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## Race, racialization and Indigeneity in Canadian universities

Frances Henry<sup>a</sup>, Enakshi Dua<sup>b</sup>, Audrey Kobayashi<sup>c</sup>, Carl James<sup>d</sup>, Peter Li<sup>e</sup>,  
Howard Ramos<sup>f</sup> and Malinda S. Smith<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Anthropology (Professor Emerita), York University, Toronto, Canada; <sup>b</sup>Department of Women's Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada; <sup>c</sup>Department of Geography, Queens University, Kingston, Canada; <sup>d</sup>Faculty of Education and Department of Sociology, York University, Toronto, Canada; <sup>e</sup>Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada; <sup>f</sup>Department of Sociology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada; <sup>g</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

### ABSTRACT

This article is based on data from a four-year national study of racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian universities. Its main conclusion is that whether one examines representation in terms of numbers of racialized and Indigenous faculty members and their positioning within the system, their earned income as compared to white faculty, their daily life experiences within the university as workplace, or interactions with colleagues and students, the results are more or less the same. Racialized and Indigenous faculty and the disciplines or areas of their expertise are, on the whole, low in numbers and even lower in terms of power, prestige, and influence within the University.

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## Introduction

Over the past several decades, Canada has become increasingly ethnically and racially diverse and the Canadian Indigenous population has grown significantly, yet racialized and Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in major institutions. A significant body of research and scholarship on equity and diversity in higher education has documented the persistence of systemic barriers and implicit biases faced by members of equity seeking groups – women, racialized minorities, Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> peoples, and persons with disabilities (Carty 1991; Mukherjee 1994; Monture-Angus 1995, 1998; Razack 1998; Dua and Lawrence 2000; Prentice 2000; Dua 2009; Henry and Tator 2009; Smith 2010). Despite the expanding research on equity and higher education, analyses of racism, racialization, and Indigeneity in the academy are notable by their absence. No major scholarly body – whether representing universities, presidents, deans, or university teachers – has given priority to the implications of the cultural heterogeneity in higher education, and none has undertaken a study of the status and everyday lived experiences of racialized scholars and scholarship in the academy. Despite many efforts, which most often amount to no more than well-worded mission statements and cosmetic changes, inequality, indifference, and reliance on outmoded conservative traditions characterize the modern neoliberal university.

Using data from our recent nationwide study *Race, Racialization and the University* which foregrounds *racism* as a critical variable shaping peoples' lives and experiences, we examine what universities have done, and question the effectiveness of their equity programs. We also set out the experiences of racialized faculty members across Canada for whom strong claims of equal opportunity have not really changed their everyday working conditions.

## Methodology

We employed a multileveled and mixed methods approach – census data (statistical analysis using Public Use Micro Files as well as Research Data Center original data), surveys, interviews, textual, and policy analyses. Our methodology utilized the strength of qualitative and quantitative approaches. To gain an overall picture of the university faculty population as well as their earnings, a questionnaire survey administered in eight universities,<sup>2</sup> and interviews with 89 racialized and Indigenous faculty, equity directors, and administrators were conducted in 12 universities selected on the basis of size, region, and interest in the subject matter. Interviewees were secured through personal contacts and snowballing techniques increased our sample size. Interviews were guided by pre-constructed questions and conducted informally ensuring confidentiality. Faculty members were generally eager to speak of their experiences; for many, this was cathartic since they rarely discussed racism.

Going beyond a focus on numerical representation meant looking at everyday experiences with racism, the ways in which institutions create an understanding of equity, and the effectiveness of the mechanisms to address inequities. Therefore, we examine the multiple and interrelated ways in which racialization and racism take place by analyzing data on: (1) representation relating to hiring, tenure and promotion practices, and the attitudes and practices of administrators responsible for equity policy and practice; (2) institutional/organizational culture that generates barriers to access and equity; (3) mechanisms for inclusion, noting what universities have put in place to ensure inclusion; and (4) discourses in terms of the social construction of knowledge about equity, diversity, inclusion, and exclusion and how these have been used by the academy to inform its practices.

This study is the first national study to address the status of racialized and Indigenous scholars in Canadian universities. Until this point, the Canadian literature had focussed on either case studies of one university or experiential analyses written by Indigenous and racialized faculty. As important as these studies have been in highlighting patterns of racism, a national picture was missing and, in fact, no such study seemed to exist in the international context. We supplemented our national analysis with more detailed study of a sample of 12 Canadian universities which represents a diversity of regions and institutions. As a result of its scope, this study has gathered extensive data in order to make as accurate as possible an assessment of the position of racialized minorities within Canadian universities.

We encountered some difficulties in measuring representation of racialized and Indigenous faculty, mainly due to lack of disaggregated data. Inter- and intra-group differences with respect to gender or other markers of difference were impossible to assess (Jayakumar et al. 2009). The lack of data affected both the quality of research findings and the conclusions that can be made. Difficult as it was to obtain good data on those employed within academic institutions, the data presented here are as significant for those whom they do not describe as they are for those described. The issue is not simply one of obtaining more data, but of asking who is included and why (Dua and Bhanji 2012). Notwithstanding

differences in the ways in which the academic work force is categorized, it cannot be denied that under-representation occurs, that women are less represented than men, and that there are significant differences in the numbers and the patterns of representation of different racialized groups. Under-representation points to obdurate barriers to access and participation of racialized and Indigenous academics.

## The context

From the perspective of racialized and Indigenous faculty members, we examine whether institutions seem ready to accommodate not only their presence but also their scholarship, pedagogy, service inclinations, and cultural and social capital shaped by their communities. We ask, what life is like for racialized and Indigenous faculty members in universities shaped by neoliberal individualism, merit, competition, and entrepreneurship (Kurasawa 2002; Luther, Whitmore, and Moreau 2003; Mahtani 2004; Newson 2012; Thornton 2012; Griffin, Bennett, and Harris 2013; Giroux 2014; James and Valluvan 2014).

Drawing on qualitative data of the experiences and perceptions of racialized and Indigenous faculty, we use the prisms of critical race theory (CRT) and whiteness, employment equity, and neoliberalism to examine how the social, political, and cultural climates of their institutions have enabled or limited their role as agents of change, and what their presence has meant in helping to advance equity in their universities. Scholars suggest that the seeming shift over the last four decades toward more accessible and inclusive universities corresponds to the neoliberal shift in society as a whole – which has operated not only to demoralize faculty members, but also to obfuscate the university's shared responsibility (Kurasawa 2002; Luther, Whitmore, and Moreau 2003; Ahmed 2012; Newson 2012; Thornton 2012; Giroux 2014). In a context in which the ideologies of neoliberalism and whiteness structure the articulation and evaluation of merit, democracy, and diversity (in both membership and scholarship), racialized and Indigenous faculty members tend to experience work situations where they have limited control over their working conditions, institutional barriers to their scholarly potential and productivity, and challenges to their professional judgements and entitlements – factors that are typically associated with a precarious work situation (see Braedley and Luxton 2010; Thomas 2010; Law Commission of Ontario 2012).

Disciplines and the departments or programs that host them often function as gateways to the academy. They may open doors but they may also put up walls and police boundaries in ways that limit access and change and, thereby, conserve the prevailing order. In order to advance equity, diversity, and complexity in the university, more attention needs to be focused on disciplines as a unit of analysis and the ways they reflect and represent historical and social realities such as diversity and decolonization. Canadian society is undergoing a fundamental demographic transformation. Despite decades of talking about equity, diversity, and inclusion in society and the academy, this demographic transformation is not reflected in the academy and the absence is especially notable in the composition of faculty and leadership, which remain overwhelming white and primarily male. The invisibility of broader representation of diversity also remains evident despite almost three decades of self-studies, which until recently have narrowly focused on the status of women. Where disciplinary diversity is evident, in hiring or teaching and research, it is primarily in the area of women, gender, and sexuality studies. This means Indigenous and racially and ethnically

diverse students in many social science and humanities disciplines, in particular, never or rarely experience someone like themselves as university professors, mentors, and leaders, and as researchers and knowledge producers.

In proceeding, we discuss how the tenets of neoliberalism and whiteness structure how universities respond to perceived needs for equity programs. We first examine the policies that frame 'equity' and 'representation,' noting the results of those programs in terms of measurable aspects, that is: increases/decreases in representation, and variation in salaries. We then address the precariousness of racialized and Indigenous faculty members' work situation using their own assessments from surveys and in-depth interviews. We discuss their perceptions of and experiences in terms of how they are positioned in the university, and the extent to which the climate in which they work opens up or limits scholarly research, teaching, and service opportunities. Finally, we address the process of racialization itself, examining the ways in which everyday events in the university create racial difference and oppression. Three main concepts underlie our research: CRT and whiteness, employment equity, and neoliberalism.

### **CRT and whiteness**

The project is informed by CRT (Crenshaw et al. 1995; Delgado and Stefancic 2012), including whiteness studies and intersectional thinking. Bell (1980) stressed that the systemic oppression of African Americans, and by extension Black and racialized people in many areas of the world, cannot be understood without reference to how capitalism, the free market economy, the political status quo, and other conservative institutions maintain white privilege. Institutions of white privilege must be acknowledged if the rights and interests of non-whites are to be fully recognized.

CRT scholars deconstruct the assumptions that, when posited as 'universal,' form the foundation for white privilege and power. CRT challenges antidiscrimination policies that do not take into account the linkages between race, class, and gender, which structure the everyday racialized experiences of Indigenous and racialized people as they engage with sectors and systems such as education and the media (Williams 1992; Ladson-Billings 1998; Dua and Lawrence 2000; Monture 2010). It also emphasizes the role that narrative and storytelling play in analyzing the nature, dynamics, and impact of racism. Victims' stories help us to understand feelings, perceptions and experiences, interpret myths and misconceptions, deconstruct beliefs and common-sense understandings of race, and unpack the ahistorical and often decontextualized nature of law and other 'science' that renders mute the voices of the marginalized group members. The role of 'voice' is central to a critical race approach (Henry and Tator 2009; Smith 2010).

Whiteness Studies is closely aligned to CRT. It focuses on how white skin confers privilege systemically and structurally while excluding racialized people from the benefits of society. The category 'white' is socially constructed, and operates in relation to 'whiteness,' which 'refers to a set of assumptions, beliefs, and practices that place the interests and perspectives of white people at the center of what is considered normal and everyday' (Gillborn 2015, 278). Both whiteness and blackness are racialized. Whiteness studies racialize the white race and uncovers the ways in which white privilege is unconsciously acquired and exercised. White privilege is transnational and comes from the history of European imperial and colonial expansion and its continuing legacies globally. Some of the commonly held

discourses labeled ‘discourses of domination’ by Henry and Tator (2009) include the myth of color-blindness, in which people are assumed not to recognize skin color as a racial differentiating trait in making decisions. Gotanda (1991; cited in Vaught 2011) criticizes the assumption that people do not ‘recognize’ constructs of race in making decisions and argues that such non-recognition ‘fosters the systematic denial of racial subordination and the psychological repression of an individual’s recognition of that subordination, thereby allowing such subordination to continue.’ In other words, non-recognition of race permits the continued opacity of white privilege and domination.

Another analytical concept that has relevance to the present study is ‘intersectionality,’ as there are many forms of inequality that interact with one another, and individuals and groups have multiple, interacting identities. Race intersects with gender, class, disability, and other social and demographic characteristics to shape social and economic experiences. The concept, originally proposed by legal scholar Crenshaw (2002), is one that ‘goes beyond conventional analysis in order to focus our attention on injuries we might otherwise not recognize ... to (1) analyze social problems more fully; (2) shape more effective interventions; and (3) promote more inclusive coalitional advocacy.’ In our research, we gave attention to gender and its intersectional relationship with differences in income, ethnicity, and daily lived experiences in the lives of racialized faculty. With respect to social class, Solomos has recently reiterated that class hierarchy is still fairly evident in the United Kingdom. The persistence of inequalities is primarily a function of the failure of the state to ease the erosion of the working class (BSC Conference 2015). Class and increasingly immigration have become substitutes for what he calls ‘color coded’ racism. These factors underlie the role of racism and become the major focus of government intervention.<sup>3</sup>

Along with other critical race scholars, we see that intersectionality has both an empirical and an activist component. It is a tool for analyzing related forms of oppression which aims to resist and challenge the status quo’s denial of equality. Yet it has become a mantra in some social science literature to the extent that single variable analysis is criticized for ignoring or paying less attention to multiple forms of oppression (Gillborn 2015). One of the founders of CRT, Richard Delgado, recently noted that intersectionality can be taken to such extremes that it becomes paralyzing, ‘because of the realization that whatever unit you choose to work with, someone may come along and point out that you forgot something’ (cited in Gillborn 2015, 279)

Gillborn (2015, 277) notes that

any attempt to place race and racism on the agenda, let alone at the *center* of debate, is deeply unpopular. In the academy, we are often told that we are being too crude and simplistic, that things are more complicated than that, that we’re being essentialist and missing the *real* problem – of social class.

While it is fruitless to contest the role of social class in any analysis, we need to guard against subsuming race and racism within a class analysis since the attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes that underpin racism can be found at any class level. Indeed, we recognize that subtle and elusive forms of ‘othering,’ leading to discrimination and marginalization, are the twenty-first Century’s primary form of racism in many institutions and societies. This racism pervades all social institutions and social classes therefore focusing on racism in universities makes good empirical sense. Despite increasing diversity, including students who come from the poorer and working class sections of society, universities are still seen as a middle-class institutions which provide pathways for social mobility. While overt forms of

racism are largely, although not exclusively, attributed to lower social classes and associated with economic competition, middle-, and upper-class racism is far more sophisticated and complicated. While many people are appalled to hear that racism exists at universities – the highest seat of learning – it is because they conceive of racism in its overt forms. They cannot comprehend that, for example, that criteria for the denial of tenure based on publishing in the ‘wrong’ journals or not bringing in enough grant money are manifestations of racism when its objects are people deemed to be ‘different.’ Intersectionality is vital to our framework and as critical scholars of race and racism we also believe that there is a need to focus on racism and its many elusive forms.

### **Employment equity**

It is now more than three decades since the ‘Abella Commission’ (Royal Commission on Equality in Employment 1984) introduced the concept of Employment Equity, a made-in-Canada term intended to address barriers to entering the workplace and conditions in the workplace. Abella named four groups – women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and members of visible (or racialized) minorities – that would be designated under Employment Equity legislation. Her recommendations were largely responsible for the 1986 adoption of an Employment Equity Act that initially applied to all federally regulated employers of a certain size. A decade later, the legislation was amended to incorporate the federal government itself and federally regulated employers under one Act, and to strengthen the planning and reporting dimensions of the policy. Within that rubric, universities fall under the Federal Contractors Program, which ties eligibility for contracts to a requirement to file reports and to set targets on equity hiring. Employment Equity programs were established in most Canadian universities in the 1990s, aimed at removing structural barriers and biases that hindered the recruitment, hiring, tenure, and promotion of racialized faculty (Dua 2009).

The program has had limited regulatory function and, over the past decade of Conservative government, Industry Canada has stopped monitoring altogether and does not provide any data derived from the annual reports. The university – or any workplace for that matter – does not exist in isolation, and Employment Equity is therefore not something that the university can achieve alone. Our focus on employment *equity*, therefore, emphasizes the need for specific measures to ensure equitable outcomes.

### **Neoliberalism**

Our third major concept, neoliberalism, refers to the instrumental governmentality of the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. The term is rooted in monetarist policy of the Thatcher-Reagan era, with their emphasis on shrinking the state, the freedom of the market, the privileging of (certain) entrepreneurial ideas, and the rollback of government spending on social programs and policies. Neoliberal approaches include the withdrawal of governmental support for programs such as accessible education or social housing, as well as the underfunding and de-funding of grassroots and nongovernmental organizations. At the same time, we have stronger governmental intervention through an emphasis on audit culture, narrow notions of accountability and fiscal oversight, and stronger support for private business.

In Canadian universities, the rise of neoliberalism and audit culture have led to the adoption of managerialism, and widespread use of performance indicators and benchmarking. It has meant shifting funding to research projects that have the support of private businesses, and shifting university resources from supporting faculty to creating larger accounting departments with ever stronger audit requirements. All of these developments profoundly affect who gets hired and what they do, how many students they teach, how their time is apportioned, and what kinds of support and respect they receive for their research. More and more of the curriculum is taught by contract faculty rather than those in tenure-track positions. There is substantial evidence that members of the equity-seeking groups are disproportionately affected by neoliberalism.

## **Our findings**

### ***Representation, income differentials: the survey results***

Our analysis of census data reveals that racialized and Indigenous professors are not only under-represented in universities (a situation which worsened over time);<sup>4</sup> they also earn lower wages than do their white counterparts, even after controlling for variables such as years of service and academic level. These earning differentials points to a number of questions: If racialized and Indigenous professors have the qualification and human capital needed to become professors, why are they not hired at the same rate as white professors? Some people have argued that they might earn a degree but underperform in other criteria evaluated in hiring, such as publication record, lack of success in funding, and providing appropriate service to the university and community. But the onus is on those who use this argument to present convincing data. Differences in income can also be justified according to similar criteria. If racialized and Indigenous professors are less productive than their white counterparts, then this is used as justification for lower remuneration. For such an argument to hold, however, convincing data that indicate their systematic underperformance in productivity compared to white professors at all age levels are needed. At the very least, our data clearly suggest that racial inequality in representation and earnings cannot be easily dismissed by productivity differences alone.

In our national questionnaire survey of eight universities in English Canada, we found a higher number of men than women among racialized and Indigenous faculty, with the vast majority of racialized faculty (two-thirds) identifying as immigrants.<sup>5</sup> They disproportionately worked in Medicine/Dentistry, Engineering, and Science/Computer Science and not the Arts and Humanities; and they have worked fewer years in the academy. This pattern points to evidence of a racialized-segmented-academic-labor market in Canadian universities. While there were only eight universities enumerated in our sample, it is likely that the trend extends more widely. It is clear that far more needs to be done to diversify the entire university and not just a small number of faculties. Canadian universities and their students need more racialized professors who teach in the Social Sciences and Humanities in addition to those already teaching in Engineering, Medicine/Dentistry, and Science/Computer Science. Their perspectives can help change the social and cultural narrative of Canada to one that better reflects an increasingly multi-racial/cultural/ethnic population.

With regard to the productivity of racialized faculty across various disciplines, we found that they are 'playing the game.' Racialized faculty outperform their non-racialized



counterparts in winning research grants and publishing articles but have few book chapters and books. It is worth noting, as heard through our interviews, that these faculty members kept up this publication record even as many were told that their research was too political, too ideological, or too rhetorical. Further, an examination of these faculty members' tenure and promotion found that racialized faculty were less likely to be awarded these benchmarks, but if they do manage to earn them, there is marginal difference in how long it took them. The survey also showed that racialized faculty members perceive tenure and promotion to be influenced as much by 'soft' metrics such as personality, civility and collegiality, as by 'hard' metrics like publication and winning grants. The opposite pattern is largely found with perceptions about administrative and committee appointments and hiring. Few racialized faculty agreed that equity considerations were factors affecting hiring, tenure, and promotion, as well as appointment to administrative and committee appointments. As other aspects of our study found, these findings suggest that equity policies are not working and racialized faculty are aware of this failure. We further analyzed the perceptions of work load, to find marginal differences in perceptions between racialized and non-racialized faculty.

When asked about perceptions of tenure and promotion, 'hard' metrics of performance appear to be undervalued by racialized faculty. This could be because of the tensions between high rates of output and lower rates of reward for them. This is also illustrated by the higher rates of agreement by racialized faculty on the importance of 'soft' metrics of performance, those that are least quantifiable and observable empirically. It appears that racialized faculty recognize that their academic output or production might matter less than affinity and network biases, such as who they know and how they get along with them. This pattern might reflect a pragmatic outlook on the devaluing of their labor and skills. Differences between racialized and non-racialized faculty members' perceptions of the role of 'hard' and 'soft' metrics are also seen in administrative and committee appointments. For the former, racialized faculty appear to prize 'hard' metrics more than do non-racialized faculty, which may mean they have confidence in the academy once they have broken barriers into it. This suggestion is in line with the findings on the differential pathways of those who achieved tenure and promotion. In contrast, racialized faculty were far more ambivalent and skeptical of factors that affect hiring, perhaps reflecting a malaise associated with the leaky pipelines and blockage we found in other data reported above. The skepticism racialized faculty express with regard to hiring might be best illustrated with the low level of agreement that equity considerations play a role in hiring, despite Employment Equity policies that shape all Canadian university job ads.

As a whole we find that racialized faculty understand the Canadian academic system and 'play the game.' That is, they have the human capital and demonstrate a high level of performance on outcomes that should be rewarded by universities; however, their perceptions of how to best navigate that system are clearly different from those of their non-racialized colleagues. Such differences in perception are very much in line with previous research on perception of discrimination in the Canadian academy (Nakhaie 2004, 2007; Henry and Tator 2012). We believe that differences found among racialized faculty generally reflect a pragmatic and skeptical outlook on the Canadian academic system, which shows that some racialized faculty successfully navigate the system, but perhaps through a solitude of experiences that their colleagues fail to see.

### ***University responses to inequities: anti-racist initiatives***

Our study illustrated that equity initiatives are unevenly developed. Universities vary substantially in the kinds of policies available to address inequities and racism, the mandates of the office responsible for dealing with discrimination, reporting structure, and number of staff.

We found that three dominant frameworks are deployed to address inequity – human rights, equity, and diversity frameworks. These frameworks differ in how they address racism. Human rights frameworks focus on implementing government requirements that employers have anti-harassment and anti – discrimination policies. Equity frameworks employ a broader mandate to address systemic discrimination, while diversity frameworks, emerging as a backlash against equity frameworks, are seen as less conflict ridden. Most universities have some infrastructure in place to implement policies. Thirty-five of forty-nine universities had developed dedicated offices that are directed to address harassment in the workplaces, and enhance equity. These offices often focus on faculty and staff concerns, leaving student issues to be dealt with by Ombudspersons, Student Services, or Deans. These offices vary substantially in the number of staff, and in the reporting structures. Finally, we found a proliferation of equity services, particularly in the larger universities, where senior administration appointments mandated to address equity have emerged, in addition to faculty equity offices.

In dealing with the effectiveness of equity policies in Canadian Universities, we found a broad range of mechanisms that addressed harassment, discrimination, and inequities to some extent, but all were assessed as ineffective in addressing racism. Formal processes for anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies were riddled with ineffective procedures and resulted in conflict-ridden and unsatisfactory results. In addition, this mechanism was least able to address situations of racial harassment, bullying and discrimination. As a result, most universities attempted to resolve incidents informally. Informal mechanisms were also reported to be ineffective, however, in dealing with racism, racial harassment, and bullying. Educational workshops, despite their inability to reach most members of the university community, were assessed to be effective in shifting some aspects of institutional culture – but changing the influence of ‘whiteness’ was still seen as a challenge. Equity committees were effective in raising concerns about inequities and proposing remedies, but as these committees did not have mandates to ensure implementation, often their efforts were for naught. Equity plans were often put forward with little consultation, and not always enforced. As a result of the ineffectiveness of these mechanisms, in many universities, senior administrators are being mandated to oversee equity. This strategy was assessed to be the most effective in furthering equity, as well as ensuring a systemic approach in which different constituencies are accountable for equity; however, senior administrators reported that resistance to their efforts limited their success.

The ineffectiveness of human rights and equity mechanisms to address racism raises serious questions. Given the expansion of efforts to address equity, why are such efforts not more effective? This question is particularly pertinent as changes that could allow these mechanisms to be more effective were identified including procedural rules and mandates, more resources, greater input from equity activists, greater monitoring, and more administrative support. Why are these mechanisms that seem to be effective in addressing other inequities so ineffective in addressing racism?

The expansion of equity policies may have occurred in order to address other forms of inequities, such as sexism, gender, sexual orientation, and disability, rather than Indigeneity and racism. The ‘culture of whiteness’ makes it difficult not only to remedy incidents of racism, but also to shift the culture of academia so that such incidents would not occur. We found that the effectiveness of each mechanism was limited by the ways in which whiteness is structured and at the same time invisibilized in university settings. Perhaps the most significant aspect of whiteness is the power of white subjects to resist anti-racist efforts. Such mechanisms, rather than facilitating, inhibit the recognition and remedy of racism. Thus, our findings strongly suggest that the attention paid to equity is not necessarily tied to a commitment to addressing racism. Senior administrators in particular pointed out the results of such mechanisms are more ‘performative’ than substantive, thus obscuring the ongoing racism within higher education. Our findings resonate with Ahmed’s (2012) research in England which draws upon Butler’s concept of performativity as ‘the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.’ She describes British academic context characterized by audits, embedded in diversity policies that provide apparent evidence of proactive measures, but concludes that diversity is ‘[i]n the world of the non-performative, to name is not to bring into effect’ (Ahmed 2012, 117).

The complex set of interrelated factors that account for the expansion of equity – legal obligations, fear of litigation, fear of negative media coverage, the increasing competitiveness for students, especially international students, the importance of international reputations – also ties equity mechanisms to non-performativity. Moreover, the ineffectiveness of such mechanisms cannot be divorced from the complex relationship between managerialism, neoliberalism, and equity, where neoliberal tenets of competitiveness, markets, and efficiency have encouraged equity initiatives with limited scope. Thus, under neoliberalism, the most important measure of an equity policy is not its ability to address racism (and other forms of inequities), but rather to what extent the presence of these mechanisms leads to the perception that such universities are efficient, competitive leaders. Thus, the ineffectiveness of equity policies is not a failure but a very successful discursive act. Not only do these policies serve to mask discrimination, they offer a discursive non-performative process of naming ‘not to effect.’

### **What our respondents said: interview findings**

The overall picture is of a significant group of faculty across many Canadian universities with deep-seated and profound criticisms of the academy, its structures, and its governance. The university is largely perceived to be a traditional white and male-dominated institution that is taking only minimal steps to provide an inclusive welcoming environment for its racialized and Indigenous faculty.

In reflecting on current hiring practices one faculty member commented that someone like him ‘would never be hired these days.’ For the most part, this comment sums up the sentiments of many racialized and Indigenous faculty members we interviewed about their experiences in the academy. Given their experiences, they reckoned that the ‘good intentions’ of universities that brought them onto campuses in the 1980s were mere ‘rhetoric’ without substance – without the necessary institutional policies and practices that created an environment where the different knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous and racialized scholars were accommodated and incorporated. On this basis, they reasoned that

universities were 'starting to become less progressive,' in that they were reluctant to have more racialized and Indigenous scholars on their campuses. As Giroux (2014, 17) argues, today's universities operate within a culture in which the academics best able to survive its challenges are those most comfortable with 'the corporatization of the university and the new regimes of neoliberal governance' where they are ' beholden to corporate interests, career building and the insular discourses that accompany specialized scholarship.' Many racialized respondents argued that only specific types of knowledge are recognized as legitimate, and Indigenous faculty members talked of their decolonial struggles to re-center Aboriginal history, philosophy, and culture and to incorporate anti-racist models of knowledge. In doing so, they are often met with deep resistance from white students, colleagues, and administration. Racialized faculty commonly experience demands from minority students wishing to have mentors and role models whom they believe can relate to them and their lived experiences.

The Indigenous and racialized faculty members also told us about sitting in hiring committee meetings and being part of conversations where they observed affinity, network and accent biases such that who one knew (or her/his network of friends) and accent (having a 'foreign' accent was considered a problem because students will not be able to understand the speaker) operated as invisible barriers to faculty appointments. And there were also the questions about these scholars' 'foreign' credentials if not obtained in Europe or North America, their ability to secure research and program funding, and their capacity to live up to expectations and images as representatives of their ethno-racial groups. These demands, questions, and expectations, combined with the absence of mentorship, the problematic relationships with their white colleagues and students, the insecurity generated by the tenure and promotion processes, and their struggles to be taken seriously and gain respect, contribute to precarious working situations and social relationships in which Indigenous and racialized faculty members found themselves, as well as the psychological state of ambivalence, skepticism, uncertainty, low self-esteem, hopelessness, and anguish they felt in their job.<sup>6</sup>

The presence of some Indigenous and racialized faculty disguises the fact that there has been little or no change in the ways institutions operate. Some faculty members increasingly feel marginalized in university environments that appear to be reverting to a traditional, white, homogeneous character, even as the university advertisements declare commitment to having an ethnically and racially diverse faculty body and affirmative action appointment committees are charged with implementing equity policies. Racialized and Indigenous scholars are often called upon to mentor a diverse student population, but such work taxes their time, and it is clear that their numbers are insufficient to address the needs of a future generation. Further, conscious of the fact that universities insist on having 'academic stars,' many racialized and Indigenous scholars are working diligently to prove themselves worthy of their tenured appointments and, in some cases, to prevent the demands of teaching and service (including that to their own communities) from interfering with their scholarship and limiting their productivity. But the reality is: the sometimes new, emerging, and different scholarship in which many racialized and Indigenous scholars engage has yet to earn the recognition and credibility. Conceding that they tend to be viewed as 'representatives' of their communities and as narrowly concerned with issues of equity, these faculty members acknowledged that how their behaviors and scholarly output are read have implications for the future of equity policies and practices, particularly with regard to hiring faculty members

from their communities. There is a precarious work situation where they constantly struggle against marginalization, racialization, tokenization, ghettoization, and alienation expressed in the demands that they conform, fit in, be star scholars, and meet an 'academic standard' that devalues the critical and transformative knowledge they bring to scholarship and the institution.

## Conclusion

If universities can't figure out how to deal constructively with our differences then you just have to give up hope generally. If we can't do it in universities then what hope does the rest of our society have? (interviewee)

Four decades of equity policies have failed to transform the academy significantly to make it more diverse and reflective of the broader society and student body. In part, this is because of structural barriers and discriminatory practices that have functioned to exclude and stall transformation. It is also a result of the inadequately examined preference for sameness that leads to practices of replication. Change has also eluded universities because of the subtle workings of unacknowledged biases that privilege affinity and the needs of dominant insider groups. Unconscious biases have a significant impact on the career trajectories of racialized and Indigenous scholars and women in the contemporary academy. The cumulative biases and structural barriers mapped along a spectrum or pipeline make visible the challenge for racialized and Indigenous faculty not only at the point of entry but, potentially, at every major stage of their academic careers. The biases tell a story about a potential obstacle to career mobility that many racialized and Indigenous scholars face. The complex dynamics of subtle biases and structural barriers also make visible how much harder they have to work in order to thrive and succeed in the academy. The findings suggest that biases and assumptions of whiteness have exacted an incalculable cost for many racialized and Indigenous scholars. They rob the academy and the broader society of a wealth of talent and the invaluable heterogeneity of people, their knowledge, and the perspectives that could make universities more equitable, diverse and excellent.

It is important that faculty members, and those hired with diversity in mind, enter an institutional climate in which their presence is valued for the new, additional, and different experiences and perspectives that they bring through their research questions and analyses, contributions to curricula, pedagogy, service, and scholarly activities (including their work with communities). If post-secondary institutions are to be relevant as knowledge generating entities in today's diverse communities, then they must be ready to accept and accommodate the presence of racialized and Indigenous faculty. Indeed, as Professor Joanne St. Lewis contends regarding the failure of universities to 'face up' to issues of race, 'it's not just how many black faces [there are] in the room. It's about the space to engage in intellectual work. It's about the opportunity to create new forms of knowledge' (cited in Drolet 2009).

Despite talk about an inclusive curriculum, and demands from Indigenous movements aimed at indigenizing, decolonizing, and internationalizing the curriculum in the westernized university, the scholarship on race/ethnicity, Indigeneity and, to a lesser extent, gender, remain on the margins of teaching and learning. Many students can graduate from a degree program and never grapple with issues of racism and decoloniality. This issue is particularly true of graduate programs engaged in training the next generation of scholars. It also means that graduate programs are not providing new scholars the tools they need

to grapple with colonial history, its relationship to power and the hegemony of imperial and colonial narratives that have established the terms of, and tools for, conversation in the westernized university.

If universities are places into which racialized and Indigenous people will gain access, fully participate, attain tenure and promotion, and have their scholarship recognized, then critical attention must be given to how the existing diversity discourse sustains color-coded power relations, inculcates expectations, and conveys reminders (e.g. ‘you know why you were hired’ – to represent ‘your’ communities and take care of marginalized students’ and communities’ concerns) that racialized and Indigenous faculty are not recognized or accepted as legitimate members of the academy with all the earned rights and privileges. What is clear, despite their increasing presence on university campuses, is that racialized and Indigenous faculty continue to struggle against their historical exclusion, and to justify the special measures, however limited, that have been implemented to make their presence in the academy possible. Frequent reminders of the reasons for their presence in the academy mean that they will constantly have to struggle against not only their own erasure, but also that of the faculty members they mentor, the students they teach, the research they conduct, and the scholarship they produce. That silence about race and racial issues remains the norm and does nothing to address the reality that race and racism have shaped and continue to shape the experiences, opportunities, and perceptions of racialized and Indigenous scholars. If the challenges that these faculty members face are to be effectively addressed, then, an institutional commitment to equity is integral to creating a welcoming and supportive academic culture.

## Notes

1. Federal Government documents use the term ‘Aboriginal.’ We, however, prefer to describe this population as ‘Indigenous.’
2. It should be noted that while the census data were sufficient to allow us to disaggregate Indigenous from racialized faculty (reference to in the census as ‘visible minority’), for our survey data, the numbers were too small for us to do the same. Hence, our reference here to racialized faculty is a combination of Indigenous and racialized respondents.
3. Due to limited resources and using an analytic framework that foregrounds race and racism, we were only able to get at social class in relation to tenured versus non-tenured faculty. For basically the same reasons, we were unable to include disability because that data are even more unavailable than for race.
4. Interestingly, the situation has remained about the same and slightly improved for Indigenous faculty.
5. Many of these respondents could have been graduates of a Canadian university, but many were likely foreign hires. This raises concerns about what is happening to Canadian-born racialized doctorates who appear not to be transitioning into the academic labor market. It is a problem seen in other job sectors, and one that is raising concern over potential inequality and alienation from Canadian society (Reitz and Bannerjee 2007).
6. In their study of Black male faculty in white university campuses, Griffin, Ward, and Phillips (2014, 1369) found that their everyday routine experiences not only led to ‘microaggressions,’ but also to psychological states such as ‘imposter syndrome and racial battle fatigue. ... Imposter syndrome refers to strong feelings of self-doubt despite one’s intelligence and credentials ... while racial battle fatigue marks the physical, mental, and emotional stress that racialized oppression brings forth.’

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