2015).

While strides were made to create equal opportunities for people across racial lines, women still had limited access to institutions of higher education. As early as the
1860s, women began participating in higher education (Thelin, 2003). Most women attended colleges to prepare them as teachers, and were provided a rigorous course of study that went beyond basic teacher preparation (Hurtado, 2003). The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, along with other federal and state laws, allowed women to move into spaces previously limited to men. The trend toward coeducation grew in response to the demands for equal opportunity and access that led to the aforementioned Constitutional amendments (Hurtado, 2003).

While educational access has been granted to women and People of Color as students for years, the faculty realm is still dominated by White men. Prior to the Civil Rights Era, U.S. historian James D. Anderson demonstrated the early failures of college presidents to fill faculty positions through meritocratic practices (Smith, 2004). When presented with lists of highly qualified and well-trained African American scholars, just one-third (200/600 of presidents contacted), hesitantly suggested they would consider hiring an African American (Smith, 2004). College presidents even avoided hiring African American faculty during times of surges of enrollment where there was an increased need for new faculty members (Smith, 2004). This illustration provided evidence for the early false claims of U.S. higher education as a meritocratic field, particularly in conversations related to faculty. The persistent preference for hiring White faculty carried through to the Civil Rights Era and beyond (Smith, 2004; Smith, 2015).

Smith (2015) asserted, “if historical inequities are not interrupted, they will continue to cascade from generation to generation” (p. 15). Thus, with the passing of the
Civil Rights Act of 1964, higher education began “to reevaluate who was hired, who was taught, and who was admitted” (Smith, 2015, p. 90). Increases in enrollment for underrepresented minorities have outpaced the increases in hiring for Faculty of Color (Smith, 2015). Turner, González, and Wood (2008) highlighted the trend of Faculty of Color being used to recruit and maintain a more diverse student population at individual colleges and universities. However, diversity in the student body was also a recruitment and retention tool for leaders to maintain diversity at the faculty level (Turner et al., 2008). The cyclical nature of diversity initiatives in higher education demonstrates the need for diversity at all levels of the university. As a result, universities would be able to create an environment in which faculty are valued for their diverse perspectives and students are prepared for engaging in our global society (Turner et al., 2008).

**Predominantly White Institutions**

When separate institutions were created for Black students in the late 1800s, a divide was created and maintained for decades (Dayton, 2015). However, at the inception of U.S. higher education, a “system of racial exclusion” was developed (Smith, 2004, p. 172). Freed slaves sought total freedom through education, however, the dominant and persistent narrative characterized Blacks as “intellectually inferior” (Smith, 2004, p. 172). After the government-mandated integration of public schools, Black students and other Students of Color slowly began entering White universities. Today, we see the effects of segregation and limited efforts to diversify formally all-White institutions. Thus, we are left with predominantly White institutions (PWIs) throughout
the U.S. These institutions have a particular climate and set of structures that make it difficult for WOC faculty members to thrive and succeed (Turner et al., 2008).

**Institutional climate.** Turner et al. (2008) provided a review of 20 years worth of literature investigating the experiences of Faculty of Color in higher education. The themes presented in their review demonstrate the departmental, institutional, and national contexts that impact the presence and success of Faculty of Color (Turner et al., 2008). Primary department contexts that led to Faculty of Color dissatisfaction included “undervaluation of their research interests, approaches, and theoretical frameworks…challenges to their credentials and intellect in the classroom…isolation; perceived biases in the hiring process; unrealistic expectations of doing their work and being representatives of their racial/ethnic groups; and accent discrimination” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 143).

On the institutional level, a lack of campus-wide diversity in staff and students was discouraging for Faculty of Color, who often felt tokenized in an environment where they are pressured to represent an entire identity group (Bradley, 2005; Turner, 2002; Turner et al., 2008). The “interlocking work place effects of racism, sexism, and classism” have been well documented as a barrier to the advancement of Faculty of Color (Turner et al., 2008, pp. 144-145). Combining the institutional contexts with the national context of failed implementation of affirmative action, higher education has been left with significant underrepresentation of Faculty of Color (Springer, 2004; Turner et al., 2008).
Pasque (2010) discussed the power dynamics inherent in the conversations among educational leaders in the field of higher education. Pasque (2010) recounted the results of a discourse analysis of conference proceedings where the nation’s invited leaders in the field gathered to discuss the state of higher education and the future of higher education. Surprisingly, Pasque (2010) discussed in the findings how certain comments were silenced over others. Comments that interrupted the status quo, or primary mentality in that space, were most often invalidated. Pasque’s (2010) work demonstrated that a change in leadership might bring about changes in institutions of higher education.

Dowd and Bensimon (2015) and Smith (2015) provided frameworks for change in higher education. Down and Bensimon (2015) recounted steps for more equity-minded organizations, in which race was no longer a forbidden subject. Race, ethnicity, diversity, equity should be integral in the conversations around the experiences of marginalized groups at a university. Once the history of oppression has been acknowledged, then leaders can begin to consider how to create policy and change standard practice to provide a more equitable experience for all members of the organization (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

Smith (2015) presented a framework that presented diversifying an institution as an inherent evolutionary need. Likened to the onset of technological advances, diversity in the academy was deemed necessary for a university to stay relevant in the educational marketplace (Smith, 2015). As more Students of Color seek opportunities for higher education, a diverse and inclusive environment should be a requirement to attract the nation’s top talent (Smith, 2015). Institutions must evolve to meet the needs of a
changing society. If education was to be a contributor to the nation’s public good, and diverse learning environments prepare students for life in a global society, then diversity in higher education was a necessary condition of relevant institutions of higher education (Pasque, 2010; Smith, 2015; Turner et al., 2008).

Creating a diverse higher education environment requires members of an organization to be prepared and open for changes in the demographics of the organization. Harper and Hurtado (2007) alluded to a lack of training among staff and administrators to handle diversity-related conversations or issues. An inclusive campus climate needs to be one in which all members of the university feel welcomed, supported, and valued by the organization (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Inclusivity is conveyed through policies that support access to students of varying identity and policies that support the paternity and maternity rights of faculty and staff without repercussions in their advancement prospects (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011; Smith, 2015). Inclusivity in the literature meant hiring practices that prioritize faculty with diverse research interests or teaching strategies that incorporate culturally relevant approaches (Turner et al., 2008; Nunez, Murakami-Ramalho, and Cuero, 2010). In order to have an inclusive environment, however, administrators and university leaders must have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make change (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Smith, 2015).

**Institutional structures.** The members, leaders, and the spoken and unspoken rules of an organization impact the climate of the organization (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). In a university setting, this means faculty members, staff members, administrators, and students have a role to play in creating an inclusive climate (Smith, 2015). Rules of the
organization come in the form of explicit policies as well as the accepted norms of the university, college, and department. The way in which policies and norms are communicated to junior faculty can help or hurt their transition into the organization.

Hiring policies, such as targeted hiring lines, may provide an entry point for faculty members that bring certain types of diversity to the department (Smith, 2015). Most often, these targeted lines were seeking women or People of Color. Departments could make use of institutional resources to support the hiring of candidates who will enhance diversity, but may not fit a current job description (Smith, 2015). The problem with these positions, however, is the perception other faculty members hold for this type of hiring practice. If a senior faculty member did not benefit from this type of entry point, or philosophically objected to the concept of diversifying the department (in general or through these means), then whoever filled the targeted hire position would most likely feel the burden of that disapproval, regardless of their qualifications, actions, or productivity. Department leadership must monitor their departments to ensure enthusiastic support for those hired as special hires (Smith, 2015).

Next, policies that support a personal life shape one’s experience for better or for worse. Maternity leave policies place female faculty that choose to have children in a double bind where they are once again choosing between what they need and the implications in their department (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). For those faculty members offered maternity leave, some would choose to forego that option for fear of more harsh evaluation in the tenure process because they chose to take time off or “stop the tenure clock” in order to have more time before tenure review (O’Meara & Campbell,
2011, p. 458). Also, some faculty women would work through the semester while finding creative solutions to cover their own teaching responsibilities so as not to draw from department resources or to avoid asking for support in that regard (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011).

When considering the administrative leadership, most educational systems operated from a top-down perspective in which the positional leader has greatest influence on the operations of the organization (Smith, 2015). Many college deans rely on their department chairs to handle the day-to-day functions of individual departments. However, the relationship between deans and department chairs could have a positive or negative trickle-down effect to individual faculty members (Smith, 2015). With deans having a level of oversight for all departments, the dean is able to intervene if department chairs are not operating within the goals or mission for the organization. Unfortunately, deans are culpable in maintaining racist or sexist practices if they fail to acknowledge or address biased situations in the departments that the chair has perpetrated or allowed (Smith, 2015).

At the department level, the department chair controls leave requests, funding requests, course loads, hiring, and tenure and promotion reviews (Smith, 2015). Even if various committees are established to assist or manage these tasks, the chair has the ability to establish the purpose or goal for the committees and intervened if committees got off course (Smith, 2015). Thus, administrative leadership must be evaluated and considered when discussing the experiences of faculty. University leaders are barriers to
success for WOC faculty because of their lack of understanding of the issues facing WOC in predominantly White settings (Smith, 2015).

History of Tenure and Promotion

Higher education experienced a surge in growth between the end of World War II and the 1970s. New colleges and universities were chartered, more students were enrolled, and faculty positions were abundant (Youn & Price, 2009). Unfortunately, enrollment slowed in the late 1970s and schools became fiercely competitive in an attempt to achieve the prestige necessary to stay open. Increased standards for faculty rewards made achieving the coveted position of tenure much harder to obtain (Youn & Price, 2009). Prior to this, faculty had divided themselves into disciplines and various subject matters, with science and technology the most privileged of the disciplines (Gonzales & Rincones, 2012). The scientific ways of knowing were also privileged in the academy since the nation had developed rapidly on the basis of science and technology (Gonzales & Rincones, 2012).

Empirical research became the standard measure of scholarship across all institution types. The dominant perspective during this period of low enrollment was that a university/college could maintain their importance and stand out if they had the best faculty members, conducting the best research, and therefore, providing the best education (Youn & Price, 2009). It was during the final decades of the 20th century that non-tenured faculty positions declined and the period of promotion from assistant professor through the ranks to full professor expanded (Youn & Price, 2009).
increased competition for obtaining and maintaining a faculty position impacted the faculty experience in all aspects of the role.

Higher education in the U.S. began as an elite system that rapidly became a massive system with increasing access (Boyer, 1990). The tenure and promotion process became a way for faculty to ensure job security. Where the process was once focused on teaching ability and service to students, research became the critical component for institutions and individual faculty members (Boyer, 1990; Youn & Price, 2009). Teaching and service, although still required and expected, became less important in a faculty member’s review process, a shift that has remained (Boyer, 1990; Youn & Price, 2009).

Park (1996) described the three main criteria for tenure and promotion: research, teaching, and service. While service is an expectation for faculty members, an individual’s service work is rarely a deciding factor in the achievement of tenure or promotion (Park, 1996). Similarly, teaching is a requirement for most faculty, and yet, the adjudication of teaching varies across gender (Park, 1996; Griffin et al., 2013). Thus, research is the most heavily weighted criteria, particularly in research institutions. Park (1996) highlighted “research is necessary for successful promotion” and can even counteract lower levels of achievement in the teaching and service categories (p. 48). Within the category of research, certain research activities are privileged over others (Park, 1996). Research publications are judged based on topic, publication outlet, authorship, and connection to teaching and service (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Park, 1996). The most highly regarded scholarship falls in line with the dominant
narratives in education; privileging quantitative research, solely authored, and published in top-tier journals (Delgado Bernal and Villalpando, 2002; Park, 1996). Given these standards, most WOC faculty will encounter a variety of barriers during tenure review based upon their choices in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

**Women of Color in Higher Education**

The literature shows a variety of factors that hamper the success of WOC faculty. Stemming from intersections of identity and intersections of responsibilities, WOC faculty have enormous pressure to attempt to be all things to all people. This amount of self-imposed, and sometimes externally imposed, stress leads to dissatisfaction in the workplace, delays in the tenure and promotion timeline, and “pipeline issues” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 148) of WOC faculty headed to the upper ranks (Misra et al., 2011; Campbell & O’Meara, 2014).

The number of WOC faculty is growing, but at a very slow rate. As of 2013, 22.2% of full-time faculty members at degree-granting institutions were Women of Color, up just 0.7% from 2011 (NCES, 2015b). When looking at the intersections of race/ethnicity and gender, Asian/Pacific Islander women, African American/Black women, and Hispanic/Latina women make up the largest proportions of that 22.2% (NCES, 2015b). Women identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander represented 39.0% of full-time, WOC faculty, African American/Black women represented 33.0%, and Hispanic/Latina women represented 21.7% (NCES, 2015b). However, Women of Color have remained underrepresented in higher education as compared to their share of the total U.S. population (Smith, 2015).
In the next section, I have outlined the distinct challenges of Women of Color in a racialized and gendered environment. The overlapping nature of various roles WOC faculty experience added an additional layer to their career advancement choices and success. Then, I discuss the challenges WOC faculty face in the key areas of the tenure and promotion process. These challenges, in combination with their various roles and experiences with race and sex discrimination, demonstrate the barriers to advancement for WOC faculty. Some tools for success have been researched and reported in the literature and provided information related to the coping strategies employed by this group of faculty. However, a gap in the literature still exists in terms of the experiences of tenured WOC faculty in the particular setting of this study.

**Marginalization and intersectionality.** With each marginalized identity, oppressive forces are not simply added, but compounded (Turner et al., 2011). WOC experience the world based on the intersections of their race and gender identities (Crenshaw, 1991). For WOC the salient identities of race and gender are marginalized identities in U.S. society. Thus, WOC face double marginalization, which has implications for their success in higher education (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Turner et al., 2011).

CRF theory highlights the barriers and pitfalls that face Women of Color. CRF has similar tenets to critical race theory (CRT) but evolved in response to the lack of the female perspective in CRT (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010. CRF provides a unique approach to evaluating experiences because of the role gender plays in the racialized settings. CRF is mirrored in the concept of intersectionality, which Oleksy (2011)
defined as “the interconnections between various social differentials, such as gender, race, [and] ethnic origin” (p. 263). Intersectionality was an important frame for my study because the experiences of faculty members of interest were distinctive to them. White women do not experience higher education in ways that Women of Color do. Similarly, Men of Color do not have the same opportunities and challenges that Women of Color face.

The intersections of identity within WOC can lead to psychological stress in the face of stereotypes from colleagues and supervisors. In education, stereotypes impact women in how their scholarship is judged, how students view them in the classroom, and expectations around how they should dress, act, and speak (Griffin et al., 2013). Over time these stereotypes can impact a woman’s self-efficacy and lead to the development of a sense of being a fraud, unworthy of her position, thus leading her to leave the field of education (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Smith, 2015).

Chambers, Huggins, Locke, and Fowler (2014) described the racial opportunity cost for Students of Color at predominantly White institutions. Reasserting the “tension between social expectations and their own racial community norms” People of Color feel in these settings (Chambers et al., 2014, p. 467). While most research on racial opportunity cost has been focused on Students of Color, the parallels to Faculty of Color are relevant to this study. Chambers et al. (2014) reminded us of the hypocrisy of the field of education, clearly based upon a White, middle- to high-class norm, but maintaining the false claim of meritocratic achievement. By choosing to pursue advancement in education, WOC must choose to leave behind certain characteristics of
their culture in order to be received in the academic environment. The cost of working in higher education is a deeply personal choice. One must often choose to sacrifice elements of oneself or endure the potential consequences of not conforming (Chambers et al., 2014).

In light of persistent stereotypes facing Black women, specifically, Collins (1986) called for “Black female intellectuals…to produce facts and theories about the Black female experience that will clarify a Black woman’s standpoint for Black women” (p. 516). However, I am taking this challenge a step further to include all Women of Color. Scholarly WOC should produce literature on the experiences of WOC in academia to disrupt the current narrative created to support a White, male norm.

**Experiences in community, personal, and work roles.** Women of Color faculty maintain multiple roles throughout their lives and careers. They tend to be career-minded and driven toward success as a faculty member despite the physical and psychological stress of the academy (Griffin et al., 2013). Women of Color faculty play varying roles in their communities as activists, advocates, and role models. Finally, in their personal lives, WOC faculty may be spouses, partners, mothers, sisters, or daughters. Each personal role has a set of expectations or responsibilities that add to the list of things requiring time and attention (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).

Many WOC faculty report competing commitments in their every day life (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). Women of Color faculty often maintain ties to their community, serving as advocates (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Community roles allow WOC to maintain connections to something larger than themselves. As a
faculty member, many WOC see their work role as a means of uplifting their personal communities by challenging current systems (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Many write and publish research that can inform policies to directly support the daily lives of their communities. Women of Color faculty are often asked to speak at local schools, serve on community boards or panels, or volunteer in elementary or secondary school settings (Dancy & Jean-Marie, 2014). Despite the natural overlap among roles, not all behaviors are valued (Park, 1996).

Personally, women must consider the choices they make around family commitments in ways that their male counterparts do not. O’Meara and Campbell (2011) discussed the choices women make around work and family and striving to give their best efforts in both areas. Using qualitative methods, O’Meara and Campbell (2011) explored the responses of 20 participants, five men and 15 women, to the parental leave policy at one research university. The study was focused on tenure-track faculty members, but two non-tenure-track faculty were included (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). When women asked for considerations in their work lives for the benefit of their personal commitments, they are viewed negatively, as not being serious about their work or looking for special consideration (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011).

In addition, cultural norms influence the decision a Woman of Color makes about her personal and work commitments. Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) provided a case study of a Latina educational leader headed toward becoming president of an institution. While she was excited about the potential to serve in the top-seated role, her extended
family questioned how she could sacrifice time with her family and children for her work (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).

These additional roles play a large part in how WOC faculty live out their career roles. Every decision point is a negotiation among time for family, time for research, time for students, and time for their community. Women of Color faculty are not only concerned with what they are doing every day, but how they are completing the task. They often take on additional service tasks and teaching assignments in order to maintain collegiality, while sacrificing research productivity (Misra et al., 2011). Moreover, WOC thrive in environments that encourage collaboration and relationships with others (Stanley, 2006; Turner et al., 2008). Mentoring, advising, and other service activities are a way for faculty, particularly WOC, to promote and support the advancement of WOC faculty as a group (Park, 1996). Women of Color endure hostile environments where their presence and contributions are invalidated and underappreciated (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Griffin et al., 2013). Yet, these faculty members persisted, determined to maintain their position and their goals (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011).

**Evaluation of Women of Color faculty in the academy.** Research, teaching, and service continue to be the primary categories measured in the tenure and promotion processes of today’s research institution (Gardner & Veliz, 2014; Youn & Price, 2009). Prioritizing research over all else, WOC faculty are continually disadvantaged in the review process because of their research interests, methods, and audiences (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Turner et al., 2008). Their willingness to engage or adapt in
these contexts may influence their interactions with colleagues. Each area brings with it positives and negatives that impact the success of Women of Color in the professoriate.

In the context of research, literature has shown that WOC faculty are drawn to the humanities, social sciences, and education disciplines. Their work is often focused on the experiences of People of Color and published in outlets that will make a direct impact and are accessible to a varied audience (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Unfortunately, department chairs or review committees often view this work as biased or lacking rigor and discount these publication efforts in the tenure and promotion process (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Turner et al., 2008). While WOC faculty may be passionate about a topic or particular research agenda, they may have to face a decision about doing what they want to do and doing what will help them achieve tenure or promotion (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011).

Many Faculty of Color are drawn to their faculty role as a way to give back. Teaching is a strong motivation for their persistence (Turner et al., 2008). Gregory (2001) referred to the African proverb “she who learns must also teach” as a motivation for Black women in particular to seek a career in education (p. 124). However, teaching is undervalued in the tenure and promotion processes of research institutions. While teaching is important, women are stereotyped as predisposed to the nurturing, care-giving nature of a teaching role. Therefore, if a woman receives high marks in her teaching evaluations, it is not highly weighted or seen as a benefit. However, if she receives negative comments and low marks, it is noted and held against her in the review process (Griffin et al., 2013).
Additionally, teaching is devalued in the tenure review process because of the assumption that all faculty teach (Park, 1996). Evaluating faculty members based on an activity that everyone undertakes is assumed a less valuable measurement. Current metrics of teaching fail to consider the quality of teaching by considering the time invested into creating new courses, factoring in overall course load, or the number of students the faculty member teaches. Park (1996) highlighted that Faculty of Color, particular female Faculty of Color, are more likely to teach courses utilizing different pedagogical techniques for delivering content and assessing learning. These techniques require more time for preparation and grading than traditional, lecture-based content delivery and test-based assessment (Park, 1996).

Furthermore, junior faculty are more likely to be assigned to teach introductory courses that will have higher numbers of student enrollment. While senior faculty members have more of a choice in the courses they want to teach, junior faculty members have little to no control over their teaching loads (Park, 1996). Junior faculty may not have the opportunity to teach graduate level courses with lower student enrollments or more specialized courses with connection to their research interests (Park, 1996). Without metrics for assessing quality of teaching for junior faculty, female faculty members of color will continue to be penalized for their teaching activities (Patton & Catching, 2009; Turner et al., 2008). Primarily, student evaluations are the main assessment tool. Unfortunately, WOC faculty members consistently receive lower evaluation scores than their counterparts (Turner et al., 2008).
Similarly, service activities are over-assigned and undervalued in the review process (Misra et al., 2011; Park, 1996). Service responsibilities include advising students, representing one’s department on university-wide committees, or mentoring graduate students. However, there are benefits and challenges to this area as well. Women of Color faculty understand the importance of mentoring and role modeling for students at all levels (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Being present and available to Students of Color can assist with student persistence, and introduce more diversity into the pipeline to graduate school and the professoriate (Misra et al., 2011; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Turner et al., 2008). Women of Color faculty also recognized that without their presence on certain committees a particular perspective may be missing from the conversation that could impact them and other People of Color in the institution (Misra et al., 2011). In general, service is a rewarding experience for WOC faculty, but it is highly time-consuming and undervalued in the review process (Misra et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2008).

There is a power dynamic that exists in most departments where junior faculty are unlikely to say no to suggestions or requests to serve that are made by their department chair or college dean (Park, 1996). There is a double bind when it comes to service. Again, if junior faculty were to politely decline a service request, they would be viewed as difficult or labeled as not being a team player (Park, 1996). However, accepting the request results in less time to commit to research, the primary evaluation area for tenure. As with teaching, quality in service work is not measured. Different service commitments require different amounts of time and energy (Park, 1996). While WOC
faculty members are willing to serve, they are often overly sought out based on their identities and less likely to say no to requests for their time. Sadly, their efforts in service are the least valued in the tenure review process (Park, 1996).

Finally, there is one unwritten factor in the tenure and review process. Collegiality is a measure of department-faculty fit, which impacts a faculty member’s job security and livelihood (Hurtado & Sharkness, 2008). It is heavily weighted and subjectively measured. Moreover, in a racialized and gendered environment, WOC may not feel the luxury of saying no to additional requests on their time for fear of being seen as difficult (Misra et al., 2011). As a result, WOC faculty take on additional tasks in order to maintain a collegial environment with White or male colleagues out of necessity, rather than desire (Hurtado & Sharkness, 2008).

Research is prioritized in the tenure and promotion review process (Gardner & Veliz, 2014; Park, 1996). However, the research efforts and scholarship of WOC faculty are routinely undervalued and underappreciated (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Gonzales & Rincones, 2012; Turner et al., 2008). Teaching is a source of motivation for WOC faculty, but can also be a hurdle to overcome if evaluations are unfavorable (Griffin et al., 2013). Service connects WOC faculty to their university and personal communities. Service activities provide the opportunity to support students and give back in ways that WOC faculty may have been supported themselves. Unfortunately, the rewards of service activities are not often seen in the review process and can take away from the research productivity that is so heavily weighted (Misra et al., 2011; Turner et
al., 2008). On top of these tangible experiences, WOC faculty also face the intangible burden of an oppressive system.

**Racial battle fatigue.** Women of Color faculty have to consider their personal health when choosing to persist in predominantly White universities. Not only do they face the occupational stress of being a tenure-track faculty member, but also the race- and gender-based stress of being a woman of color in a White, male-dominated industry. “Unlike typical occupational stress, racial battle fatigue [RBF] is a response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing racism daily” (Smith, 2004, p. 180). The body turns on a physical response in the face of danger, much like bracing for an attack. Most of the time there is a recovery period as one returns to a normal state. Smith (2004) compared RBF to “combat fatigue in military personnel”, whereby the body is physically prepared for an attack (p. 180). RBF is the result of preparing for and experiencing attacks in the form of racial micro- and macroaggressions.

Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano (2006) defined racial microaggressions as:

1) subtle verbal and non-verbal insults directed at people of color, often automatically or unconsciously; 2) layered insults, based on one’s race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; and 3) cumulative insults, which cause unnecessary stress to people of color while privileging Whites. (p. 300)

Extending that definition, Osanloo, Boske, and Newcomb (2016) defined racial macroaggressions as:
actions) conducted in a public forum or sphere...[they are] verbal or non-verbal communications that are not only purposeful and deliberate, but are meant to create longitudinally debilitating and depressive results...Macroaggressions occur in the nebulus space between microaggressions and institutional/structural racism. (p. 6)

Race-based stressors, microaggressions, and macroaggressions can come from colleagues or students. Faculty of Color are most likely to be on the receiving end. The stress response is engaged when an actual racist event occurs or in the anticipation of a racist event (Smith, 2004). Walking in to the classroom, Women of Color faculty may be braced for potential stressors just because of the identities they bring into the room with them. Just showing up to work, Faculty of Color are walking into a battleground and preparing for the impact of psychological assaults (Smith, 2004).

RBF leads to physical symptoms that manifest because of this constant state of psychological tension. These symptoms may be experienced individually and, thus, are easily dismissed. However, chronic symptoms related to race-based stressed take a cumulative toll on the body. Some research studies demonstrate the cost of everyday racism is higher for African Americans, specifically, as seen in a shortened life expectancy as compared to Whites (Smith, 2004). RBF is dangerous because the symptoms are common enough to not cause concern. White administrators often dismiss or downplay the race-based stress Faculty of Color experience. When an individual is not aware of the impact of racist or sexist experiences, it is hard to attribute seemingly disparate symptoms to a larger cause.
In addition to the surface level difficulties WOC face as they navigate various roles and the labyrinth experiences of faculty evaluation, internally they face physiological effects of a hostile environment. Bringing diversity into a predominantly White environment is needed for the benefit of everyone in the community. However, staying in a racist and sexist environment comes at a psychological and physical cost to WOC faculty members.

**Tools for Success**

**Agency.** Campbell and O’Meara (2014) explored the departmental contexts that impact faculty agency through a quantitative, cross-sectional survey. The survey was administered at a large, public, research institution and included 488 tenure-track faculty members, with a 32% response rate (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). Campbell and O’Meara (2014) described agency as taking specific actions to achieve one’s goals. In this context, I viewed agency as taking specific actions and adopting certain attitudes or beliefs in order to obtain tenured status. Campbell and O’Meara (2014) demonstrated that department contexts do influence an individual’s perspective, which supports my efforts to explore the organizational structures and climates that impact WOC faculty and their ability to achieve tenure.

Organizational predictors of agency include person-department fit, work-life climate, and professional development resources (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). Person-department fit was measured by the extent to which the faculty member felt their work was valued by their departmental peers and leaders. Additionally, fit was measured by the extent to which the faculty member’s values aligned with their department values.
(Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). In their study, a positive work-life climate was one in which department policies promoted and supported the personal needs of a faculty member. For example, a faculty member could be open and honest about family emergencies and schedule changes (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). Finally, professional development resources supported the scholarship and productivity of faculty members, which increased their agency for the benefit of the individual and institution (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014).

O’Meara (2015) elaborated on the concept of agency and asserted, “agentic perspectives, like agentic actions, emerge from and are shaped by organizations and social contexts” (p. 334). Agentic perspectives influence an individual’s agentic actions (Campbell & O’Meara, 2014). Thus, one’s goals can be achieved once an individual decides to take steps toward achieving his or her goals. This is the foundational idea of an agentic perspective. Additionally, O’Meara (2015) put forth the possibility that agency increased with one’s career status. A potential causal relationship existed between one’s level of agency and level of career achievement (O’Meara, 2015).

**Mentoring.** Mentoring is a key to success for all women in education (Gibson, 2006; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). For Women of Color, mentoring interrupted the psychological harm that comes from stereotypes and an inability to define who you are (Collins, 1986; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Mentoring provided a sense of encouragement, sense of belonging, and in same-gender pairs, a role model for navigating a hostile environment (O’Meara, 2015; O’Meara & Campbell, 2011; Smith, 2015). However, with mentoring, WOC can develop additional social capital, a valuable
resource in the tenure and promotion process (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Hurtado & Sharkness, 2008; Yosso, 2005).

**Summary**

The professoriate, along with the field of higher education, was not designed for Women of Color (Dayton, 2015; Thelin, 2003). Women of Color faculty continue to be underrepresented across institution type, discipline, and rank (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; McNeely Cobham & Patton, 2015). Currently, there is a need for additional research related to the experiences of WOC faculty in predominantly White, research institutions (McNeely Cobham & Patton, 2015; Turner et al, 2008). In particular, more research studies are needed to describe the institutional environment of these women and not just the review of their behaviors and abilities presented from a deficit perspective (O’Meara, 2015; Pasque, 2010).

Diversity is a necessary and compelling interest in education (Bollinger, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; Smith, 2015). Increasing the diversity of faculty demonstrates to all students that WOC can be legitimate creators and holders of knowledge (Patton, Harris, Ranero-Ramirez, Villacampa, & Lui, 2015). With additional Faculty of Color, particularly WOC faculty, Students of Color have role models in the professoriate and White students learn to value and respect the contributions of Faculty of Color (Patton et al., 2015). My study provides additional information to assist institutions with creating an environment in which WOC faculty can thrive, succeed, and advance. In the following chapter, I outline the research design for this study to include the epistemology, theoretical framework, methodology, and methods.
Chapter 3 provides the details of the research design of this study. Grounded in interpretivist and critical paradigms, this research study was framed by a constructivist epistemology and critical race feminist theory (Hatch, 2002; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Constructivist grounded theory was the chosen method for this study (Charmaz, 2014). This particular form of grounded theory was chosen because of the ability to explore the counter-narratives of Women of Color (WOC) in order to create a theory describing the unique phenomena facing WOC faculty. This chapter was divided into four sections: (a) epistemology, (b) theoretical frameworks, (c) methodology, and (d) methods.

**Epistemology**

I approached this study as a critical constructivist. The goal of this study was to explore the institutional structures of society through the lived experiences of individual people and groups. The purpose of this research study was to bring light to the experiences of WOC faculty who are often misrepresented and misunderstood due to their underrepresentation in higher education (Collins, 1986; Stanley, 2006).

Constructivism and critical/feminist paradigms informed my position for this study. Ontologically, constructivism has spoken to the belief that there is no absolute truth, only the constructed realities of multiple individuals or groups (Hatch, 2002). The critical/feminist paradigm has asserted that there are ...“historically situated structures
that have a real impact on the life chances of individuals” (Hatch, 2002, p. 16).
Exploring the multiple truths of WOC faculty and the real-life systemic barriers in higher education allowed me to describe the constructed reality of an underrepresented and under-researched population in higher education.

The epistemologies of constructivism and critical/feminist paradigms have shared a common theme. Within both paradigms, it has been believed that the researcher is intimately connected to the research through construction of reality with participants and the political lens through which the results are reported (Hatch, 2002). In the context of this study, these paradigms were intertwined in a way that allowed me to seamlessly investigate a population with which I identify in order to promote change in a system to meet the needs of a diverse society.

**Theoretical Framework**

Critical race feminism (CRF) provided the foundation for this study. Primary tenets of this theory asserted that WOC experience the world differently than men of color and White women, face multiple forms of discrimination due to their intersecting identities, and require additional theories to study and address systemic oppression (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Specifically, CRF highlighted intersectionality as an important position from which people experience the world. Women of color faculty operate from the intersection of marginalized racial and gender identities creating a specific experience subject to racism and sexism in U.S. society (Crenshaw, 1991). The field of education and research institutions of post-secondary education are gendered and racialized environments in which WOC experience multiple marginalization (Delgado
Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Thus, this study was designed to pull the voices of WOC from the margins and center them in a conversation about tenure and promotion, and diversity in the academy.

**Methodology**

The focus of this research study was the individual experiences of tenured, WOC faculty members of which little research has been conducted (Croom & Patton, 2011; Stanley, 2006). Constructivist grounded theory allowed for an analysis and construction of reality based upon the lived experiences of the target population (Charmaz, 2014).

**Qualitative Approach**

Qualitative research was the appropriate approach for this study. Evolving from the fields of sociology and anthropology, qualitative research in education allowed participants to play a role in the research design that went beyond the participants (Hatch, 2002). The goal of qualitative research has been to explore the intangible elements of phenomenon that occur in society. In this study, qualitative research methods allowed me to learn how something occurred, not only if the phenomenon occurred at all.

**Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Naturalistic qualitative methods were the primary tools of constructivists. Thus, I chose constructivist grounded theory as the methodology of this study (Charmaz, 2014; Hatch, 2002). Constructivist grounded theory has been a contemporary version of grounded theory that combines original methodological strategies with a new epistemological foundation (Charmaz, 2014). Constructivist grounded theory has stressed the importance of “social contexts, interactions, sharing viewpoints, and
interpretive understandings” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). I have chosen to align myself with the position of Charmaz (2014) because the constructivist grounded theory approach acknowledges the subjectivity of social life.

Grounded theory (GT) methods have involved distinct actions that address data collection and data analysis. Data collection and analysis happen simultaneously (Charmaz, 2014). Simultaneous analysis provided the critical information needed to reflect upon and adjust data collection tools. Moreover, theoretical sampling has been a key element of a GT study. Continuous analysis allowed me to monitor my progress toward theoretical saturation and know what perspective was still missing from the data (Charmaz, 2014). Systemic analysis of actions and processes were the focus rather than particular themes in order to develop inductively crafted categories. These categories were the basis of theory construction, which remained the primary motivation for this GT study (Charmaz, 2014).

GT studies have made valuable contributions to creating policy and informing practice (Charmaz, 2014). The purpose of this study was to create a model that described the experiences of tenured WOC faculty and a theory for how institutional leaders can work to remove barriers to tenure for Women of Color. This model illustrates the intersections of individual faculty member characteristics, actions, and behaviors with institutional structures and climates. The results of this study should be used to alter and create policies that support WOC faculty at predominantly White research universities. A research map illustrating the design of this study can be found in Appendix A.
Methods

The goal of this grounded theory study was to collect and analyze the distinctive experiences of tenured, WOC faculty at predominantly White, public, research institutions in the southeast United States. The study was initially bound to the southeast region of the United States in order to control for regional differences that may impact participant experiences. Initial pilot studies were conducted with women in the Mid-Atlantic and Mid-Western regions of the U.S. However, I found enough similarities in their experiences to those in my target region to include the pilot data in the full data corpus. Because the study included women from various regions, the results will be relevant to institutions in the Southeast region and beyond. While the sample was not fully representative of other regions in the U.S., the results should not be quickly dismissed based on perceived regional differences among universities.

Research Questions

The research questions were designed to explore a particular aspect of the experiences of tenured, WOC faculty. Given the complexity of the topic, this study sought to answer one overarching question and one sub-question:

• How do tenured Women of Color faculty describe their experiences in the tenure and promotion process at their current and previous predominantly White, public, research institutions?
  o What, if any, structures or climates of their department or university aided in the ability to achieve tenure?

Population
This study was focused on the population of tenured, WOC faculty. As a researcher, I chose not to study junior faculty. While junior faculty, also known as pre-tenured faculty, may be able to give current examples of their experiences in the academy, there was no guarantee they would earn tenure. By focusing on tenured faculty members, I was able to access a group of women who had overcome the barriers. Also, there is a level of security that faculty members gain once they became tenured, allowing them to freely share their experiences (Gardner, 2012).

In order to identify target universities, I utilized the regional definitions provided by the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) and the institution types defined by the Carnegie classification system (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2015). The first step of this process was an intentional review of data collected in the 2013 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (NCES, 2015a). I downloaded a list of institutions and their respective statistics related to faculty employment. I included public universities in the Southeastern U.S. (i.e., Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), with a Carnegie classification of doctoral/research university, doctoral/research university- high research activity, or doctoral/research university- very high research activity (NCES, 2015a).

I also obtained the following demographic information for universities that met the above qualifications from the IPEDS database: Total number of tenured faculty members; total number of tenured women faculty; and number of tenured faculty by race/ethnicity and gender (i.e., American Indian women, Asian women, Black or African
American women, Hispanic or Latino women, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander women, and women of two or more races). I then calculated the percentage of total faculty members that were Women of Color.

There were 45 universities in the Southeastern U.S. classified as doctoral/research universities. The average percentage of tenured, WOC faculty at these institutions was 5.4%. I initially targeted institutions with a percentage of tenured WOC faculty above 5.4% for two reasons. First, with an above average percentage, I assumed the pool of possible participants would be larger than other institutions and individual faculty members would be less identifiable. Second, I believed these institutions would have unique structures and climates that contributed to higher numbers of tenured, WOC faculty. I contacted the 23 schools with a percentage of tenured WOC faculty at or above 5.4% to recruit participants (see Table 3.1 on pg. 57). To increase maximum variation among states represented I included a Mississippi school with 5.2% tenured WOC faculty in my initial contacts (NCES, 2015a). I also included three schools at the 5.2% and 5.3% level to increase the potential yield in participants. I contacted 26 universities. The schools listed in Table 3.1 solely represent those contacted, their Carnegie classification (as of 2013), and the percentage of tenured faculty represented by Women of Color (NCES, 2015a).

Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Carnegie Classification</th>
<th>% of All Tenured Faculty that are WOC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn University</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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</tbody>
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57
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Alabama</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>6.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Arkansas at Little Rock</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Atlantic University</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida International University</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of West Florida</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>R3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Florida</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina at Greensboro</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Carolina- Columbia</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Tennessee State University</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Memphis</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Mason University</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth University</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The abbreviation R1 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university-very high research activity. The abbreviation R2 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university-high research activity. The abbreviation R3 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2015).

**Recruitment.** The sample was identified through targeted recruitment at select institutions; advertisements in professional association email lists; and printed cards distributed at national conferences. The targeted recruitment included emails and phone calls to institutional contacts seeking lists of tenured, WOC faculty or requesting recruitment materials be emailed to the faculty members that met my sample criteria. My recruitment emails included a video in which I was seen introducing myself and describing the study. The video was used to build early rapport with potential participants and demonstrate my personal connection to the topic and target population.

I utilized purposeful sampling to select study participants. Purposeful sampling is the most common form of non-probabilistic sampling, the more appropriate technique for qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Through purposeful sampling, I was able to identify and select a sample that could provide information related to my research questions. I used a combination of sampling techniques, specifically, snowball and maximum variation sampling (Merriam, 2009). Snowball sampling, also known as chain sampling...
or network sampling, began with identifying a few participants and then having them refer other participants to my study (Merriam, 2009). At the end of each interview, I encouraged participants to share my research invitation with their colleagues or provide me with names of other WOC faculty members.

The primary techniques I used were maximum variation and theoretical sampling. Maximum variation sampling involved seeking “widely varying instances of the phenomenon,” as the resulting patterns that emerge would be more interesting (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). With the goal of creating a theory, maximum variation sampling strengthens the descriptions and theory produced given an increased variance in experiences and perspectives on the topic (Merriam, 2009). As I collected my data, I monitored the variation in my sample based on the demographic data collected in my survey as well as the data I collected.

I drew the sample from faculty that voluntarily completed a short demographic survey (see Appendix C). The survey contained a list of optional questions that gathered information related to potential participants’ race/ethnicity, gender identification, discipline, department, faculty rank, and institution type. Additionally, participants were asked about their citizenship status. The focus of this study was U.S.-domestic, tenured, WOC faculty. Given the history of the U.S. and its construction of race, the educational experiences of WOC in the U.S. may have been different from women in other parts of the world (Haney Lopez, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The current inequities in U.S. higher education were the result of a societal evolution based on racism, sexism, classism, and the multiple marginalization of intersecting identities (Haney Lopez, 1996;
Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). However, one participant was a permanent resident and in the process of obtaining citizenship at the time of participation. Her experiences were aligned with other participants and included in the final sample.

After completion of the survey, I reviewed survey responses and invited participants to an interview. I excluded participants that completed the survey if they were not tenured faculty members or if they did not provide contact information. I monitored the sample in an attempt to achieve maximum variation (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Maximum variation can allow for increased representation and comparability between the sample and population of interest (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). While the goal of the study was not to create generalizable results, I did hope to provide a theory that could be applied in various settings to improve the work conditions for a racially diverse population of tenured faculty women. I did not achieve the maximum variation in regards to location of employment, however, I was able to create a sample with variety in discipline, race/ethnicity, rank, institution type, and time in rank (see Table 3.2, p. 62 and Table 3.3, p. 62).

The nature of this study does not provide a recommendation for a sample size. Participants were selected and interviewed until theoretical saturation was achieved. Theoretical saturation was the point at which newly collected data no longer contributed new information to the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical saturation was reached. I was able to refine the theory knowing that I have the most representative information included from all participants.
Sample. The final sample for this study included 23 participants. Demographic information for this group has been presented in Table 3.2. Notably, one participant was currently serving as a college dean at the time of participation. Another participant was transitioning to a college dean position.

Table 3.2.

Summary of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Time in Current Position (in years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.A./Black</td>
<td>Assoc. Professor</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI</td>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/Hispanic</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Performance Arts</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STEM</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The moniker A.A./Black refers to participants identifying as African American or Black, AAPI represents those identifying as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander, and Assoc. Professor is the chosen abbreviation for Associate Professor.

Table 3.3.

Summary of Participant Institutional Affiliations (location and type)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Institution Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High Research (R1)</td>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Research (R2)</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Doctoral (R3)</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside of the Southeastern U.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The abbreviation R1 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university-very high research activity. The abbreviation R2 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university- high research activity. The abbreviation R3 refers to institutions classified as doctoral/research university (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2015).
Fifteen participants indicated serving in faculty positions for 15 or more years, three served for 10-14 years, and five have served for 5-9 years. Eleven participants have been in their current, tenured faculty position for 9 or more years. A total of five different disciplines and twelve different universities were represented in this sample.

The sample represented various races/ethnicities. Faculty members identifying as Indigenous/Native citizens or faculty members identifying with two or more races/ethnicities did not volunteer to participate. In 2013, according to IPEDS data, 32% of WOC associate professors were African American/Black, 20% were Latina/Hispanic, and 41% were Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander (NCES, 2015b). In comparison, 70% of my sample was Black females, 17% was Latina, and 13% was Asian/Asian American. There was a clear overrepresentation of Black faculty. However, this overrepresentation may be due, in part, to the way U.S. society discusses race (Patton et al., 2015) as well as the increased likelihood of full-time Black faculty to reside in the Southeastern U.S. (Nettles, Perna, & Bradburn, 2000).

The phrase “Women of Color” was created as a unifying term for those that experience racial and gender discrimination (Patton et al., 2015). However, with the existence of society’s Black/White binary, race is often only viewed as Black or White. Thus, the term “Women of Color” often functions as a euphemism for “Black”. While I was intentionally looking to recruit women from a variety of underrepresented racial and ethnic identities, the call for participants may have been misinterpreted as a study of Black women. The use of this non-specific term, without a clear definition in the recruitment materials may have caused confusion and limited the variation in my sample.
(Gasman, Kim, & Nguyen, 2011). Moreover, the differential racialization of Asian American/Pacific Islander women as the model minority, may lead some women to not identify as a “woman of color” and thus, not respond to the call (Patton et al., 2015). It is also possible that referencing my identity as a Black woman in the recruitment video led potential participants to believe I was only looking to recruit Black/African American faculty members.

To protect confidentiality, I created larger categories to represent the variation in participants’ discipline. Each participant indicated their discipline in the demographic survey, but was presented in this study by category. For example, if a participant were in Mathematics, I would have counted them as a part of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) category.

An initial sample was created through word of mouth. I collected the names of faculty in the U.S. that fit my target audience from faculty, peers, and colleagues. Those that agreed to participate were largely outside of the Southeastern U.S. region. I started with these faculty members in order to test my demographic survey and interview protocol. While conducting these initial interviews, I began the recruitment process for the study. Data collection from my intended participants began to overlap with my test participants. I quickly noticed the similarities among participants in and outside of the southeastern region. As I continued data collection, I decided to include the preliminary, out of region participants in the final sample.

Data Collection
The unit of data for this study was the stories and experiences of tenured, WOC faculty. I collected these data through individual semi-structured interviews with each participant (Charmaz, 2014). I chose semi-structured interviews in order to provide consistency among participant interviews, and flexibility to explore unanticipated experiences of interest. The semi-structured interview technique utilizes a common protocol to create consistency, but the researcher also has the flexibility to ask follow up or specific questions for individual participants (Charmaz, 2014). The goal of the interview was to gather information related to each faculty member’s experiences with their job search, job selection, tenure and promotion processes, and department. Some participants were able to speak to additional promotion experiences if they had been promoted from Associate Professor to Full Professor, or if they were initially tenured as an Assistant Professor, and later promoted to Associate Professor. From the data collected, I was able to understand the factors that led to their success in achieving tenure.

The final semi-structured interview protocol has been listed in Appendix D. Questions in the interviews walked participants through their career experiences. The interview started with an open-ended question regarding their educational background and the path to their current position. Next, we discussed the tenure process and the sources of support during the tenure process. I asked questions specifically related to the climate of their department and institution. I inquired as to the participant’s family life, personal life, or life outside of their faculty role. I concluded the interviews with questions related to the university’s commitment to diversity, at times asking participants
to describe their ideal department. Finally, I asked participants to offer any recommendations they have for universities looking to diversify their faculty body as well as any recommendations for aspiring or junior faculty members.

Semi-structured protocols allowed for consistency among interviews, along with the flexibility to follow up on responses. Consistent with grounded theory practices, the interview protocol evolved throughout the data collection process based upon my memo writing and initial review of data (Charmaz, 2014). I audio recorded each interview for transcription and analysis. I did not collect video recordings to protect the anonymity of participants. I conducted the interviews in person, by video conference call, and by telephone conference call.

During the data analysis process, I conducted member checking as a means of confirmation of data and elaboration of themes (Charmaz, 2014). I contacted participants for written reflections or follow up interviews to discuss specific information that was missing from my record of their experience. I gave participants an opportunity to provide feedback on preliminary themes that emerged during data analysis as well as the final model I created (see Appendix E). I chose to conduct member checks via email through written reflections or interviews in order to provide them agency in their engagement in the process (Merriam, 2009). The member checking techniques were outlined in and approved during the Institutional Review Board (IRB) research application process (see Appendix F).

Data Analysis
I conducted a grounded theory analysis of the data collected from participant interviews. There are many ways to analyze qualitative research (Saldaña, 2013). I chose to utilize multiple coding strategies to analyze the data, conducted in phases, based on the type of data collected and theories framing this study. Multiple phases of data analysis provided a detailed review and interpretation of the data based on constant comparison between the data and the interpretations (Charmaz, 2014). The first phase, pre-analysis, was conducted during data collection and completed prior to the start of phase two. The pre-analysis consisted of reviewing transcripts for accuracy based upon the recording of the interview. During the initial review, I made note of interesting quotes, common phrases or experiences shared among participants, and questions asked that were not in the original interview protocol. The fluid nature of grounded theory methods allowed me to watch commonalities appear in early participants and follow up on or explore more deeply with later participants.

The second phase of analysis, line by line coding, consisted of a detailed coding process. I used NVivo, Version 11.1, to review each transcript and commented on what was happening in their story. An example of line by line coding is included in Appendix G. Line by line coding allowed me to become more familiar with the data and make additional connections among participants. I used the results of my line by line coding to determine the follow up questions for my participants. During these first two phases of analysis, I also began sketching preliminary versions of the theory’s model. These sketches evolved over the course of the data analysis phase, but some key components repeatedly emerged from those sketches and were incorporated in the final model.
Next, I conducted my third phase of analysis. In this phase, I used NVivo, Version 11.1, to code for themes in the data corpus. With grounded theory, codes were created in gerund form in order to “stay close to the data” and ensure the theory that evolved was as rooted in the participant’s experiences as possible (Charmaz, 2014, p. 120). A gerund is a verb, connoting an action, but functions as a noun (Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2011). For example, “supporting students (of color)” and “trying to have a low profile” are codes used in the analysis process. I used the constant-comparative method in which I repeatedly analyzed transcripts as new codes were created throughout the process (Charmaz, 2014). The emergent codes were then used to create a series of preliminary themes.

I engaged my participants in the process of member checking to elaborate on and confirm my interpretation of the data and initial themes. Member checking “generally refers to taking ideas back to research participants for their confirmation” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 210). By soliciting participant feedback, I was able to assess the extent to which my interpretations of the data corpus were consistent with individual participants’ experience (Charmaz, 2014). Member checking also increased validity, or trustworthiness, in the results (Walther, Sochacka, and Kellam, 2013). I sent the list of preliminary themes to all participants along with a feedback form to collect their thoughts on the themes (see Appendix E). I asked them five prompting questions to assess their thoughts on the themes and how their experiences were or were not represented in the themes. I had 11 participants respond to my request for participation in member checking. Ten responded via email with general comments or with the feedback form
completed. One participant requested a conversation, which I audio recorded and dictated comments and notes. One participant indicated that my preliminary themes were not unique to WOC faculty, which prompted me to reconsider my analysis. I spoke with one participant who provided recommendations for additional ways to consider and view the data I had collected. The information I received through member checking prompted me to engage in two additional analysis processes.

I analyzed the data collected through semi-structured interviews utilizing the five elements of CRF (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Through this process, I was able to achieve a more critical analysis of the experiences of my participants. As I read through the participant transcripts, I created a chart with a representative phrase for the experience, the CRF tenet or concept represented, the exact transcript data, and any notes or thoughts I had related to that piece of data (see Figure F2).

Additionally, I took a critical look at the codes I had created in NVivo that led to the initial themes. I conducted axial coding of the initial codes utilizing the tenets of CRF and the concepts of power and privilege (Saldaña, 2013). The purpose of axial coding is to determine the most important codes (Saldaña, 2013). My goal for axial coding was to identify the codes that were too specific to be representative of the data set and codes that were not specific to the experiences of Women of Color. I created a similar chart to the one described above and included specific participant transcript data as examples of the codes (see Figure F3).

From these final analysis processes, I was able to create a revised set of themes as well as a model to represent the experiences of my participants. I presented these themes
to my participants once again for a second round of member checking. Three participants responded during the second round of member checking and provided positive feedback. After completing the member checking process, I created a peer-debriefing group to verify my interpretations.

Peer debriefing is the process of identifying individuals to review and critique the research (Creswell, 2014). Peer debriefers enhance the validity of a study because their review ensures the results make sense to someone other than the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The peer-debriefing group was composed of three researchers that utilize critical theory in their research in higher education and sociology. These researchers were doctoral candidates at the time of our consultations, but were familiar with literature surrounding and application of critical theory in education research. I had individual meetings with those researchers to gather their feedback. We discussed revised versions of the visual models, themes, and recommendations. The peer-debriefing group reviewed the critical interpretation of my findings, which, in turn, strengthened my recommendations. From the feedback from my peer-debriefing group, I also combined codes into a final set of categories. I structured my findings around these categories as presented in Chapter 4.

Throughout the analysis process, I conducted memo writing to document my thoughts and interpretations of the data as I moved from initial coding to themes to theory (Charmaz, 2014). These themes were used to create a model that illustrates the particular phenomenon of tenured, WOC faculty at predominantly White, public, research institutions. The model is presented in Chapter 4.
Rigor, Trustworthiness, and Quality

Qualitative research is often critiqued for possessing a lack of rigor and validity due to its subjective nature and the intimate involvement of the researcher within all phases of the process (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014). However, I implemented various strategies to increase the rigor and validity of this study. I adopted traditional, quantitative language to discuss validity and the strategies I used, in order to appeal to a wide, interdisciplinary audience. Overall, reflexivity safeguarded the validity of the study as I acknowledged my connection to the participants, the topic, and the study overall (Charmaz, 2014). Reflexivity is the way a researcher considers their thoughts about, feelings toward, and connections to the research process (Charmaz, 2014). Reflexivity allowed me to make note of personal opinions or interpretations of the data that may or may not be in the data. This process added objectivity to my data analysis and strengthened the results of the study (Charmaz, 2014).

My role as the researcher was to serve as the data collection instrument, data analysis tool, and reporter. Throughout the process, I continuously calibrated myself through reflection. I managed any inherent bias from my own experiences with racism or sexism and focused on illuminating the participants’ experiences more than my unsubstantiated opinions. I maintained a research journal where I kept track of my responses to the data, which allowed me to reflect on my interpretations in comparison to the data collected.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is of primary concern in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness was defined by four particular questions:
“truth value”, “applicability”, “consistency”, and “neutrality” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Conventional terms are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I address the issues of trustworthiness and validity using the Q3 Framework designed by Walther, Sochacka, and Kellam (2013) and discuss each element individually.

**Quality.** To convey validity in a research study, Walther et al. (2013) offered six areas to consider. First, theoretical validation addressed the fit between the theory developed and reality explored. The grounded theory should emerge from the data collected and represent the lived experiences of the participants (Walther et al., 2013). To address this, I recruited participants that represented various WOC and created a theory based upon their lived experiences. The theory was not created to represent men of color or White faculty, as those individual’s experiences were not collected in the data. Additionally, the participants provided feedback on the themes that emerged to confirm fit between their reality and the themes on which the theory was based.

Second, procedural validation referred to the design of the study to accurately explore the topic. The interview protocol was designed to collect data that would answer the research questions. Revisions to the interview protocol strengthened my ability to draw closer to the right data. In addition, transparency and accuracy in the coding process enhanced the validity of the final theory. Initial codes came from words and phrases used by the participants, and second round coding combined initial codes to form more summative codes (Charmaz, 2014). Triangulation was used to confirm procedural validation as well. Triangulation is the process of comparing the same data collected
from multiple sources (Walther et al., 2013). For example, while conducting my interviews, I audio-recorded the conversations, took notes, made observations of the participant’s tone and word, and had the interviews transcribed. I had three forms of documentation of the same piece of data (i.e., participant experiences). I verified the transcripts with my personal notes and audio recordings to ensure accuracy.

Third, communicative validation should have relevancy to the community/population being explored. The study was designed with the population of interest in mind. The results of the study are relevant to the community explored, as this was a study about WOC faculty to support WOC faculty. Moreover, members of the educational community reviewed the findings to confirm validity through member checking and peer debriefing (Walther et al., 2013).

Fourth, pragmatic validation measured how well the theory fits into a practical application. Walther et al. (2013) assert the utility of research as a sign of validity. The results of this study illustrate an experience that has not been fully explored. Universities seeking ways to support WOC faculty will find the results useful in achieving that goal. Specific recommendations are offered in Chapter 5.

Fifth, ethical validation spoke to the design and execution of the study to protect participants from harm. An ethical study provides confidentiality when promised, does not involve protected groups of participants as outlined by the federal government, and does not cause undue harm to participants (Walther et al., 2013). This study received approval from the Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) in November 2014. IRB approval meant the necessary processes were in place to protect the human
subjects involved in this study (i.e., the study participants). Documentation of IRB approval was included in Appendix F. The design and implementation of this study provided confidentiality for my participants. Pseudonyms have been used to label data during the transcription and analysis phases. By removing the participant’s real names from their data and placing those names with aliases, or pseudonyms, I was able to protect my participants from identification (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, pseudonyms were stored in a separate file from the raw data, and in a file without the participants’ contact information.

The final measure of validity was process reliability. In this area, the research study was protected against random incidents that could impact the outcomes, and conducted in a natural setting rather than a simulated lab setting (Walther et al., 2013). While this study was conducted during a time in U.S. history with increased racial tensions on college campuses, in most cases, participants gained tenure prior to the emergence of campus protests in the last two to three years. However, some participants acknowledged their current institutional climate included a focus on racial tensions due to student campus activism.

Overall, grounded theory is a valuable and important research method that can be designed with rigor, quality, and validity. Through intentional acknowledgements of my involvement in the study, quality has been assured. This process-oriented design demonstrated rigor through all phases of the study, development, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results. My rigorous grounded theory study developed codes directly from the data collected, themes that represented the experiences of participants,
and an analysis that reflected more of the participants than myself as the researcher.

Member checking, triangulation, and peer debriefing helped to verify results and ensure validity in the outcomes. Attention to the six areas of validity presented by Walther et al. (2013), led to a quality, grounded theory investigation.

Limitations

My study was focused on a small population. According to the 2013 IPEDS data set, there were 1,490 tenured WOC faculty working at the universities of interest in the Southeastern U.S. (NCES, 2015a). The average at any given institution was 33. This was not a large population, so finding enough participants to sample was an anticipated challenge. While persons of interest might not have wanted to participate because of the potential for being identified, this did not come up as a concern for my participants.

With so few people meeting the eligibility of my study, I was concerned that potential participants would be discouraged from participating if they were one of only a few Faculty of Color at their institution. Some participants acknowledged that they were the only Woman of Color in their department. However, the threat of identification was minimized by the optional questions on the demographic survey and the use of pseudonyms, whether selected by the participant or assigned by me, throughout the study.

Based on my recruitment strategies, I did not achieve full maximum variation in my sample. I was unable to access and recruit participants from all of the institutions I originally targeted because of the difficulties in identifying participants based on varying levels of institutional support. When I did receive contact information for eligible participants, it did not include race/ethnic identity as established by the university. Thus,
I used less purposive sampling and more volunteer sampling, whereby all participants that met my research criteria were interviewed. The model and theory created should be tested in other settings to determine how WOC faculty can be supported in other institutional settings and regions of the United States.

I was mindful of the races, ethnicities, and disciplines represented in my sample, but I became less concerned with the variety of states represented as data collection progressed. My goal was to achieve maximum variation in order to strengthen the theory I created. However, the balance between maximum variation and theoretical saturation was mitigated by the similarities in the data collected despite similarities and differences in the sample. Additionally, Black women were over-represented in this sample, due, in part, to the prevalence of Black faculty to choose employment at institutions in the Southeastern U.S. (Nettles et al., 2000). However, reasonable attempts were made to contact and recruit women from a variety of underrepresented races and ethnicities. The goal of this study was not to generalize, so a full representative sample was not needed. Results of this study are transferable and can be applied to various WOC faculty members.

This study was limited by the nature of the data collected from participants. While data was collected directly from those that experienced the process, varying amounts of time had passed since the tenure review. Some participants were recently tenured (i.e. 0-2 years ago), while others received tenure nine or more years ago. I assumed at the start of the study that participants would be able to share truthful and accurate information related to their experiences. A constructivist study is rooted in the
belief that truth is constructed from the lived experiences and self-reported reality of those under study (Hatch, 2002).

The final limitation of this study involved defining terms for participants. Prior to conducting interviews, I did not clearly define structures, culture, or climate for participants. I used these words interchangeably at times and during interviews would let participants respond with their own conceptualization of terms. As a result, there was inconsistency among participant responses when they would describe their institutional and departmental culture or climate. During the analysis phase, I was forced to code their responses based on my interpretation and definition of these terms. I did not clarify these terms during member checking and continued to interpret participant responses based on their conceptualization of structures, culture, and climate.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the epistemology, theoretical framework, methodology, and methods for this study. I utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach to explore the lived experiences of 23 tenured faculty members that identified as Women of Color. This study was executed in a rigorous and systematic manner from design through data analysis. In the next chapter, I will present the results of this study including a representative model of WOC faculty experiences and a theory for the institutional removal of barriers to tenure for this population.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I outline the relevant themes that emerged from this study. Utilizing grounded theory methods, I analyzed the data collected from 23 participants through semi-structured interviews, and two rounds of member checking. My specific research questions were:

• How do tenured, Women of Color (WOC) faculty describe their experiences in the tenure and promotion process at their current and previous predominantly White, public, research institutions?
  o What, if any, structures or climates of their department or university aided in the ability to achieve tenure?

The purpose of my study was two-fold. First, I wanted to highlight the differential experiences of WOC faculty and acknowledge the skills and strategies they utilized to achieve tenure at predominantly White, public, research institutions. Second, I wanted to describe how institutions can mitigate the systemic issues of higher education to help WOC faculty achieve tenure. Chapter 4 focuses on the unique experiences of WOC faculty and their path through tenure and promotion processes. I describe the positive and negative behaviors of institutions to highlight the differential experiences of WOC faculty. Chapter 5 is focused on recommendations for how institutions can evolve to consider the needs of and make space for WOC faculty.
A primary objective of this study was to bring light to the experiences of an underrepresented group of faculty members in order to move toward the elimination of racism and sexism in PWIs. Stanley (2006) highlighted the way some studies focused on WOC were set in comparison to a White or male “norm” (p.703). The findings from this study were not set as a comparison between White women and WOC faculty. This study was used to demonstrate the experiential knowledge of People of Color as legitimate in and valuable to the field of higher education.

A fundamental assumption of this research study was the belief that racism and sexism were engrained in the culture of the U.S. and, thus, systems of privilege and oppression exist in predominantly White, research institutions (Smith, 2004; Smith, 2015; Yosso, 2005). PWIs were spaces built on the false narrative that People of Color were not smart (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano et al., 2000). University presidents in the mid- to late-twentieth century were hesitant to hire African American faculty members, in particular, because of this belief in their inability to teach and function as a scholar (Smith, 2004). As faculty members were hired to integrate PWIs, institutional leaders failed to consider what it would mean if these individuals sought to receive tenure. Most often, Faculty of Color, particularly African Americans, were hired for the purpose of responding to diversity issues or handling the service tasks related to Students of Color (Griffin et al., 2011). It is no surprise that WOC faculty would have experiences of racism and sexism. University leaders did not think WOC faculty would be in the academy long, as they were not hired for the full range of possible contributions. Systems of privilege and oppression were designed and utilized to limit the success of
WOC faculty with penalties for race-related research, cultural taxation to prevent research productivity, and the inequitable weighting of collegiality and fit in the review process (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Solórzano et al., 2000).

The themes presented in this chapter were based upon multiple rounds of data analysis including a critical race feminist interpretation of the experiences of my participants. In this way, I was able to co-construct the reality of my participants incorporating their experiences with my theoretical perspective (Charmaz, 2014). I utilized pseudonyms in the analysis process to protect the identities of my participants. My participants or I chose the names associated with various quotes in this chapter and Chapter 5. Table 4.1 provides a list of participant pseudonyms, race/ethnicity, and discipline by representative category.

This chapter was divided into two sections. In each section, I presented my findings as they related specifically to the research questions listed above. In the first section, I also outlined the themes I found among the strategies my participants used to navigate faculty work on the tenure track at their PWI.

Table 4.1.

Participant Demographic Information with Pseudonyms

<table>
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RQ1: Experiences of Women of Color Faculty

The primary question that guided this research study was essentially an exploratory look at the experiences of tenured, WOC faculty in predominantly White, research institutions. I specifically wanted to understand how WOC faculty navigated the path to tenure in environments laden with power, privilege, oppression, racism, and sexism. I present the tools my participants utilized in the tenure process in the section labeled “Strategies for Success”. Throughout my analysis process, I coded data under the heading “describing the tenure process” in order to capture specific descriptions of my participants’ experiences on the tenure track. Within this code, I created multiple subcodes that acknowledged their feelings throughout the process. I have discussed each subcode individually along with the overarching code.

In the following section, I discuss experiences of my participants as pre-tenure faculty on the tenure track. It is important to distinguish between being on the tenure track and the tenure review process. The term tenure track refers to time pre-tenure
faculty spend working toward tenured status and preparing for the tenure review process. The tenure review process includes the evaluation of tenure materials at the department, college, and university levels as well as the decisions issued at these various institutional levels.

**Experiences on the Tenure Track**

Throughout their time as pre-tenure faculty, my participants described a variety of experiences that impacted their path to tenure. I was able to draw out themes from their stories to illustrate what they experienced and themes among their experiences as they navigated these systems. For many of my participants, the tenure process was filled with hurdles and unforeseen challenges. This section highlights the negative aspects on the tenure track and provides illustrations of my participants’ intersecting roles.

**Emotional, physical, and psychological impacts of tenure.** Some participants described an array of negative emotions throughout the process leading up to their review. Christine described an unsupportive environment in which the chair of her review committee never provided information about the process in terms of deadlines. This caused her enormous stress in the final hours. She said:

> Every time you had your case, you had to build this tenure box. That took a long time, and because [the tenure committee chair] had no sense and didn't care, it was like he was telling me everything at the last minute. I did get the box done, and everything went well, but it was ... I saw, at that point, "Do you even care?” I felt devalued the whole time before… That experience, I just was like completely demoralized.
Christine went on to serve on future tenure and promotion committees, but the very first time the experience acted as a trigger of her review experience. Two additional participants acknowledged that the tenure process was a source of trauma to them. Maya said:

I was actually going through the tenure process at Texas A&M before I left, and was on the job market at the same time, and had kind of a traumatic ... It's the theme of my life. Nothing can ever be easy.

The pressures of the tenure process physically and psychologically impacted others. Athena relayed:

I do know in my first job it effected my health to the point where I wasn't tending to myself very well...I think I hadn't noticed because I'd been on adrenaline for 7 years trying to desperately get tenure. I remember that sometime that spring I noticed this big lump in my body. I was like, "I wonder what that is?" I thought, "Oh, maybe just things move around or something." And then by fall it was just so painful...it was extraordinarily painful. I went and they saw this huge sweet potato sized tumor. That had to be removed. In January 2008, I had this major surgery to remove that. I think it affected me because I wasn't paying attention to my physical well being.

Jasmine described the tenure process as emotional. She stated:

It's like you get yourself in a tizzy about chasing this thing, and it's like ... I said, "What's the worst thing that could happen if I don't get [tenure]?" I was like, "Well, I'll just go find another job." The process, like I said, there were some
days when it was really, "Oh my God. I'm never going to get tenure," and then, "Oh my God. I don't care," and then, "Oh my God. I got to work harder," and then, "Oh my God. I don't care." It was really like this emotional roller coaster.

Christine was particular impacted by the tenure process saying:

By the time I got out of tenure, I was pretty much having panic attacks. I literally brought my physical and psychological health under intense issue and pressure because of that experience.

In his research on racial battle fatigue, Smith (2004) demonstrated the physical and psychological toll Faculty of Color experience in racialized settings. While only a couple of participants explicitly discussed the emotional, physical, and psychological impacts of the tenure process, it was worth noting that WOC faculty were not immune to these types of experiences.

**Identity salience.**

**In teaching.** Consistent with CRF, WOC faculty remained acutely aware of their racial and gender identities when existing in predominantly White spaces. The visible identities of race/ethnicity and gender could not be hidden from the world. Thus, these identities impacted how WOC faculty were perceived and received in educational spaces. For example, Lannie discussed her classroom experiences at her institution, when she said:

I embody the work that I do so I am this African-American woman teaching African-American literature. I think for students sometimes it's difficult to negotiate between having me as this professor but also having me as the
embodiment of the history and the literature that I talk about because I tell them, I said the history of [this state] is written on my skin. I have ancestors who are slaves and slaveholders, immigrants, Native Americans, you name it. It's me. I'm not just African American but I'm the history of the state standing in front of them. All the complexities of race, it's like right here, in front of you.

She was aware of how her visible identities impacted the way her message was received by her students. Lannie was able to articulate that it was difficult for some of her students to wrestle with the course material while having the lessons come to life as she engaged them. She considered the fact that she may have been the first teacher her students had had that did not look like them (i.e., not White). The situation is problematic for WOC faculty because they cannot just teach. Their identities in a predominantly White classroom forced them to fight against stereotypes and challenge an expectation that professors are old, White men. Before (or while) they teach, they had to prove their expertise (Onyekwuluje, 2002). Another participant discussed how student perceptions of her identity informed how she was treated in the classroom. Prince said:

Well, I think that, I guess to be very blunt, certainly I think anytime you are a Black woman, and I'm being very intentional with my term of Black woman. Actually I will say African American female, not just a woman of color, but African American female, you're automatically looked at with suspect in terms of who you are, what are your motivations, any of those types of things. I think that I was questioned a lot more. I was not an expert just because I had doctor in front of my name. Students questioned me a lot more.
I argue WOC faculty face that challenge more often in classroom settings than their White colleagues (Griffin et al., 2011; McNeely Cobham & Patton, 2015; Patton & Catching, 2009; Sulé, 2011). White women may have their authority as an expert questioned in the classroom and experience somewhat similar confrontations with students. However, a distinct microaggression occurs when students assume they know more than the WOC faculty member, despite their educational pedigree (McNeely Cobham & Patton, 2015). Laverne had this to say about her experience in the classroom:

A lot of the problem here is that students don't feel like you should be standing here teaching them because you're Black and you should be sweeping the floor or something. There is that whole thing about I don't know what I'm doing, I don't know what I'm talking about. That kind of stuff. They can be real disrespectful.

Your student evaluations are just really something else.

The subtle microaggressive behavior of challenging a WOC faculty’s authority in a way that most students would not challenge their White male faculty members sends a clear message about how WOC faculty are perceived. Because WOC faculty are so aware of their identities and how they may be received by their students, they often spend time over-preparing for class lectures rather than focusing on research productivity.

Additionally, WOC faculty must be prepared to discuss and address the racially biased incidents that may occur because of their students’ lack of experience with People of Color in a race-related discussion. All faculty in every discipline should be prepared to respond to biased commentary in the classroom (Griffin et al., 2011; Stanley, 2006). However, the burden often falls to Faculty of Color to correct the false assumptions and
misperceptions of White students when White faculty are unprepared or uncomfortable discussing race. Griffin, Bennett, and Harris (2011) discussed how Faculty of Color were often recruited to deal with diversity issues. Often WOC faculty are accused of having an ulterior motive, or a racialized agenda, to force students, particularly White students, to discuss race in a way that the students feel is unnecessary. Prince shared her experience with this when she said:

I've had students literally who have come and told me that this is how I should do my course because I'm doing it wrong. I've had students who have told me that I only talk about Black stuff and I'm like, there was not one article that highlighted the African American experience. I do have a very strong race discourse that goes throughout any class that I teach. Somehow that is always converted to agenda, Black, you're just trying to push a point. I'm like, no, not really.

While WOC faculty, in this case Black or African American faculty, may be recruited to help departments incorporate discussions of race and diversity into the curriculum, students are not prepared for that shift in teaching. This creates an issue for WOC faculty who are then penalized in student evaluations of their teaching, which unfairly impacts their tenure review when student evaluations are the only metric for review of teaching effectiveness. Teaching evaluations can be evidence of obvious and subtle racism and sexism if department leaders understood the underlying subtext. Unfortunately, too often subjective student evaluations are relied on in the tenure review process and disproportionately disadvantage WOC faculty.
In service. Additionally, WOC faculty are called on to serve as the diverse perspective on various committees, serving as the voice of their identity groups (Griffin et al., 2011). As a junior faculty member, Charlotte acknowledged that no one was protecting her time and the expectations for her to complete administrative work were high. This continued for her after tenure and she reflected on this saying:

Being a Black woman, and being relatively young, I feel like people are pulling on you in every direction to do everything. To be an advocate and mentor and supporter for my students to direct my academic program to sit on tenure promotion committees to chair search committees. The amount that I have been asked to do over my four years here, I can't wrap my brain around the fact that this is normal for an associate professor. That part's a bit challenging.

One participant, Alice, described that early in her career she was repeatedly invited to give talks related to her research. She said:

I can remember, and I think it’s because I was to them maybe a novelty, I’d always get these speaking engagements… I would do it, but I remember a faculty member saying to me, “You might want to think about publishing more and speaking less, because you’re going to need that for tenure.” I’m thinking, “Wow, nobody said anything. Why don’t they stop demanding my time?” It’s awkward if you have the chancellor of the university asking you to do this, what do you do, tell him no? That was a little difficult, the pulls on your time.

These quotes also serve as an example of how institutional leaders make it hard for WOC faculty to guard their time. Women of Color faculty who turn down a service request
may be view as difficult or not collegial, but those that accept lose precious time for research (Park, 1996). My participants’ experiences were consistent with the literature on service expectations for WOC and the impact on the other areas of their faculty role (Misra et al., 2011; Park, 1996).

Overall, WOC faculty are highly aware of their identities, particularly the visible social identities, and the way in which they are perceived (Stanley, 2006). This awareness is a factor in their job search process and continues while fulfilling their faculty duties. There is an additional pressure for WOC faculty to consider their identities when going about the daily work of a faculty member. I argue navigating U.S. society as a Woman of Color is a learned behavior that my participants have been doing since they were children. I will discuss this further in the section regarding strategies for success, but mention it here to illuminate what it means to be a WOC working at a PWI.

**Collectivist mentality.** The identity salience of WOC faculty connects with the multiple roles they play and how they make decisions. A collectivist mentality refers to the outward focus WOC faculty maintain as they consider the needs of those closest to them and those in the identity groups with which they align (Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012; Park, 1996; Stanley, 2006; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). The consideration for others was represented in where my participants chose to work and why they chose to stay.

**Choosing where to work.** When making decisions in the job search process, WOC faculty considered the environment and what it would mean to be in certain spaces as a woman of color. Participants discussed the implications for their family, their desire
to find other Faculty of Color in their department or college, and their perceptions of how race and gender are viewed regionally. Lannie, who works at an institution in the Southeastern region, put it best when she said:

I think that's one of the problems in attracting and keeping Faculty of Color at … We often don't come alone. We come with our families and so [the institution] has to be a good place for our families too.

Multiple participants discussed choosing their current institution based on their spouse and their careers. Those with partners that were also faculty members had to consider if there was a university that would have a position for both of them or a neighboring university where they could easily commute. Others mentioned that they wanted to be close to their parents or find an environment that would be a good place to raise a family. Vanessa remembered the impact of her high school experiences on her education and said:

In the high schools, as a Latina, you were not advised, you where never advised to do that kind of trajectory. You were advised to do something secretarial. I didn't even know there was a college-bound [program] at my high school.

Maya illustrated how her roles as a wife and mother played into in her decision by saying:

Because I'm in this partner hire situation, we have to find an institution that works for both of us. Then we have a five year old son…You know, just making sure we're choosing a place that's going to be okay for him, thinking about he's going to have to go to school. I don't want him to be the only one. I don't want him to
have a repeat of my experiences, so trying to find a place that balanced all of those things.

My participants were aware of larger societal implications of being a young child of color in K-12 schools. So, for those with children or familial ties, the intersection of personal and professional roles were a factor in their career decisions.

Participants also expressed a desire to find a workplace environment in which there were other Faculty of Color. Maya also said, “for me it's important for me to have a community of scholars of color, particularly Women of Color, but I'll take Scholars of Color generally. I don't want to be the only one.” Amber said she explicitly looked for pictures of department faculty to find visible evidence of racial diversity when she was job searching. She was also encouraged to consider a university when she observed the search committee chair was a person of color. She said:

When I did go to the interview I did see the person who was the chair of the committee was an African American male, and that was a factor that did influence my decision… I thought that was great because I thought if he’s comfortable working in that environment, maybe I would be too.

Unfortunately, some participants expected to be the only Faculty of Color in their department based on their field as well as the decade in which they first entered higher education as a faculty member. Some also found a lack of support from People of Color, receiving bad advice or no advice in difficult situation.

While others, like Maya, alluded to the regional climate regarding race, Tai made note of her lack of preparation to deal with gender discrimination. She said:
The subculture of the patriarchy is extremely ingrained here in the South. I was ready for the race issue but I wasn't as much ready for having to use the side door because I was a woman. I wasn't really prepared for that one…When I say that it's a metaphoric side door but still…There was a club that I was not privy to. Part of that I believe was being the only Black professor in the department and then also being a woman. Both of those identities were difficult to navigate and I wasn't a Southerner either.

While these intersecting roles impacted where WOC faculty chose to work, they also influenced why they stayed.

Choosing to stay. Many of my participants acknowledged other roles they play outside of their faculty position. These other roles were integral in their decisions to stay at their university despite troublesome experiences in the tenure process. Participants acknowledged their faith and roles in their church (Gregory, 2001), their family (Gardner, 2012), and the faculty that were to come behind them (Garrison-Wade et al., 2012) as deciding factors in their career decisions.

Faith played a role for some participants in their decision making and persisting in difficult environments. In regards to choosing to stay at her institution after making it through tenure review, Laverne said, “I'm very involved, involved with my church. I teach Sunday school there…I'm not going anywhere until God tells me to go somewhere.” Nesia believed that her faculty role was a divine means to an end, a way for God to use her in a different way. She said:
I'm also a minister…My teaching is a calling from God. It wasn't anything I planned to do. It wasn't on my plate… I have concluded that I am at [my university] because this is my assignment. One of my church members… he just said, "You thought that God sent you here for your career, but you're not here for that career. You're here for this congregation and those whom you have served.

Nesia was able to leverage her community role to motivate her to stay at her institution.

Once again, participants commonly mentioned their families as a reason for why they were still at their current institution. They expressed an inability to make unilateral decisions about their career when they had husbands with a career, in or out of academia. Christine talked about not leaving her institution because of her children and their community ties. Additionally, her children were getting closer to college age. The benefit for faculty members’ children to attend her institution was a perk of the job. Financially, Christine’s career choice was also financially driven. Her faculty role significantly contributed to the household income and would definitely make a difference once her children went on to college. Others mentioned they stayed because of the familial ties to parents and siblings. Finally, Marie acknowledged that even though she and her husband were employed at different institutions and have what she called a commuter marriage, neither of them considered leaving. She said:

I was the first one to get a job because his was a little... It's hard in our field anyway, but his is even harder. I got a tenure track job first. Then that's what brought me to [my university], and due to him, we have a commuter marriage, so he ended up finding a job about three hours away. First I thought, "Oh, I'll be
here three years tops," but now I'm still here. A lot of it has been location, because I didn't want to be too far, and it's very hard to find to two tenure track jobs in the same department.

The roles WOC faculty play in their community and family impacted their decision to stay and often provided a source of support to navigate a difficult environment (Gregory, 2001).

Finally, WOC faculty considered the scholars of color that would come behind them and what it would mean for them if they left. The collectivist mindset is something unique to communities of color and showed up in my analysis (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Laverne expertly illustrated how her identity and connections to her community through that identity influenced her decision to stay at her university despite negative experiences in the tenure process. She said:

It's times when I say, "I'm tired. I don't want to.” I say, "No. You have to…You're a Black woman. You've got to do what you've got to do.” There are other Black women like you coming along, and you have to find some doors open somewhere or know someone that went through. Realize that no matter how tough it is, you got to stand up and be counted.

This idea of being counted speaks to an awareness of the limited numbers of Faculty of Color in higher education. Her comments also alluded to a cultural mindset that I was taught growing up as a Black woman in the U.S., being required to show up and be seen in spaces from which I, and other African Americans, have historically been isolated and excluded.
Two participants shared words from their parents that reminded them that they may have been placed in their situation to help someone else. Tai shared:

[My mother] said, "You might have come there not for you but for someone else.” She said, "Not everybody has the ability or the credentials behind their name to be able to fight this fight.” … She said, "I don't think you're supposed to leave."

Alice’s father believed that her experience and difficulties happened for a reason. Alice reflected saying, “My dad always said to me, “If you leave, you will not see the change come.”

Some also considered their students, particularly Students of Color, in their consideration of other scholars. Vanessa said:

As a doctoral student, we need Faculty of Color in the academy. Our students need that. Our students need to know that they need to have a place to exist, and I also think our colleagues need Faculty of Color, so that they can see that there's another perspective. I also think Faculty of Color need Faculty of Color.

In their consideration of others, my participants found greater meaning for their careers. Their position meant something more than just an individual career. It was tied to the advancement of their community. Their presence and persistence was by design, for some, was influenced by their familial roles, and was necessary for the success of others. Maya said, “if I've learned any lesson since I've gotten tenure, it's that my presence is so needed.”

**The Tenure Review Process**
All of my participants were tenured faculty members, so they experienced successful outcomes of their evaluations. Overall, my participants experienced few issues with the tenure review process. Amber noted:

At this institution, we go up for tenure in our fourth year. It actually comes through in the fifth year. I joined in 2008, and then in 2012 I put my materials together, and submitted it. So, the process, I went up on time. Everything went smoothly.

Adrienne acknowledged a straightforward process that has stayed the same over time:

The process has more or less stayed the same…You serve on a bunch of committees, you do your work, you get your annual evaluations. I was very fortunate that I had very supportive chairs. That was a real important part, and they were very good mentors. I would say that that was really major in getting through because I've encountered very little problems, actually I'd say no problems, in the tenure promotion process.

Elizabeth also acknowledged the ease with which she went through tenure review when she said:

It was about 6 years before I earned the tenure. Back then, that was average, they say that you should go up for tenure in your sixth year. You go up in your fifth year if you are extraordinarily important to the criteria in teaching, research, and publication. I went up in my sixth year, I felt pretty confident about it, and it went through without a problem.
Tai had one of the more difficult tenure review experiences. After being recruited to her southeastern university, she negotiated to enter the university with tenure. She expected an expedited review that would occur within the first year. She described the flaws in her tenure review starting with department chair:

The chair of my department did not realize how an expedited tenure process was supposed to go. Because technically there should have never even been a committee formed, at least not here at [my institution]. What should have happened were certain people [were] assigned to just check the credentials, check the recommendations, check the vita. To just make sure that what was being said or presented was true. Things weren't padded or whatever… It should have happened within the first year…in that spring, in the end of the second semester… That didn't happen because they had formed a committee and then something happened with the committee… I didn't think anything of it when they said, "We have to redo it for the following year. Don't worry. It's going to be all right.” … I was like, "Oh, okay. I don't know what the protocol is." I'm thinking that the chair has my best interest and he's giving me proper advice which he was not.

That's why we're in the second year when this happens. I had arranged to do this research out of town, come back and find out … They've met in that fall. Come back and get this letter.

The letter she received stated she had been denied tenure and had 18 months to find a new position. Through the advice of her family and a mentor, she hired an attorney and appealed the decision. She was granted tenure immediately after the conclusion of that
hearing in which clear evidence demonstrated the department chair’s disregard for university rules and procedures.

Additionally, two participants attained tenure through negotiation. As assistant professors, these participants decided to apply for positions at different universities. As a part of their application process, they applied at the associate professor rank and their materials were reviewed as a part of their application. I refer to these examples in the next section of this chapter as an illustration of their use of agency as a tenure track faculty member.

**Strategies for Success**

Participants in my study demonstrated a variety of developed skills and strategies to overcome the biased practices and hostile environments of their department and university. I utilized Yosso’s (2005) framework of community cultural wealth to name the skills WOC faculty demonstrated in their response to bias-related incidents. Throughout my sample, I found evidence of aspirational capital, social capital, resistant capital, and navigational capital. I also found the emergent themes of congruence and fortitude and the use of agency to describe how research participants navigated their paths to tenure.

**Community cultural wealth.**

*Aspirational capital.* Aspirational capital is defined as “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). For example, in each of my interviews with Associate Professors, I asked about their plans to pursue the rank of Full Professor. Maya said, “Yeah. It's on my radar. I want to
go up in 2018. It will be five years from when I came, which is five years in rank. Yeah. My eye is on that prize.” Athena also shared, “Yes definitely. I definitely want full professor, in part because I want to beat out the other guys. That makes me so joyful to do that. That's always been my dream. I've always wanted to be full professor.” Both of these women had negative experiences in the tenure process and even changed institutions, one before and one after receiving tenure.

Of the 17 Associate Professors in my study, eight said they planned to pursue the full professor rank, seven were unsure at the time of the interview with two having a tentative plan if they did, and two definitively said no. Sadly, one of the participants, Amber, wavered and expressed concerns that she had yet to do enough and was planning to wait an extra year. Amber stated:

Yeah, I’m thinking about it, I’m thinking about it but I’m not sure. Technically like many Faculty of Color I’m tempted to delay one year, I should go up this year or may be should have gone up last year. I can’t remember. I’m tempted and been wondering whether I have enough. My colleagues are encouraging me because they all know that I’m very hard working and they keep saying, “No, you need to go up.” They’re supporting me and encouraging me to go up but I’m not so sure… I could technically go up this year and I’m just wondering whether I should or not. I’m a little bit of an over achiever so I want to reach a certain standard before I submit my materials.

Others had waited too long, had more time for which to account, and were trying to get motivated to apply. The most discouraging responses came from those still
traumatized by earlier experiences with the tenure process; one was still undecided, but the other was a resounding no. Christine said:

But the same issues [exist], who's going to mentor? Is anybody caring? Do these people value my work? All those issues are still there. It doesn't seem like I'm going to get any more help and support...I think actually, it's more exclusive and more of an elusive process for full. I think it's actually even worse... People of Color I see that actually do better move on before they get full. They get full somewhere else... It's not something that makes me even think it's going to be a successful thing. In our department, most people go up twice. These are people that are White. I'm like, "Ugh, it is really going to be on, as a Person of Color." I would be, again, the first Person of Color going up in a long time... I'd be the first full professor in my department.

Tai did not even hesitate when she said:

I'm not doing it... The main thing is probably the trauma around the associate tenure process. That's the main thing because I could do it. I have the stuff to do it in my portfolio, whatever, but there's not even a significant pay raise. There's no incentive. Particularly since I'm not interested in being a Dean. I'm not interested in being a University President. I'm not interested in any of that stuff. It's like, "Why?" and I don't trust the process. I don't trust the process no matter what they say.

Women of Color faculty continue to be far less represented at the Full Professor rank (NCES, 2016). There is value in investigating the connection between the experiences of
WOC faculty in the initial tenure process with motivations for promotion. Making decisions about pursuing Full Professor based on earlier promotion experiences may be true for others with varying identities. However, aspirational capital bolsters the ability of WOC faculty to persist despite difficulties as pre-tenure faculty.

**Social capital.** Social capital represents the relationships and connections individuals cultivate to maintain emotional support and career or professional advice (Yosso, 2005). My participants utilized social capital to build support networks at various levels. The use of social capital stood out especially when it was used to fill in the gaps of support from within a participant’s department. Some referred to graduate school mentors and colleagues that continued to be a source of support. Prince stated:

I would certainly say my mentor, my dissertation chair continued to be a mentor for me, and so he was a great resource. Then other people that I went through the program with who had been ahead of me who were working in academe. They also were great sources of support just in terms of either allowing me to vent, reading my materials for me, connecting me so that I would make sure I had enough publications, offering to write with me, and those types of things.

Christine echoed this source of support when she reflected:

I really do have to thank my mentors at [the institution where I received my doctorate], and then some of my friends that I graduated with, graduated from out of the doctoral program, because those became my writing mentors, and things like that.
Some participants sought out connections in the field to get mentoring directly related to tenure review. Elena discussed an experience she had and said:

I was lucky, in the sense I was grateful that I had had a Ford Foundation Fellowship, and the Ford Foundation has a yearly conference that at that time, for the first 3 years that you were on tenure, they paid for you to go. Because of that experience, I knew people. I happened to be at a conference not long after I had started my tenure track faculty position, where I had presented at the conference, and I met a faculty member that was already tenured, full professor, sat down after my talk and said, "You know, when you come up for a tenure, put my name down, because I thought you did a really great job and that was really interesting. I could be a reviewer for you." I said, "A reviewer?" He said, "Girl, do you not know how this works?" and I said, "I have no idea what you're talking about," and he said, "Come on, we got to go talk." I was really happy to have folks there that were willing, and understood that people needed to understand what was going on.

Most often, participants discussed seeking out or joining networks of other People of Color faculty and the benefits personally and professionally. Susan said:

There was the sense that ... there was very low ethnic diversity, from an under-represented minority perspective, in my department. That said, what I did, I maintained a very strong and vibrant network of African-Americans and, particularly, African-American women, engineering faculty members. And we held on to each other.
Amber utilized a professional association to find a mentor, specifically a person of color, saying:

They offered faculty opportunity to get a mentor outside of the university. I find that I specifically asked for a person of color but I wanted a sounding board. When things happened I wanted someone to be able to give me some advice but I couldn’t reach out to my faculty in my department.

Charlotte found a group that met a personal need for connection that began to evolve to provide intentional professional support. She stated:

There were these Women of Color who were faculty members all across campus and I found them by complete and total luck…We used to get together, at first it was once a month for a potluck but eventually, we started kickboxing together, ran a half marathon together, we were trying to institutionalize our group and do a writing retreat together. Over time, we were spending more and more time together and they were really a wonderful source of support. I think they understood both the professional and personal ways in which faculty life can make you crazy and so to be able to talk about what was happening in your department or in your program and have them understand and reflect that back was really just wonderful and really supportive. It was a great resource to have.

Women of Color faculty have the ability to go beyond differences of race and find cross-cultural support. Vanessa mentioned that when she started at her university, a faculty group for Latinos did not exist. She said:
I would say that I was primarily mentored by the Black faculty and staff. They had their organization and I became their honorary sister. They were wonderful. They continued. They have been my biggest support.

For 22 years, Vanessa found support with Black faculty and staff, as the Latino Faculty and Staff Association only began about six months prior to our interview.

There is a basic human need for connection (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social capital describes how this basic need can be leveraged and valued in society (Yosso, 2005). The fact that WOC faculty members actively seek out scholars of color demonstrated another natural human tendency to gravitate toward those that appear to share a common experience.

**Resistant capital.** Resistant capital “refers [to] those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Participants spoke to their need to speak out in the face of biased incidents. Maya described a situation that arose while serving on her department’s tenure and promotion committee as an Associate Professor. She said:

At every turn I see the ways that this field is discriminatory. I see the ways, the policies that seem neutral on their face get twisted by people. People can do whatever they want to basically, and then they just hide behind policies, and procedures, and practices, and say, "This is how we've been doing it. This is fair. We came up with these policies together.” It's like, "No you didn't. You're telling people that it's fair, but I can see that it's not…Being on our department review committee I've told my department head, "You're going to have to keep me on
this committee every year, because I see too many...”. My first year on that committee I left it, came to her office after the process was over, and then I was like, "You've got a problem. Here, here, and here, and here are the places where people are being unfairly treated in the process. The process overall doesn't say that this is supposed to happen this way, but that is how it's happening.” Half of the things she was like, "I had no idea that this was happening. They're not supposed to do it that way.” I was like, "Well, they are doing it that way, and they're saying that they're following the rules and the procedures, but they're not."

Marie described how she was unafraid to speak out and how that may be interpreted based on her identities. She said:

I do tend to be outspoken. I do tend to say things. I think that rubs people the wrong way, and I don't know if it's because of my gender, and I don't know if it's because of my race… because I am an Asian woman and we're supposed to be really demure, quiet and obedient, and I was thinking, "I bet if it was a White guy saying the same thing, you would not be talking down to that person the way you are."

Lannie described her experiences resisting even when she was the lone voice in the room. She told this story:

I think feeling like you're the lone voice. Sometimes it’s difficult even when you’re a faculty member. I know that our students experience that but it doesn't go away when you become a professional and you look around and you're the only person of your race sitting in the room. It's come out when we've had hiring
decisions to make and I can remember discussions where we've had some
candidates that have come in who have not handled race very well. There have
been occasions when I brought that up and some members of my department,
some colleagues in my department have become very defensive about …
especially when it's been a White male that I call out, very protective, very
defensive, very supportive of that person. When you're the only person in the
room bringing up these issues about race then I think sometimes there's a
perception that that's all we think about, that it's always about race. I think that
anybody who comes in needs to be conversant about race and needs to be
comfortable talking about race if you're going to be in the humanities in these
days and times, especially in the English department where you're teaching
literature and race is always there. Even when it's not People of Color, it's always
there. It's important for me and sometimes we skirt around it and we don't want to
talk about it.

When participants chose to fight back and advocate for themselves in the face of
obstacles, they were utilizing their resistant capital. In the tenure review section, I
asserted that most of my participants had no issue getting tenure once their materials were
submitted. For one participant, her review was unusually and unnecessarily difficult.
However, she persisted and engaged the grievance committee to reverse the negative
decision. Amber also used her resistant capital to challenge an unsatisfactory score in her
review. In regards to her teaching review, she said:
My chair gave me a highly recommend. The promotion committee gave me a highly recommend but the dean gave me a recommend. I contested it, and when I contested it I told the dean that you know you have to look at not just one data source, you’re supposed to look at multiple data sources to get the-- you can’t do it on the basis of just the student evals… He turned around, he said, “Oh but other professors are teaching the same students and they are getting higher evals.” I said “Look at the other professors, they’re White. They’ve lived in this area all their life, they speak the same lingo, they don’t use different terminology. They don’t have different methods and so students are comfortable with them.” He wouldn’t hear of it. I did grieve the process and I ended up at the, the provost ended giving me a highly recommend as well.

By filing a grievance, Amber was able to challenge an unfair, inconsistent, and biased assessment of her teaching in the tenure review. Other participants decided that lawsuits, in particular, were not the way to go because of the potential harm to their careers, given the subjective nature of the field. When power and privilege are at play, individuals with marginalized identities feel challenging a system would only make matters worse. This also may be a generational trend for those that experienced the effects of segregation, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and modern-day segregation of higher education. Yosso (2005) asserted People of Color are taught from a young age to resist. My participants have served in faculty roles at PWIs for a range of years and found ways to succeed in those spaces. Much of what they know comes from being a Person of Color in the U.S. for their entire lives.
Navigational capital. Lastly, navigational capital speaks to the skills utilized to move through social institutions not made for People of Color (Yosso, 2005). Academic spaces such as U.S. colleges and universities were exclusionary spaces from their inception (Dayton, 2015; Smith, 2004). Yet, WOC faculty have developed the ability to navigate these environments through personal agency, professional and personal connections, and individual resilience. Laverne spoke to me through our shared identities as Black women, but her comments showed me where her strength came from as well. She said:

Your ancestors came over here on boats. Anybody that was sick or weak, they died. What's left here are the strongest. We were bred. We are the strongest people ever. I know the media says this and that and blah, blah, blah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Strongest people survive. We were bred, and we are very strong. Our minds are very strong.

The following independent themes provided additional evidence of navigational capital at work in the experiences of WOC faculty.

Congruence and fortitude. Women of Color faculty are aware of the unique intersections of their identities and how that informs the work that they do and how they do it. In the face of adversity, WOC faculty maintained their integrity, values, and authenticity. The commitment to aligning values and actions served as compass for navigating the pressures of the tenure process. Samantha was concerned about how her research would be viewed as she published in lower-tiered journals. However, she was
committed to the research she did with regards to minority health and she published in the journals that were respected in her field. Samantha stated:

Yes. Will my publications and the grants that I submitted be looked at as equal quality work because they may be in a lower-tiered, minority, health-related journal? That comes up a lot. My focus in research is health disparities, and health disparities journals are not high-tiered journals. My work under interpretation is not looked at as high quality because it's in these lower-tiered journals, but those are the journals that highly respect the work that I do. Some of those nuances that I know would annoy others, I've just taken it to this is the environment.

Prince made it clear that she knows whom she is and what her goals are in order to persist in her institution. She said:

As a junior faculty member, I graduated and hooded five students. That's crazy! Pre-tenure. All the advice that I received was, "[Prince], that's a horrible thing to do. You've got to think about yourself. You've got to do your writing," but for me, that's why I'm here. Most of those were African American students. I'm here to support these students in the same ways that I received support. For me, my integrity would have been compromised if I didn't engage with students as I did.

She also actively resisted in ways that pre-tenure faculty often do not because of their vulnerable position in the department (Park, 1996). Prince relayed:

There have been positions that I've had to maintain that put me in the minority group so to speak that probably were not good career moves. Other people would
have said, "No. It's probably better for me just to be quiet and not say anything because I got to make sure that I get tenure. Then once I get tenure then I can do ... " Well, for me that didn't work because that crossed my integrity line. I've had situations where I've had to speak to the dean on behalf of, and this is pre-tenure, on behalf of another faculty member because I felt that what was happening was not right, and so my personal integrity didn't allow me to sit on the sidelines and be quiet.

The resistant capital and collectivist mindset WOC faculty possess can motivate them to speak out and support others in an oppressive environment. The risks involved in that are real. Outspoken faculty risk isolating themselves from colleagues, opening them up to become a target, or creating enemies among peers who eventually contribute to decisions around their own tenure and promotion. However, for my participants, the cost of compromising their beliefs was more than they cared to pay. The mental fortitude required to persist is something for which WOC faculty are rarely given credit.

**The use of agency.** Women of Color faculty utilized their personal agency to improve their situations. Many participants gave examples of how they assessed the department and took proactive steps to work around the impending barriers. Adrienne said:

So, I was in [my department], as I said, for about eighteen years… It [was] a good atmosphere as well. The reason I left, however, was because we brought in an incoming chair, whom I quickly realized ... it just was not going to be a good
fit. So, I felt like I needed to move on or find something else. I was lucky to find a good position at [my institution].

For two of my participants, they applied for new positions in advance of their scheduled tenure review and were able to start at their new institution as tenured faculty.

For Maya, she observed the influence one faculty member, a known adversary, had over other faculty in the department. She shared:

I had a mentor sort of like gone wrong. A person who I trusted and was supportive of me in the beginning sort of turned on me and tried to turn the whole department on me. At the time, I wasn't worried about it, because it was just one isolated person, but she is a really sad and toxic person. It wasn't just directed at me. She had a lot of issues with other people, so she created a lot of drama in the department. It led to a mass exodus. Probably while I was there, the six years that I was there, I think we lost like thirteen faculty members, something like that. Nine of them were in the last I want to say three years. It started off as someone who had very little power, but then the last nine people in particular, because that was close to when I was going up for tenure, would have been all people who supported me. It was all of a sudden the balance of power kind of shifted and this person who wouldn't have had very much control over my life, suddenly her vote would have mattered a whole lot more.

Maya took proactive steps to shore up her reputation in the event that she was unable to leave before it was time for tenure review, but she also looked for a way out.
The other participant that negotiated tenure was ready for a change and looking to find a different kind of balance between her work and personal life. She applied for an open rank position at the Associate Professor level. At the same time, with the advice of mentors, she asked her current institution to consider offering her tenure there and she went through an accelerated review. Instead of waiting to see the outcome of her external application, she took steps to ensure a solid back up plan that would advance her career at her current institution. Personal agency, coupled with the aforementioned forms of capital, allowed my participants to navigate their path to tenure and continue to succeed as faculty members at PWIs.

RQ2: Institutional Structures and Climates

The secondary question of this research study focused the attention on the participant’s institution. I wanted to highlight how institutions helped or hindered WOC faculty achieve tenure. Through the analysis process, I created a larger category for this topic that encompassed subcodes where I sorted data into institution-specific actions, behaviors, structures, and climates. Subcodes reflected if the institution hosted tenure and promotion workshops, feedback participants may or may not have received during the tenure process, descriptions of the participant’s department chair or college dean, and descriptions of the department or institutional climate. The final code captured participant’s statements regarding how they were working toward improving the department or campus climate.

Tenure and Promotion Workshops
The first subcode of attending workshops was based upon an interview question that specifically asked for examples of what the department, college, or university did to support their tenure process. I captured if departments, colleges, or the university hosted these events and the perceived benefit of them. Only a small number of participants mentioned workshops held by their institutions. Prince said:

Then our college, the College of Education, our dean once a year held meetings for whatever rank you were in, she would have a meeting so that she could talk with you about what are the expectations for going up for tenure.

Maya contrasted experiences between her previous and current institutions saying:

At [my previous institution] that was another thing that they did well actually is that they had lots of workshops from the university. They had-- the college did also a really good job of putting on regular P&T meetings… Here we don't have those same kinds of workshops. A lot of the mentoring of junior faculty happens apparently individually.

Charlotte acknowledged the existence of various workshops at her institution, but the benefits were mixed. She said:

I think over time that I've been here, and I've wanted to know more and gone to workshops and sessions and all kinds of other things, I think one of the great and challenging things simultaneously about being a professor in higher education who knows a good bit about and to some extent, studies tenure in promotion is that no one’s told me anything I don't know. Sitting in those workshops tends to make me just more anxious than be helpful.
Valerie also applauded the work of the college dean to support individuals through workshops and said, “The dean also holds workshops to help those who are going up for tenure as well as for full professor to get a good sense of what she's looking for as she’s reviewing”.

**Feedback on the Tenure Track**

One strategy that helped my participants to have a smooth review experience was getting feedback in the years leading up to the submission of materials. It was during these annual reviews or reappointment reviews that faculty members were provided with substantial comments regarding their productivity, teaching, and service work. It was during a mid-tenure review that Dominique received the first indication of trouble. She said:

I was hired to teach three undergraduate diversity level courses. They had upwards of 75 students…that was a very high student count. It really did initially impact my ability to do research. I was able to do some but not nearly as much as my other colleagues in the same program had been able to do because their courses were capped to 30 and 35. There was huge disparity which going into I didn’t really understand the difference because I just thought there would be more support. We have a mid-tenure process and during that time when I met with the dean and associate dean, they talked about how I was an outstanding teacher. The work that I had done research-wise was good, but then going forward they had some concerns about me being able to receive tenure based on my level of productivity. That was really kind of a shock to me because no one else had said
that before, so I didn’t really know that that was the case. Basically I was given me two years to do what I needed to do to really bolster my research to be successful for tenure. I was a little bit stressed out about that.

Interestingly, Dominique pointed out the disparity between the student enrollment in the courses she was assigned to teach and the enrollment caps on the courses of her colleagues. Moreover, her example shows how she was brought in specifically to teach diversity related courses. In her interview, she also disclosed how she was getting a high number of requests to serve on dissertation committees for students outside of her unit, primarily Students of Color seeking support they were not getting from White faculty members. Her story was a perfect example of the cultural taxation Griffin et al. (2011) described. Luckily, for Dominique, her teaching load was altered and she was successful in her review.

Elizabeth appreciated the annual reviews her department provided, so she never had to wonder. She said:

Yes. We had annual reviews, and the department chair would review our teaching, scholarship, and service. There was a numbering system back then, and comments as well. I don't have the numbers off the top of my head, but it's pretty much satisfactory, meets expectations, partially meets expectations, does not meet expectations. From all of the reviews, for the tenure position, for tenure application, I knew that I was on solid ground. Yes, so we did the annual reviews and those were helpful to let us know where we stand.
Additionally, some participants were given very clear guidelines regarding what was expected in order to achieve tenure. Despite having the information, there were still the unwritten rules of the tenure review to consider. Samantha said:

   Even for my tenure packet, I just received tenure last month. I didn't have any problems. I submitted a packet. I followed the instructions that were in the document, but it was always the what ifs because it's always those unwritten rules. You wonder if the unwritten rules, will they be used when assessing your packet?

With a certain level of ambiguity, WOC faculty are often left to wonder if they have done enough and will delay tenure or promotion applications until they feel they are ready. Amber said:

   I am a very hardworking overachiever, and that’s probably the fact that I am a Faculty of Color, I know it’s a fact. I just know and no one really says it, but it’s implied you have to work twice as hard as everyone else, but to accomplish anything.

Constance consistently received high marks in her pre-tenure evaluations and still had doubts when she submitted her final packet, and said:

   I would say another thing that also helped me prepare for or mentally think about the tenure and promotion process was going back to that annual evaluation process. Our merit pay process is connected to the annual evaluation. The same materials you submit for evaluation, our faculty development committee reviews those for merit pay. This colleague that I was just talking about he had put together this matrix and we had all these categories and you could get points for
these things. It's a very quantitative deal. We implemented that I would say about 3 years into our process. Those years leading up to it. I was the top person. It was so funny because I kept thinking, "Oh I had a bad year.” 2 years I thought this. "Oh I had a bad year. This is not going to be good. It's not going to be good.” Each year it was good… I think when I finally got to the tenure submission of the tenure binder, I was nervous but it was freeing in the sense that I have done all that I can do.

Unfortunately, others were not provided information related to tenure and almost found out too late. Nedia shared:

I had no plan for becoming tenured. [Name removed] is the person who told me after year five that, “You know, in another year, they can let you go, because if you're not tenured by the end of your sixth year, then they don't really have a contract with you.” I said, “Nobody told me that.”

While most faculty are aware the tenure process exists, the details are not always communicated. Flexibility can be an advantage, but loose guidelines can also disadvantage certain individuals. Ambiguity in the tenure process can be used as a mechanism for exclusion. Ambiguity in the tenure and promotion guidelines is a technique institution and department leaders can use to control which faculty can stay, despite their qualifications and achievements. Tai provided her assessment of the institution saying:

I think that it's changing very slowly, but for a long time at this institution the tenure process has been very ... It's a mystique. How do you get it? What are the
rules? What counts for this and what counts for that? There's no university wide system because every college is different. There's so many disciplines that are different so you can't even compare and contrast. It's been a very, very mystifying process. They can rationalize any argument against you getting tenure.

However, while reflecting on her process and her new position as a college dean, LuLu said:

Nothing was written down. It's all vague language and now that I'm sitting in this chair, I understand a little bit more why it's vague language. The tenure and promotional process looks different for every single person that comes up so you don't want to create such specific language where you're basically cutting someone off. The vague language has its good points to it.

There is room to debate the pros and cons of specific tenure requirements and guidelines. But there could still be problems even when solid rules are written and published.

**Descriptions of the Department Chair or Dean**

Participants had various descriptions of their department chairs and college deans. Experiences with these administrators ranged from highly supportive to highly destructive. It was difficult for me to extract meaningful, representative themes, given that each participant’s story was highly individualized.

**Department chairs.** With regard to the department chair, some participants shared positive experiences with their department chairs where they felt supported through the tenure process. Some described their department chair as a buffer and was
able to write positive letters in their annual review, which counter-balanced the biased teaching evaluations from students. Other participants shared incredibly negative stories regarding their experience. These experiences ranged from outright violation of university policy to outward threats toward the participant to pressure them into silence regarding the inappropriate treatment. Alice shared:

I can remember our chancellor bringing in a new provost, and I later realized her mission was to clean house, get them out of there. He would tell me too, he said, “You’d better not every say anything that happens here.” I said, “Oh, my.” [But] I had everything documented.

Samantha discussed the inaction of her department chair when she had an issue with another faculty member. She stated:

It was clear bullying…hostile things that she was saying to those students and faculty members. I took it at that time to the department chair…That person really just blew it off, didn't take it serious at all, said, “I’ll talk to the person.” I knew that they wouldn’t do that because I had had previous problems with that department chair in the past related to race issues…He didn't really do anything about it. I knew that he really wouldn't, so I went to the dean.

Based on the stories shared, I argue that WOC faculty utilized different strategies to in order to respond to these experiences. These strategies are discussed in the next section.

One important theme that did emerge was the impact of instability in the department chair position. Some participants highlighted the critical nature of the department chair in regards to the tenure review, noting that it matters who writes the
letter for your packet. Others discussed how the turnover and changes in leadership at the
department chair position influenced the climate of the department. For Amber, the
change in leadership impacted her teaching experiences, she said:

I feel with our first chair when posts were assigned, ability was looked at… The
person who became chair second operated solely on seniority. By doing that she
won everybody’s approval, all the senior professors would love that because they
got the courses they wanted to teach… my doctorate is in leadership. I have had
to wait the longest amount of time to teach leadership courses because senior
professors who don’t have a doctorate in leadership are teaching these courses just
because they’ve been there longer…Mainly I think the climate was affected by
difference in leadership styles.

When Christine started as a junior faculty member, she felt she was walking into chaos.
She described the situation:

There will be someone there, then they leave, and there's an interim for a while,
then that person leaves. The department, from what I've been told, was used to
doing things themselves. They were used to running themselves without a chair,
without much oversight of anything.

But Prince provided evidence of the positive outcomes that come from a more permanent
chair and what can happen in the aftermath. She said:

He had been the department chair for, I want to say, maybe eight years, something
like that, and had been in the department for probably ten years before that. I
mean, he's been there for a long time. He was just a very stabilizing force…[after
him] There was just a lot of change in a relatively short amount of time that did not allow for any type of stabilization of the department, which in turn I think had very negative repercussions for the department as a whole.

**College deans.** Most participants had little to say about their deans. Unless they had a noteworthy positive or negative experience, most did not mention the dean in our interviews in any meaningful way. Some described how the dean was culpable in their mistreatment, but I felt that spoke more to the overall climate than the basis of a theme among participants. Some participants acknowledged the importance of the dean in the tenure review. Again saying that it mattered who wrote the letter for your packet at that level of the review. Collectively, the data demonstrated how the individual serving as a college dean could influence the climate in the college, which plays a role in how WOC faculty experience the path to tenure. The impact of the dean’s attitudes and action can encourage WOC faculty to move forward or cause them to leave an otherwise pleasant position. In this way, the impact of the dean can be mitigated by the department chair, but only if the department chair is concerned with protecting their faculty members.

**Descriptions of the Departmental and Institutional Climate**

Throughout their descriptions of departmental and institutional climate, participants were able to make connections to race and gender. Their unique perspective as a woman of color played a role in how they experienced their work place environments. Interestingly, similarities in experience crossed regional boundaries. The five participants that worked at institutions outside of the Southeastern U.S. told similar
stories about the treatment they received and observed throughout their time as pre-tenure and tenured faculty members.

**Departmental climate.** The most evident theme within the data is people control the climate. Individual personalities come together to create toxic environments or collaborative spaces, and feed competition or provide support. One could claim that a negative work environment would cause anyone to leave his or her position. However, for my participants, when the negative environment was steeped in subtle and obvious racist and sexist behaviors, WOC faculty were the most vulnerable, and these biased incidents were the least likely to be addressed.

Alice shared specific details about the overt discrimination she experienced under one department chair. The most benign was intentionally leaving out information about her grant awards in her annual review letter. To illustrate the departmental climate, however, Alice said:

> [My colleague] said to me, … “Everybody knew [what the department chair] was doing [to] you.” That was painful. I’m thinking, “What? It’s like they all sit around and watch?” He said, “Everybody knew it.” I said, “Why did he do those things?” He said, “Because he knew he could get away with it.”

The climate in her department was so bad that even her peers sat by and let the mistreatment occur. Alice relayed that the dean was a friend of this department chair and felt she had little recourse. Even mediation did not solve the problem. She said:

> With my second child… there was leave. I took the leave, and then my reviews, I was getting negative reviews for not coming to department meetings. Those are
the kinds of things where at one point they had brought in somebody for
mediation with this chair, me and the chair. This company said, “We are pulling
out. We have never seen anything like this. You could sue us, it is so well
documented the things he did.” They just said, “We can’t do this. This climate is
so negative.”

Tai realized after a failed expedited review that something was wrong in the department.
She conveyed that prior to her arrival all (three) of the African American faculty in the
department had left, one passed away and the two Black female faculty had been in
adjunct positions are left. Tai had been recruited to her position and then ultimately
sabotaged by the chair. Tai said:

Yeah. It was a complete set up, and he did want to maintain…He liked the
adjunct position because that's a renewable contract every semester. Tenure is
like he wouldn't be able to do anything if I had that.

The adjunct position allowed him to hire and fire faculty members at will, and if Tai
received tenure, he would have a harder time controlling her and her influence. My
interpretation, which she confirmed, was that the chair was only interested in maintaining
a level of representational diversity, but was not interested in changing the way the
department operated. She said to me, “because like you said, ‘They were not interested
in changing the fundamental structure’, the inculcated and embedded. They were not
interested in working on that. All they were interested in is cosmetics and I was not
interested in that”.
Structures within the department. Additionally, various policies within the department can influence the climate. For Athena, the battle for resources created a competitive environment where faculty members saw each other as enemies rather than friends. She said:

I'm not particularly super friends with anybody. I think also because we're in our 40's and 50's we all have small children. We're all competing for the same things. We don't necessarily help each other. It's a somewhat hostile environment.

Also, the unwritten rules of a department can affect the path to tenure for WOC faculty. Generally, it is the more senior faculty in the department that share and enforce these rules. Marie shared her experience and said:

I felt, I shouldn't have a kid until I was really secure… I did not take maternity leave the first time. I probably could have, but I was almost about to get tenure. It was my last year, and I felt pretty confident, so my last year I did have a baby, even though I didn't officially have [tenure], but I felt pretty confident. Because I was afraid of jeopardizing it. I mean, I did have my daughter late July, but I went back in August 10th, August 11th. I went back immediately after a C-section.

When I asked if she received any messages related to maternity leave, she said:

I just felt like the only other female there had been there so many years, and all she talked about was how she didn't get maternity leave. I appreciate what she went through, because I'm sure it was much harder for her, but since she mentioned that story so many times, I felt like I better not take it until I'm tenured.
Maya also “read the writing on the wall” and realized she would not be supported if she decided to have a child during the pre-tenure years. Christine received a direct message from a White male, senior faculty member when she arrived. She believed it was his way of highlighting the culture:

But he meant well, because he was trying to tell me, "Look, this is the culture of this place. We don't really want you to stop your clock.” They already had the side-eye for women. It was like, "Something's going to happen. You're going to be one of these that gets pregnant and then never gets tenure.” They had these very negative perceptions of women, diverse people it's almost like you could forget it.

Institutional parental leave policies, or lack thereof, complicate the tenure process for women (Gardner, 2012; O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). Structurally, without paid leave, women may not be able to financially afford to take leave after having a child (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011). Also, the subjective nature of some tenure and promotion processes may disadvantage women who choose to “stop the tenure clock” and make use of existing parental leave policies (O’Meara & Campbell, 2011, p. 458). However, departments can mitigate punitive leave policies with how they support women who choose to become mothers. Athena shared that her department was very supportive of taking time off and it would have been abnormal if she had not taken leave.

Overall, department climate is highly dependent on the people that are hired and permitted to stay. The kinds of people that are promoted or not promoted say a lot about the department and institutional values. Maya illustrated this point well when she said:
I'm sitting in a meeting with a couple of my colleagues here in particular and they say the things that they say. I'm just like, "What possible motive would you have to do this, except to sabotage people?" There is no other explanation. The fact that these people get rewarded, that they're full professors, that they sit on these high level committees, that they have this kind of power just empowers them to do what they've been doing their whole lives I guess. It's sickening to me…I've seen people almost get into fights over long standing arguments that they've had for a long time…I don't know how you turn that around or who's responsible for turning that around. I don't know. It's kind of a flaw of our field that people are allowed to behave so badly sometimes. There are some really terrible people. It's too bad. I don't have a solution to that…That's the hard thing is that we're dealing with people. For some reason people are hard, but professors are harder.

**Institutional Climate.** Overall, participants that discussed the institutional climate, in terms of how women and People of Color were treated, expressed a consistent theme: the institution was not doing enough. Participants shared that the institution made verbal statements regarding a commitment to diversity, but they had yet to see meaningful actions. Also, multiple participants acknowledged a decline in Faculty of Color, particularly Black faculty. I had some institutions represented by more than one participant. Each acknowledged the number of Black female full professors or tenured faculty in the institution when I asked about climate. However, participants also mentioned two institutional sources of support when discussing their experiences with tenure.
Support structures with the institution. When asked what the institution may have contributed as a source of support along the path to tenure, participants that acknowledged support mentioned an institutional center for teaching and learning and the National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE grant. Some participants were encouraged to work on their teaching during their annual or mid-tenure reviews or independently sought out resources to improve their teaching. Samantha said:

At one point I was struggling with my teaching evaluations and my department chair at the time allowed me a semester off from teaching so that I could take some additional trainings and strengthen my teaching… I've seen a tremendous change in that, and I attribute that to the support that I had a department chair that saw that something might not be right. It might be more than just race. Being a minority faculty member was just one component, but it might also be something else going on… the Center for Learning offers a variety of different courses weekly that you can take as a faculty member that I think have been very helpful, at least to give me different ideas, help me think about the Millennial student, and other ways to increase student and student involvement in the topic. That definitely helped with teaching.

Elizabeth wanted feedback on her teaching when the department peer review process became less of a priority for her colleagues. So, she reached out to an institutional support. She said:

It's on campus… teaching effectiveness and technology. They offer workshops on teaching. I've been to several, they're very good. They offer observation of
your teaching. I went to [them] the last couple years, because the person over
there who was leading all those, happened to be [a native speaker]. She's a
perfect fit for the [language] class. She can observe any language [instructor].

These women chose to make use of the teaching and learning support centers on their
campus and benefitted on their path to tenure and beyond.

The purpose of NSF ADVANCE grants is to increase the number of women in
academic STEM fields. Institutional grants generally require a multi-pronged, systematic
approach to professional development (National Science Foundation, n.d.). While
focused on the STEM disciplines, the programmatic offerings that emerge from the use of
the grant and generally open to the full campus community. For those that mentioned the
ADVANCE grant existing at their institution, the comments varied. Christine shared:

There's a dashboard that's been created. It actually did help for salary. I don't
know if it's helping with the tenure process, and promotion for full… With our
salaries, it has helped, because you can now go in and see, "Well, look at what
women are making on average compared to men. We need to be doing something
about this."

About the same institution Charlotte said:

There was an initiative that was funded by ADVANCE when I was here on
campus that was targeting faculty members of color and I participated in that one
of my years here. That was really helpful in terms of providing us with a network
to other faculty members on campus. It allowed me to meet some really
wonderful colleagues outside of my unit that I go to for support and
encouragement and all kinds of other things and to know that you're not crazy when you see things happening in your department or your program.

Prince shared how an ADVANCE grant initiative impacted recruitment and hiring of Faculty of Color:

We do have the ADVANCE office on campus. Part of what they do is they have a search committee training, which looks at issues around recruitment and how to make sure that you're recruiting diverse applicants so that you have a diverse pool.

Elena, who recently became the director of the ADVANCE grant at the same institution as Prince, said:

Maybe without the ADVANCE grant, things would've changed anyway, but it would've been less organized, I think. Things were changing in the college, certainly, and that was because there was someone new, but things changed in the institution because there was also someone new.

Elena’s perspective on the changing climate of her institution was different given that she had worked for a new college dean committed to faculty development and then began to oversee the ADVANCE grant that had been written by a new provost at the institution.

Participants wanted to see their universities doing more to increase faculty diversity or improve retention of Faculty of Color. Even when the institution was not doing enough, my participants shared ways they planned to support climate change. Departmentally and institutionally, Lannie is committed to the cause. She provided examples of how her research is helping the university explore its history and how she
plans to serve on the department search committee in order to start having conversations around diversity of candidates earlier in the process. Maya planned to continue to monitor how policies around tenure and promotion impact junior faculty. As a senior faculty member, Susan is trying to bring more camaraderie to her department, inviting
junior faculty members to collaborate on grants and changing the culture of her college. This commitment to changing the department and institution climate is further evidence of the collective mindset of WOC faculty, something that should be fostered and encouraged by institutional leaders (Stanley, 2006, Sulé, 2011).

The Grounded Theory Model

From my analysis, I was able to create a visible representation of the experiences of my participants (see Figure 1). In the model, the phrase tenure process refers to the years as a pre-tenure faculty member, the time spent preparing and submitting tenure materials, and the tenure review process. As WOC faculty on the tenure track, my participants bring with them different forms of capital and external support networks. An arrow, at the center of the figure, is used to show movement across time illustrating the tenure process. However, the arrow does not imply that the path to tenure for my participants was linear. Influencing the tenure process for my participants are the contextual factors of the predominantly White institution and the systems of oppression and privilege that exist in U.S. society. The contextual factors of the PWI were discussed above and include the department and institutional climate, department leadership, and institutional support for pre-tenure faculty (if applicable).

The systems of oppression in society influenced how the context factors of the PWI manifested. Since PWIs are microcosms of the larger U.S. society, the systems of oppression and privilege are reflected in the PWI space and the marginalization of WOC faculty PWIs reinforces the larger systems of oppression, as represented by the arrows on the perimeter of the figure. Additionally, the systems of oppression in society also
directly impacted the tenure process. I set the model on a time continuum to demonstrate that the tenure process is more than just the moment of evaluation, but also the time leading up to the submission of materials. Time is represented in years, four being the minimum and \( x \) representing the variant number of years to tenured status among my participants.

The model is a simplistic visual representation of a complex phenomenon. Through multiple rounds of analysis, I discovered the emergent themes of my participants’ experiences. With this model, I was able to show how some WOC move through the tenure process using various strategies and tools to combat the environmental barriers of PWIs and the systemic oppression and privilege of U.S. higher education.

**Summary**

The findings of this study demonstrate the differential experiences of WOC faculty in predominantly White, public, research institutions primarily in the Southeastern U.S. Some participants had positive experiences in which the institution supported them as junior faculty and resulted in a smooth tenure process. Others had to rely on their personal capital and knowledge to navigate a system that was not designed for them, influenced by societal bias. However, the WOC faculty in this study were not passive in the face of adversity. Bolstered by their personal values and belief systems, they utilized various forms of community cultural wealth and agency to improve their situations and succeed in their roles (Yosso, 2005).

Unfortunately, the findings of this study provided additional evidence of the mistreatment and devaluation of WOC faculty. While this information was not new, it
supports the need for continued attention to the experiences of WOC faculty in a way that will alter the status quo operations of PWIs. In the next chapter, I provide recommendations for the ways in which departmental members and leaders can mitigate the systems of oppression at play at PWIs and remove the burden on WOC faculty to navigate and combat those systems as marginalized scholars.
CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In Chapter 4, I highlighted the experiences of tenured, Women of Color faculty in my study. I acknowledged the skills and strategies they utilized to achieve tenure at predominantly White, public, research institutions. In Chapter 5, I provide recommendations for how institutional leaders can mitigate the systemic issues of oppression and privilege to help Women of Color faculty achieve tenure. Maintaining a critical lens, I have developed implications for practice that focus on institutional changes rather than individual WOC faculty adjustments. Women of Color faculty are not a monolith and cannot be treated as such. The implications for future research reflect the complexity of experiences for WOC faculty and the various projects that could emerge from this research study.

The majority of my recommendations are directed toward institutional structures (i.e., leaders and policies) to shift the burden of making change away from WOC faculty. Figure 2 represents the potential role PWI environments could have in the experiences of WOC faculty.

This adaptation of Figure 1 shows the PWI environment as a buffer. Since the systemic issues of racism and sexism exist on a higher societal level, fully eradicating these issues is outside of the locus of control for the field of higher education. However, I believe that PWIs could lessen the influence the larger systems of oppression have on the tenure process. By altering the structures and climates of the institution, WOC
faculty’s tenure process will be bolstered by the PWI environment rather than hindered by it. Also, the dashed arrows represent how the changes within the PWI will lessen the influence of societal systems on the PWI environment. I have provided
recommendations that speak to this idea and suggest changes in PWIs to support WOC faculty.

**Implications For Practice**

Throughout the data collection process, I asked participants for recommendations they would offer to university leaders looking to diversify their faculty population. I have incorporated quotes that illustrate the themes of my recommendations for department heads, college deans, upper-level administrators, and senior faculty members. I provide recommendations for department and institutional climate change, training for administrators, recruitment and retention, and tenure and promotion guidelines. These themes overlap, in scope, and mirror the interconnectedness of any resolution that will effectively change the experience for WOC faculty at PWIs.

**Department and Institutional Climate Change**

Everyone in the university setting has a role to play in creating a climate that is inclusive and welcoming to faculty, staff, and students. Intentional action should be taken to train and cultivate university members that value diversity. Amber echoed this when she said, “We need to change the people we currently have. We need to educate the students, we need to educate the faculty, and just build a value for diversity”. While the other themes in my recommendations feed into changing the climate, there are things that have to happen in tandem to support the changes in policy and practice. Changing the institutional climate is the responsibility of all members, but the directive must come from the top. The university’s governing board, president, and senior leadership must commit to creating inclusive environments through intentional action, not just verbal
commitments. Elena recommended that the coordination of diversity initiatives must take place at the highest level to have the greatest chance at effective implementation. Smith’s (2015) work provided details for how institutions can move toward creating a diverse educational environment.

Faculty members should be intentionally chosen to fill the role of department chair and dean. Since department chairs and deans play an integral role in shaping the culture and priorities of a department or college, more harm than good can come from instability in these positions, particularly those that are appointed in a temporary or interim capacity. The future success of the faculty and thus, the department, lies in a stable, committed, and qualified department chair. Lannie suggested that more People of Color should be holding positions of authority or at least questioning the underrepresentation of WOC faculty in leadership positions. Are these positions limited to those at the Full Professor rank? If so, the problem with that policy is rooted in the troubles WOC faculty have in the tenure process, which has resulted in less than half of my Associate Professor sample definitively seeking promotion to full professor.

The department chairs and deans have a responsibility to set the expectations for department faculty in terms of hiring practices, collaboration, and evaluation procedures. Department leaders must work to set the standard and hold department faculty accountable for the culture and climate of the department. It may not be possible to remove a faculty member that does not agree with the department mission and values. So, department heads must find a way to deal with difficult faculty members.
Faculty in the department should be prepared to receive Faculty of Color in order to provide the mentoring and collaborative support needed for new faculty to succeed. Senior faculty should be held to the same standards of “collegiality” that junior faculty are held to in the tenure review process. If a commitment to diversity has been made at some level, faculty in the department and on the search committee should be made aware of this commitment and encouraged to support the effort or understand the implications for not supporting it. Minimally, faculty should work toward creating a collegial space. Beyond that faculty can volunteer to serve as a mentor for junior faculty or offer to bring new faculty on as a collaborator on an existing project or new project, particularly grant proposals. Prince acknowledged the complexity of changing the landscape of PWI environments for WOC faculty. She said:

We are not going to have Women of Color being tenured unless we are looking at this from a multidimensional perspective. There has to be institutional supports. There has to be interpersonal supports, and then your own person, your own personhood aspects that have to be considered in this process. If any one of those is not well developed, you're going to struggle. I think that it's just pivotal. You need to have all three. Not that you can't do it without it, but it's just going to be a lot more challenging if you don't have all those.

**Training for Administrators and Faculty**

A majority of the issues my participants experienced were directly related to a lack of understanding or deficiency in cultural competency of those in leadership positions. Administrators, particularly department heads, should understand that the
implications of being a WOC faculty member in a predominantly White classroom. There is extensive literature that demonstrates how WOC faculty are unfairly reviewed in student evaluations. Evidence of this was also presented in Chapter 4. In the area of service, WOC faculty need their time protected by their chairs rather than expecting them to carry the burdens of supporting students across the college and serving on multiple committees as the voice or face for diversity. As a researcher, administrators should understand the context of each faculty member’s particular research agenda in order to fairly evaluate their productivity. This means supporting publications in “lower tiered journals” if those journals are the most respected in a particular area of the discipline.

Additional training will support efforts to change the department and institutional climate. As such, the need for training goes beyond departments and colleges and reaches to the top of the university organizational chart. Elena painted an excellent picture of what may occur at multiple institutions. For her Southeastern university, there was a directive from the university chancellor. According to Elena:

He has a Council on University Community, which is really just all the Vice Chancellors. It's his cabinet, without him, essentially. They all meet to talk about what's going on on campus. They have a 150,000 dollars to spend every year on grants to individuals, some of them small grants, some of them bigger grants, to do diversity programming. All of that is really good, except that 90% of the people on that council don't have a clue what they're talking about… Their hearts are in the right place, but they don't really know that much about what should be done… I think that individuals in charge at this institution need to have more
cultural competency, and understanding of issues of diversity, beyond what they may know within their very small unit of issues that may be happening.

Susan, a Full Professor, said:

They need to train the administrators. Not just sit down and come to a workshop, but talk to them about the true impact of diversity, and what it means from an economic standpoint. What it means in terms of growing your research [base].

We need diversity in thinking. First thing is train the administration.

Training for current faculty is also important. As this connects with hiring practices, familiarity with theories related to conversations about race will begin to dispel the myths surrounding “diversity hires”, “targeted hires”, or special hires (Stanley, 2006, p. 730). The dominant narrative regarding special hires connotes a compromise in quality rather than the intended goal of prioritizing the hiring of diverse candidates.

Communication regarding hiring practices needs to travel from the dean to the department faculty, so that all faculty members are aware of the motivation and necessity of such practices. Training and professional development for current faculty members could also result in increased cross-cultural mentoring and collegiality within the department (Stanley, 2006). Once the training is in place, at all levels, recruitment and retention will start to look very different.

**Recruitment and Retention**

In some instances, the problem for WOC faculty begins with recruitment. Getting hired is only the beginning of the problems along the path to tenure. As Lannie said, “getting us here is only the first step. It’s not even half the battle, it’s the first step.”
Structural diversity is a relatively easy goal to achieve. Participants spoke of specific hiring policies and programs that targeted women or People of Color and that provided an entry to higher education for them. Others started in adjunct roles or postdoctoral positions that then turned into opportunities for tenure-track positions. One way administrators can work toward the recruitment issue is through being well versed in the research related to WOC faculty, talent management, and human resource development. Reviewing and understanding the research literature related to WOC faculty experiences is an element of the training administrators and faculty need to receive.

The next piece of the recruitment issues is training for search committees. While in the process of training faculty members to value diversity, explicit instructions for search committees should be developed. LuLu offered her perspective as a dean, saying:

The final thing that I think institutions often do is they don't talk enough about sort of the ... Those of us in the field would call, "Micro-aggressions." I actually refer to it as, "Unstated bias," because in the search process people will say things like “well I'm not sure their research agenda is really rigorous enough”. I'm like God, they published in 10 top tier journals, what more do you want? These kinds of unstated biases about how people think others are going to be. That's I think very problematic and we don't talk about that at all. It has to be someone in my position and I have actually on search committees stepped in and said, "This is not a satisfactory pool," but that also means I'm going to spend an hour getting attacked by the search committee and having to push them on some things but not very many people are comfortable doing that.
Deans and department heads have the ability to set out expectations for search committees to create diverse applicant pools. Susan echoed this, saying, “Hold people's feet to the fire. Don't let them give lip service and say, ‘Oh, we looked for a Black person; we looked for a Hispanic person. We couldn't find them.’ No, that doesn't work anymore.” I would agree that the issue with recruitment is not a pipeline issue (Smith, 2015). Jasmine, another dean, highlighted the need to avoid using current Faculty of Color in your department as tokens. She said:

When you're trying to diversify, if you only have one Hispanic or one Native American or one Black person, they're not the spokesperson and the advocate and the committee chair and the whatever for every group that they represent just because you only have one. You have to find some other ways to maybe utilize them without making it taxing on them.

The next step, a more critical step, is retention. Cultivating a positive climate is directly connected to retention. One has to create an environment in which faculty can thrive, not just survive. Creating the infrastructure to retain WOC faculty should be a primary concern for administrators seeking to maintain a diverse faculty body. Creating policies to support WOC faculty’s attainment of tenure is part of that plan. Maya offered her opinion and said, “My advice is you're going to have to put out some resources if you want to recruit and retain Faculty of Color. It's not about hiring one or two. It's about creating a critical mass.” As such, LuLu’s thought rings true, “to use Robert Bandura's term of, ‘Vicarious learning,’ if someone cannot see someone like them being successful it's not likely they're going to feel successful.”
Others had logistical suggestions for ways to retain faculty. Athena said, “give respect…Listen to faculty…Actually hear them out of what some of the issues are…the thing is we can’t just retain people because it’s really awful working conditions.” Another recommendation is administrators should avoid waiting until the last minute to try to retain faculty. Maya illustrated this perfectly, and said:

I asked this question at the last faculty meeting like, “What are you doing about this issue of retention? We've lost a lot of Faculty of Color.” Our new dean's response was, “Well, you know, when people have job offers from other institutions we do our best to counter those offers.” It's like, “Dude. If you're waiting for me to get an offer from another institution, I'm already gone…”

Adrienne believes in providing competitive salaries and having people monitor the tenure and promotion processes to ensure continued fairness, which connects with the next section regarding tenure guidelines.

**Tenure and Promotion Guidelines**

After hearing various perspectives related to the tenure process, I assert that guidelines for tenure and promotion should be transparent, if not, explicit. There is value in having flexible guidelines. It allows for individualization in the review process. However, intentionally vague guidelines that are easily manipulated and used as a tool of exclusion are problematic for WOC faculty (Gregory, 2001). Lannie shared the supports of her personnel committee in her department:

I mean, our personnel committee ensures even though it's not in black and white but at least we have a system that says we're going review every year and if you're
not making progress then we're going to flag you and let you know and we're going to do it early enough so that you can make the adjustments that you need in order to achieve your goals.

Increasing the level of support for WOC faculty on the path to tenure can also increase their success during tenure review. Along with annual or mid-tenure reviews, a smaller mentoring committee could be created for each pre-tenure faculty member. For departments with enough faculty members, this would create a group of faculty charged with monitoring progress and that are more intimately familiar with that faculty person’s work. Maya suggested this structure when she said:

If we're designing my ideal process, I would want to see a smaller committee of people who are lifting up an individual person going through the P&T process, so who can become very familiar with their work and work as advocates to translate the work that they're doing and why it's important, why this journal that they're publishing in is important, even though it isn't ranked.

I likened this to doctoral students’ dissertation committees. There is a checks and balances process where program coordinators, department chairs, deans, etc., sign off on materials, but the faculty that most intimately know the work of the student are those that served on their committee and grant the degree. Since tenured faculty members often serve as the department-level committee tasked with completing part of the tenure review process, it is imperative that they are familiar with the contexts in which WOC faculty produce scholarship, the biases they face in student evaluations, and the inequitable service loads they are asked to carry. Minimally, members of departmental tenure and
promotion committees should receive proper training related to the department tenure and promotion guidelines, expectations of the department chair and dean, and any additional personnel-related policies in the department, college, or university.

Deans and other upper-level administrators should review the tenure and promotion outcomes for their departments and pay attention to differences along race/ethnicity, gender, etc. They should ask questions of department chairs when there are gaps. Jasmine shared this practice at her former institution:

You would actually be telling people, "Here's a summary of the last five year of people who went up for promotion and tenure.” You can see how much money they had. You can see how many articles they had, how many students they had. All the metrics are summarized in one document. That's the way it should be. Then they give you the median, the mean, the max and the min, and our dean basically says, "There's no person called max and min.” That's what it is.

Ambiguity causes undue stress in the tenure process. Transparency in the process can decrease that stress.

Overall, it is important to discuss institutional commitments to diversity, valuing diverse perspectives, and providing professional development to faculty, staff, and students in order to change the culture of an institution, creating a better climate for WOC faculty. This quote from one of my participants accurately represents the importance of addressing institutional and department climate. Tai said, “You can't plant a garden without preparing the soil”. The implications and recommendations in this chapter
inform the preparation and tending of the “soil” needed to support the growth of WOC faculty planted as seeds in a new garden.

**Implications For Further Research**

For this research study, I acknowledged that each faculty member’s experience might have been different given various factors. I made an intentional decision to explore the experiences of WOC across race and ethnicity. However, I must make clear that cultural differences between WOC faculty may have impacted how my participants experienced faculty life. Further research within this sample could explore the differences among my participants based on their specific race/ethnicity. I would be curious to know if certain identities are discriminated against more or less than others. Additionally, there was a range in the number of years of experience among my participants. Some were more recently tenured, while others were first tenured 15-20 years prior to participation in my study. While some things have remained the same in higher education, I am curious if there is a difference between experiences based on age, years of experience, years since tenure, etc.

More information is needed in order to confirm the ideas presented. I could have completed a comparison analysis to explore the individual or institutional factors that led to some participants gaining tenure by changing institutions, the factors that resulted in a positive tenure experiences, and the factors that led to a negative tenure experience. I feel that dividing my data along those lines while looking across race/ethnicity and class, may have provided additional experiences into the varying experiences of WOC faculty at predominantly White, public, research institutions.
Additionally, this study was limited to research institutions. The experiences for WOC faculty at comprehensive universities or community colleges were not represented. Moreover, faculty from minority-serving institutions such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), or tribal colleges and universities, were not sampled and thus, this study could be replicated in those settings to compare findings.

The primary goal of this study was to focus on how institutions help or hinder WOC faculty in their pursuit of tenure. However, it was also important for me to acknowledge the efforts of my participants in controlling their career advancement. Moving forward, more attention should be spent on the individual characteristics (i.e., personality, motivation, resilience) in order to describe the individuals that survive what was described as a traumatic experience. One part of the experience that I did not focus on was the racial opportunity cost facing WOC faculty in higher education (Chambers et al., 2014). Currently, this concept has been defined for undergraduate Students of Color as the “tension between social expectations and their own racial community norms” People of Color feel in predominantly White settings (Chambers et al., 2014, p. 467). While there are definite parallels and similarities in this model, a study focused on defining racial opportunity cost for Faculty of Color in predominantly White settings would be helpful for institutional leaders interested in retaining and supporting Faculty of Color in their departments.

Additional research projects could be formed around the following questions:

• What happens to the women that do not get tenure?
• How do experiences with an initial tenure review impact the decision of WOC faculty to pursue promotion to Full Professor?

• How do first generation college students navigate the tenure process?

• What do people do with their doctoral degrees? What kind of faculty position are they getting? Are they choosing to leave higher education?

• What is the role of NSF ADVANCE grants on the climate of an institution and the experiences of WOC faculty outside of STEM departments?

Summary

Currently, the onus has been placed on individual WOC faculty members to respond to the racialized and gendered environment in research institutions. This quote from Dinos Christianopoulos (as cited in Fearless, 2015) represents the experiences of my participants at PWIs, “They tried to busy us. They didn’t know we were seeds.” Chapter 4 illustrated the persistence of WOC faculty to overcome the barriers thrown in their path to tenure by departments, colleges, or institutions. The primary recommendation from this study was for institutions of higher education to do more to mitigate the systems of oppression on behalf of WOC faculty.

Chapter 4 illustrated how WOC faculty carry the burden of responding to systems of oppression that exist in society and are inherent in predominantly White institutions. The WOC faculty in this study responded to the multiple marginalizations of their identities through their own personal agency, persistence, cultural wealth, and various other individual characteristics. Women of Color faculty are expected to complete the same tasks as White faculty (i.e., research, teaching, and service). However, they must
do it while navigating environments built to exclude them (Onyekwuluje, 2002). The experience could be likened to a triathlon (Bell, 1993). Each competitor must complete the same three events, but some (i.e., WOC faculty) are competing with 100-pounds of extra weight strapped to their back. In this conceptualization, there is a limited response or intervention on the part of the university.

Women of Color faculty must seek out what they need in terms of mentors, collaborators, and networks, often having to look outside of their institution. I assert the PWI environment should provide WOC faculty options for the support they need. With those mentors and networks located in the institution, WOC faculty can achieve tenure and be retained, increasing the networks of WOC faculty for which new faculty can connect. The entire process, from new faculty hire to tenure review, is attacked by the system of oppression that exists in the world. However, the PWI environment could provide a shield, interrupting those systems supporting the success of WOC faculty (see Figure 6).

Institutions should remove the weight from individual WOC faculty attempting to run the same triathlon as their White colleagues. By creating an intentional plan to mitigate the inherent racism and sexism of higher education, institutional members can create a more equitable path toward tenure. These actions may include additional departmental support, university commitments to diversifying the faculty, training for faculty and administrators, university-wide recruitment and retention efforts, or clear tenure and promotion guidelines. Women of Color faculty should be able to achieve tenure in spite of societal oppression rather than in spite of institutional support.
Conclusion

The results and implications of this qualitative research study were based upon the lived experiences of 23 tenured, Women of Color faculty representing a variety of disciplines, institutions, and years of experiences as a faculty member. The models presented indicate that institutions of higher education have the ability to mitigate the systems of oppression that exist in higher education and alleviate the burden of WOC faculty to navigate these spaces that were not designed for them. Women of Color faculty members are expected to produce scholarship, teach, mentor and advise students, and provide service to their local community, university, and field. Unlike their White colleagues, WOC faculty must conduct these activities while fighting against the endemic multiple marginalizations of their identities. The additional burden to achieve in a biased system places WOC faculty at a disadvantage in tenure and promotion processes.

I provided a model that demonstrated how institutions could disrupt the current system to alleviate the burdens of oppression that face WOC faculty. I posited that institutional leaders (i.e., department chairs, deans, and current faculty members) could intentionally change the climate and culture of their departments and institutions. Through personal reflection, assessment of current practices, and professional development, leaders can begin to determine their commitment to diversity and how they value the contributions of Women of Color faculty in higher education.
Positionality: Black female, aspiring faculty member, scholar-activist

Purpose: to create a theory representing the role of institutions in WOC faculty tenure experiences

Conceptual Framework: Diversity in Predominantly White, Research Institutions; Tenure and Promotion; Faculty Evaluation; Faculty Agency; Underrepresentation of Women of Color Faculty in PWIs

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Feminism
- Intersectionality
- Experiential knowledge is valid
- Centering voices
  - Racism, classism, sexism are endemic

Research Questions

How do tenured, WOC faculty describe their experiences in the T&P process?

Constructivist grounded theory (Charman, 2014)

Methodology

Data: Stories and experiences

Methods

Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews

Data Analysis

Participant Selection: Tenured, WOC faculty across the U.S., across discipline and tenured rank

Trustworthiness, Confirmability, etc.: Member checking of themes and the model, memo writing, peer debriefing
Figure A1. The Research Design Map outlines the foundational elements and methods of this study.
Appendix B

Recruitment Materials

Recruitment Letter

A Grounded Theory Investigation of Tenured Faculty Women of Color at Predominantly White, Public, Research Institutions in the Southeastern United States

Dr. Pamela Havice, Professor at Clemson University, and Miss Stacey Garrett, doctoral student at Clemson University invite you to take part in a research study. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of tenured faculty women of color at predominantly White, public, research institutions.

Your part in the study will include completion of a brief survey and a semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. It will take you about 70 minutes to be in this study (10 minutes to complete the survey and 45-60 minutes for the interview). You may also be invited to participate in a 40-50 minute follow-up interview later in the study, for a maximum time commitment of 120 minutes.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to stop taking part in this study, the information you have already provided will be used in a confidential manner.

If you are interested in participating, please review the information letter and complete the survey found here: http://goo.gl/forms/nVCNVF1TFZ

To learn more about this project, feel free to view a 2-minute video presentation found here: http://dle-mediasite-hehd.clemson.edu/Mediasite7/Play/9fbf26c3bdd44feaa054818b63879d931d

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Havice at Clemson University at 864-656-5121 or Miss Garrett at Clemson University at 703-589-7298.
If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Recruitment Card

Stacey D. Garrett, Doctoral Candidate

Hi! My name is Stacey Garrett and I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership, Higher Education concentration, at Clemson University. My career vision is to create and contribute to diverse environments in which people of color can thrive. Through research, teaching, and service, I believe my unique experiences and perspectives can change the landscape of higher education. My research agenda is currently focused on leveraging my position as a scholar to consider, investigate, and report evidence demonstrating the experiences of people of color in academia.

Email: sgarrett@clemson.edu
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/staceygarrett
To learn more about my current research, please see reverse side!

Figure B1. The front of a two-sided 3X5 card used to recruit participants at various association meetings.
A Grounded Theory Investigation of Tenured Faculty Women of Color at Predominantly White, Public, Research Institutions in the Southeastern U.S.

The purpose of this study is to create a model that describes the intersections of individual characteristics, institutional structure, and institutional climate that support the advancement of faculty women of color in order to create a more diverse faculty body.

To learn more about this project, feel free to view a 2-minute video presentation found here:
http://dle-mediasite-hehd.clemson.edu/Mediasite7/
Play/9fbf26c3bde44feaa05b18b63879d931d

If you are interested in participating, please review the information letter and complete the survey found here: http://goo.gl/forms/nVCNvF1TFZ

If you are interested in collaborating on a current or future project, or have questions about my research, please contact me directly via email (see reverse).

Figure B2. The reverse side of a two-sided 3X5 card used to recruit participants at various association meetings.
In what state is your current institution?
Fill in the blank

Are you currently a tenured, faculty member?
Yes
No

Please select your current rank:
Full Professor
Associate Professor
Assistant Professor
Other: Fill in the blank

What is your discipline?
Fill in the blank

How many years have you been in a faculty position?
0-4
5-9
10-14
15+

How many years have you been in your current, tenured position?
0-2
3-5
6-8
9+

At how many colleges or universities have you worked? This does not include the schools attended while seeking a degree.
1
2
3
4+
Survey Page 3

How do you describe your race/ethnicity? Select all that apply.
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino/a
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Prefer not to answer

How do you describe your gender?
Female
Male
Transgender
Prefer not to answer

Are you considered:
A citizen of the United States
A noncitizen national of the United States
A lawful permanent resident of the United States
Other

Full Name: Fill in the Blank
Email Address: Fill in the Blank
Phone Number: Fill in the Blank

By completing this survey and submitting your contact information, you are agreeing to participate in this study and providing consent.
Appendix D
Interview Protocol

Recap of Me and the Study. Goals of the study.

Ask for Pseudonym

Tell me about your path to your current position. You can start with your PhD work or at the point where you decided to pursue a faculty career.

What factors did you consider when searching for faculty positions?

What was the tenure process like? How many years did it take? Is that average for your discipline?

What was the promotion process like? (if applicable)

What are/were your sources of support through the process?

Was there anything that your department/institution did to support your efforts to achieve tenured status?

Do you think you’ll go up for full professor review?

How would you describe the culture of your department?

How would you describe the culture of your current institution?

As much as you’re comfortable sharing, tell me about your life outside of the faculty position.

How has or hasn’t your personal life been affected by your professional life?

Overall, how would you describe your experience been at your institution? Has it met your expectations?

If you were designing it, what would your ideal department look like? How would it feel? What would the experience be for junior and tenured faculty?

What recommendations would you offer the administration if they were trying to increase the diversity among faculty?
Any advice for aspiring faculty members or junior faculty?

Is there anything I didn’t ask that you thought we’d talk about today?
Appendix E

Member Checking Feedback Forms

First Round Member Checking

Feedback Form

Please take a moment to reflect upon the themes presented and answer the following questions.

1. What are your initial impressions of the themes presented? To what extent do you agree or disagree?
2. To what extent do these themes resonate with your experiences?
3. What additions/amendments/deletions would you offer related to these themes?
4. What other thoughts or reflections have you had since participating in this study related to your tenure and promotion experiences, future career plans, or your faculty experiences overall?
5. Are there any general comments you’d like to add?

Preliminary Themes

Tenured Women of Color faculty:

• create networks of support,
  o These networks may include faculty in their department, college, or institution.
  o In the absence of institutional support systems, Women of Color faculty cultivate and maintain external networks with colleagues in their field. These networks are developed through conferences and collaborations as well as connections with graduate school advisors, mentors, and peers.
• experience department heads and college deans as a help or a hindrance to their advancement,
• have advocates at a higher level of the university to help remove barriers to tenure,
• rely on their faith or spirituality to inform decisions and find motivation to persist in hostile environments,
• who have negative experiences in the tenure review process describe the process as traumatic,
• make decisions about pursuing promotion to full professor based on their experiences with earlier tenure/promotion processes.
Recommendations for university administrators will be in direct response to the themes with a focus on the role of the department head and college dean to remove barriers, rather than create them. Additional recommendations for those at the provost level will also be included.

Second Round Feedback Form

A Grounded Theory Investigation of Tenured, Women of Color Faculty at Predominantly White, Public, Research Institutions

My specific research questions were:
- How do tenured, Women of Color faculty describe their experiences in the tenure and promotion process at their current and previous predominantly White, public, research institutions?
  - What, if any, structures or climates of their department or university aided in their ability to achieve tenure?

Revised Themes

Women of Color faculty:
1) were aware of their identities and how those identities were perceived in predominantly White spaces,
2) utilized various strategies, based on their identities, to navigate racialized and gendered environments,
   a. Here I found evidence of Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth, including social capital, or the relationships and connections individuals cultivate to provide emotional support and assistance with career/professional development.
   b. Creating networks of support with other women and/or men of color.
   c. Maintaining networks of external mentors and collaborators from graduate or preparatory programs.
3) maintained their integrity, values, and authenticity in their work, despite pressures to conform or in the face of explicit obstacles,
4) considered others in their decisions to stay in their positions, and
5) used personal agency to improve their situation and advance their career.
   a. Contesting the results of tenure review or annual feedback,
   b. Strategic moves to new positions to escape hostile environments or generally advance their careers.

Reflection Questions:
1. To what extent do these themes resonate with your experiences?
2. What additions/amendments/deletions would you offer related to these themes?
3. Are there any general comments you’d like to add?
Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Approval Letters

From: B. Elizabeth Chapman  bfeltha@clemson.edu
Subject: IRB2015-363 Approval for ‘A Grounded Theory Investigation og Tenured Faculty Women of Color’S
Date: November 24, 2015 at 10:39 AM
To: Pamela Havice  HAVICE@clemson.edu
Cc: Stacey Garrett  sgare3@g.clemson.edu

Dear Dr. Havice,

The Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol identified above using expedited review procedures and has recommended approval. Your approval period is November 24, 2015 to November 23, 2016.

Your continuing review is scheduled for October 2016. Please contact the office if your study has terminated or been completed before the identified review date.

No change in this approved research protocol can be initiated without the IRB’s approval. This includes any proposed revisions or amendments to the protocol or consent form. Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, any complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately. All team members are required to review the IRB policies on “Responsibilities of Principal Investigators” and the “Responsibilities of Research Team Members” available at http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/regulations.html.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth

B. Elizabeth Chapman  ’03, MA, CACII
IRB Coordinator
Clemson University
Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
223 Brackett Hall
Voice: (864) 656-6460
Fax: (864) 656-4475
E-mail: bfeltha@clemson.edu

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Figure F1. Clemson University Institutional Review Board research study approval letter.
Dear Dr. Havice,

The Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your continuing review request using expedited review procedures and has recommended approval. **Your approval period is November 24, 2016 to November 23, 2017.**

Your next continuing review is scheduled for October 2017. Please contact the office if your study has been terminated or completed before the identified review date.

No change in this approved research protocol can be initiated without the IRB’s approval. This includes any proposed revisions or amendments to the protocol or consent form. Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, complications, and/or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title when referencing the study in future correspondence.

Regards,

Belinda G. Witko
IRB Assistant
Clemson University
Office of Research Compliance - IRB
391 College Avenue, Suite 406
Clemson, SC 29631
Phone: 864-656-3918

This message and any attachments contain information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the addressee (or authorized to receive for the addressee), you may not use, copy or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail and delete the message.

Figure F2. Clemson University Institutional Review Board continuing review approval letter.
### Appendix G

#### Examples of Coding Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intending to have a faculty position.</th>
<th>Excerpt from Samantha:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I always wanted to work in academia as a faculty member,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing the tools used to find jobs.</td>
<td>so after completing my Ph.D. I began a standard search, online search, I used conferences of professional organizations I was a member of, and even just my mentors and others in the field to tell me about different opportunities that were available for tenure track, faculty positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for jobs in a bad market.</td>
<td>I applied to several positions but it was during the time when the market was not great, so I received a lot of letters that some positions had lost funding and were no longer available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having four offers for faculty positions.</td>
<td>I interviewed for four tenure track positions and received four offers for each of those positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing a position that was close to family. Prioritizing quality of life over financial elements.</td>
<td>I selected an institution that was close to home and family. Quality of life was really more important to me at that time than financial sorts of things. That's how I got to my faculty position at the institution that I'm currently at.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure G1.** Example of Line-by-Line Coding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Experience</th>
<th>CRF Code</th>
<th>Transcript Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being hired to a minority line.</td>
<td>Intersectionality Differential experiences</td>
<td>“I'll make it short, and maybe about a couple months later, he called me back and he, &quot;You know, the university has gotten some minority lines,&quot; so I'm telling you this because it's going to come back to bite ... It came back to bite me. I said, &quot;Okay.&quot; I really didn't know. I was naïve.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing out on mentoring from a POC</td>
<td>Intersectionality Differential experiences</td>
<td>“and it should be a really mentoring about the expectations of what you're going to find as a faculty of color in different settings, private, public, HBCU, Hispanic Serving Institution, but I was rather naïve to that.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure G2. Example of Critical Analysis of Transcript Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Elaboration/Context</th>
<th>Notes on Power/People as Barrier</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for one’s self</td>
<td>Differential experience Intersectionality</td>
<td>Had to fight in the face of a tenure denial. Clear misconduct on the part of the chair, but if she hadn’t said anything, the decision would have stood.</td>
<td>Misuse of power by an individual</td>
<td>Individual response using Community Cultural Wealth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure G3. Example of Critical Analysis of Initial Codes
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