
Who Cares?: (Re)visioning Labor Justice for Black Women Contingent Faculty

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The changing tide of faculty has brought with it increasing numbers of faculty members serving in non-tenure-track roles. Scholars have argued this increase in contingent faculty includes an increase in inequities and has created a stratified class system between tenure-track faculty (TTF) and non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF). The majority of NTTF numbers comprise women of Color, across race and ethnicity, serving in both full-time and adjunct capacities. The cultural, historical, and sociopolitical occupation of women of Color in higher education has been rife with inequity, marginalization, and oppression. In addition to their duties across rank and appointment, women of Color faculty are more likely to take up the labor of care. Labor concerns have been raised in the both the literature of contingent faculty and women of Color faculty. Yet, few scholars have systematically studied the experiences or overlapping systems of oppression women of Color who are NTTF faculty face in the academy. Fewer still have examined the specific experiences of Black women faculty serving in contingent roles. For our study, we used a conceptual framework comprising Black feminist thought, care work, and labor justice to analyze scholarly personal narratives and focus group interviews of four Black women serving in full-time NTTF roles. Our study aims to provide a window into the intersected realities Black women contingent faculty members within the academy and a pathway forward for academic leadership.

Keywords: labor justice, Black faculty, care work, scholarly personal narrative, contingent faculty

Introduction

Patton Davis said, “Black women in the academy are situated as academic after thots, and by thots, I mean, ‘the help is over there’ or ‘thanks for helping out today’” (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 2016, 1:02:45). She shared these words as part of a panel discussion centering Black women and girls in education. Patton Davis (AERA, 2016) went on to say Black women faculty, administrators, and students are made to feel dismissed and disposable in higher education. Her play on a popular colloquialism, THOT, conveys an important and under-researched issue in higher education literature, the labor of Black women faculty in the academy. Even more scarce is literature concerning the academic labor of Black women working in contingent faculty roles at the university. In this article, we use a compounded conceptual framework to examine the academic labor experiences of four contingent Black women faculty members.

Contingent Faculty in the United States

The changing tide of higher education has brought increasing numbers of faculty serving in contingent roles (Kezar & Maxey, 2016). Scholars have argued this increase includes an upsurge in inequities and has created a stratified class system between tenure-track faculty (TTF) and contingent faculty (Gonzales, Kanhai, & Hall, 2018; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Rhoades, 2015; Tirelli, 2014). The majority of contingent faculty numbers comprise women of Color, serving in both full-time and adjunct capacities (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). In addition to their duties across rank and appointment, women of Color faculty are more likely to take up the labor of care (Cardozo, 2016). Labor concerns have been raised in both the literature of contingent faculty and women of Color faculty. Yet, few scholars have systematically studied the experiences or overlapping systems of oppression women of Color who are contingent faculty face in the academy (Boss et al., 2019). Even fewer still have examined the experiences of Black women faculty serving in contingent roles (Porter, 2019; Porter et al., 2020). Gonzales et al. (2018) argued the necessity of reimagining organizational structures and processes of higher education through justice-focused lenses. In particular, they described how higher education facilitates social stratification and human oppression. With regard to faculty, they described the shift away from tenure-track lines that has transformed contingent faculty into the new faculty majority.

Despite increasing attention to contingent faculty issues, little focus has been given to employing an intersectional framework to examine how inequities manifest across identity categories. Women, and more specifically women of Color, serving in contingent faculty roles face a number of challenges in navigating the academy (Cardozo, 2016). Their labor in identity-based mentoring of peers and students goes unnoticed and unrewarded (Ahmed, 2012). This identity-based mentoring usually happens in addition to their contracted duties and responsibilities. Contingent women of Color faculty also continue to engage in research and service, even when it is outside of the scope of their contracts, with little to no support or recognition at their institutions (Marina & Ross, 2016; Davis, Greer, Sisco, & Collins, 2020). Likewise, women of Color often find themselves in hybrid roles, such as those where they take up administrative appointments that leave little time for their own academic advancement (Cardozo, 2016; Duncan, 2014).

Black Women in Contingent Faculty Roles

Little is known about the experiences of Black women faculty in contingent roles, despite increasing numbers of Black faculty in contingent positions (Croom & Patton, 2012; Gregory, 2001). Literature on tenure-track experiences of Black women, across rank, suggest parallel experiences to those of contingent faculty. Croom and Patton (2012) argued Black women faculty experience covert and overt microaggressions, racism, and sexism that are embedded in the academy. Carter Andrews (2015) labeled the experiences of Black women faculty across rank as gendered racial battle fatigue in that they must “develop an arsenal of emotional and psychological weaponry against the cumulative effects of the gendered racism and racist sexism” (p. 79). Black women in faculty roles are often seen as ‘the help’ (AERA, 2016) and thus become tokenized and targeted to engage in more service responsibilities without appropriate recognition (Baez, 2000; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Despite increases of Black women in faculty roles, the chilly climate of the academy continues to influence and perpetuate the marginalization of their experiences, identities, and voices on campus and in higher education literature (Collins, 2001; Sulé, 2014).

Our study provides a window into the intersected realities of being Black women and contingent faculty members and a pathway forward for academic leadership. To guide our inquiry, we explored the following research questions:

1. How do contingent Black women faculty conceptualize their labor within the academy as professors of higher education?
2. How do structures of contingency and experiences of identity impact the labor of Black women faculty?

Conceptual Framework

We compounded three different theories and concepts toward a more comprehensive understanding of the academic labor of contingent Black women faculty. Specifically, we drew from Black feminist thought (BFT; Collins, 1990), care work (England, 2005), and labor justice (Gonzales et al., 2018). We have provided a brief overview of each followed by a description of how they were employed for this study.

Black Feminist Thought (BFT)

Collins (1990) offered an epistemological approach that foregrounded Black women’s subjugated knowledge. BFT centers Black women by privileging them as experts of their own experiences; it provides a lens through which Black women can share counterstories and their experiences navigating an outsider within status in the academy. She argued individual and collective identities of Black women are inextricably linked and intersections of these identities (Crenshaw, 1991) both complicate and influence the ways Black women show up and interact with their colleagues, students, and institutions. According to BFT, Black women’s knowledge is situated within multiple perspectives and attends to affect and experience. This approach recognizes that knowledge is often embedded in how one understands the world, and attention and validity must be given to how one conveys that understanding. In BFT, to know is to privilege both individual experiences and understandings of the world in addition to intersubjective ways of making meaning among Black women.

Care Work

Care work aims to explain how human development related careers have become devalued in the world of work (England, 2005). Though many concepts are advanced within this framework, we focused on the concepts of “devaluation,” “public good,” and “prisoner of love” to showcase the inequities and benefits experienced care workers (England, 2005, p. 382). Devaluation represents a mindset that views work that involves nurturing others to be less valuable. The notion of devaluation is one that some attribute to gender wage gaps; wherein, jobs typically performed by women pay less than those engaged by men. Public good suggests that care work not only benefits the people being cared for but also the larger society. Prisoner of love describes internal motivations to care for others that may prompt the care worker to accept inadequate conditions. These three areas offer explanations for the responses to, benefits of, and motivations for care work and the resultant issues of labor inequity. Moreover, Cardozo, (2016) argued care work is often engaged by and expected of women of Color.

Labor Justice

Gonzales et al. (2018) advanced the concept of labor justice as a way to address academic labor inequities in higher education. Labor justice offers a way to (re)vision organizational leadership theory and privileges shared governance in decision making to ensure historically marginalized voices are included in governance decisions. Gonzales et al. (2018) argued “the conditions of labor can only be made just if faculty are given an opportunity to further define their work, their roles, and the goals of the organization” (p. 523). Labor justice highlights resource inequity associated with systemic and structural histories and sociopolitical factors that serve to disproportionately impact faculty in minoritized identity groups. Labor justice leverages theories from critical management studies and collective leadership to question the political nature and power relationships present in how rules, policies, and goals are established in the academic profession. Labor justice urges “formal leaders to unleash their leadership authority and invite laborers into the process of defining work settings, thinking through organizational goals, and setting performance measures” (Gonzales et al., p. 520).

The combination of BFT, care work, and labor justice provided us a framework for understanding the experiences of Black women who are full-time, contingent faculty and a framework for advancing justice for their academic labor. When compounded, these theories and concepts spotlight the necessity of Black women constructing and sharing their narratives in relation to how they engage in care work in the academy. Labor justice is operationalized when marginalized faculty’s ways of knowing and being contribute to the (re)creation of institutional goals and determining the parameters and value of faculty work. In the following section, we describe scholarly personal narratives (Nash & Bradley, 2011), which served as a vehicle for exercising BFT’s idea of knowing by privileging both our individual experiences and understandings of our work as well as intersubjective ways of making meaning among each other. Additionally, SPN allowed us to tease out those concepts of care work that surfaced through our narratives. The weaving together of all of these ideas resulted in a call to action for (re)visioning academic labor.

Methods

We, the authors, served as researcher-participants within a larger study on the experiences of contingent Black women faculty in the academy. We progressed through doctoral education and graduated between 2011-2014 with degrees in student affairs from a traditionally

White, large, land-grant doctoral university. At the time of data collection, all four of us served in full-time, contingent faculty positions at traditionally White, large, land-grant doctoral universities (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, n. d.). We each identify as Black, cisgender women.

Data collection. Scholarly personal narratives (SPN; Nash & Bradley, 2011) and focus group interviews (Krueger & Casey, 2009) were used to explore the individual and collective experiences of Black women’s academic labor as contingent faculty. SPNs as a method , has previously been employed by faculty of Color in higher education to affirm and center their voices and experiences (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Louis et al., 2016). We identified SPN as a powerful vehicle for (re)visioning the study of our life experiences as contingent Black women faculty. As Nash and Bradley (2011) suggested, the “main design objective of SPN research is to investigate, present, and analyze the inner life of the writer in order to draw insights that might be universalizable for readers” (p. 83). SPNs are conducted in four phases: pre-search, me-search, research, and we-search.

The pre-search phase involves identifying topics, questions, or areas of focus. The pre-search phase is reflected in the goals of this project, the research questions, and the supporting literature and processes that guided those goals and questions (Nash & Bradley, 2011). As part of our pre-search phase, we identified a need to narrate our experiences and contribute to the larger discourse on academic labor among contingent faculty. We engaged in a two-hour orienting focus group and each wrote two personal reflections. During the focus group, we brainstormed how our experiences as Black women influenced our positioning within the academy and the ways we managed our daily responsibilities.

The me-search phase of SPN calls for the researchers to examine their positionalities in the inquiry process (Nash & Bradley, 2011). To further contextualize who we were in the study, we brainstormed and confirmed our narrative reflective prompts: 1) Write about who you are as a Black woman contingent faculty that will provide insight into your overall journey and positionality to and within this work (i.e., Who are you? What do you do? And Why?); and 2) Discuss how serving in a contingent role has shaped/influenced your teaching, research, service, and administration. We wrote individual responses to these prompts and shared our written responses with one another through a shared internet-based document drive.

The research phase of SPN involves establishing themes; attending to plausibility, honesty, coherence; and making connections to other scholarship as illustrative and embedded enhancements to the narratives (Nash & Bradley, 2011). Themes provide a unifying thread for SPN and become the measure by which the authors convey and readers make meaning of the narrative.

Finally, we-search involves a retelling of narratives that transcend the researchers’ own meaning making by drawing writ large connections to the literature and signaling ways readers might take up similar understandings and processes (Nash & Bradley, 2011). We-search provides the answer to the “so what?” of our writing.

Data analysis. To start, we each read through each other’s responses to the aforementioned prompts. Following those readings, we met to discuss our reactions to each other’s narratives and discuss commonalities and deviations we saw across the narratives. We also discussed how we might move forward to identify themes across our data. We decided to employ focused and axial coding to collapse findings (Charmaz, 2006); specifically, focused codes permitted the organization of smaller chunks of data and axial codes helped us establish categorical relationships. All of us contributed to establishing focused codes. Authors two and

four collapsed the 333 focused codes into 31 categories. After authors two and four established categories, author one revisited the data in relation to this study's research questions:

1. How do contingent Black women faculty conceptualize their labor within the academy as professors of higher education?
2. How do structures of contingency and experiences of identity impact the labor of Black women faculty?

Data were further classified into categories which were collapsed into three themes. All of us contributed to the resulting SPN.

Plausibility, honesty, and coherence. SPN uses the terms plausibility, honesty, and coherence in the place of what would be called validity or trustworthiness in other research traditions. As Nash and Bradley (2011) explained, “the ultimate test of SPN truth...is the extent to which all the stories, self-disclosures, and scholarly references are linked explicitly to the driving theme(s)” (p. 85). In ensuring these links, we drew on our collective expertise as knowers and analysts and pored over our data to ensure our narratives were cohesive to our themes and prior literature. Our method resembled the processes used in Patton's (2009) description of triangulation of sources, using multiple data sources to support inferences drawn from other data, and triangulation of analysts, using two or more analysts in the process of making sense of the data. Additionally, analyzing our narratives through our compounded conceptual framework aligns with what Denzin (1973) termed theory triangulation, using multiple theories to interpret data. In the next section of this article, we present a narrative that incorporates our data, conceptual framework, and prior literature. Throughout the narrative we call for reflection within our themes with the final theme situated as a call to action.

“Her Work is Different”: Othering, Caring, and (Re)visioning

At the time of this study, all four of us were early career, full-time contingent faculty members at three different institutions. Throughout these narratives we refer to ourselves using pseudonyms—Oprah, LaVaughn, Nia, and Campbell—as protection against those who would weaponize our words against us professionally. We are Black women who desire to have long careers as faculty members, but not all of us aspire to tenure-track status. The purpose of this narrative is not to decry contingency; in fact, some of us have found advantage in contingent status to our work in the professoriate. Rather, our purpose is to illustrate the labor injustices that occur around contingency and the trivial pursuit of attempting to disentangle identity characteristics—race, sex, class—in pursuit of justice. In fact, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) arguing in favor of pluralistic thinking, wrote, it “shifts the entire focus of investigation from one aimed at explicating elements of race or gender or class oppression to one whose goal is to determine what the links are among these systems” (p. S20).

In our own experiences, we have found an inability or unwillingness by some of our colleagues and administrative leaders to engage in such pluralistic thinking related to our work. This lack of intersectional understanding has led to dismissal of our concerns. “I did not invite you to the meeting because it was heavily focused on grants, and, being a contingent faculty member, you cannot apply for large-scale grants. It has nothing to do with you being Black or a woman,” a hypothetical colleague might say. Yet, the colleague, at best, fails to realize, or, at worst, denies the very fact that being Black and women created a greater probability of our contingent status. We are aware of Finkelstein and associates' (2016) report that women of Color

and particularly Black women's representation has been growing more quickly in contingent roles than in tenure-track roles. And, like Leslie Gonzales and her colleagues (2018), we know those trends are embedded in a larger historical and sociopolitical context of racism, sexism, and classism. So when our colleagues attempt to dodge any responsibility or connection of their actions to these larger ideas, we find ourselves questioning "who cares enough about us for things to change?" This question is not reflective of lack of recognition of our agency; conversely, it is indicative of our deep understanding of our social location in academia and the need for advocates to leverage their power to amplify our voices, experiences, and worth (Porter, 2019). While amplification is a helpful starting place, we ultimately seek to advance the conversation about the essentialness of our representation in governance.

It is important for us to pursue those purposes in this format, because SPN provides an avenue in which we can actualize Collins' (1990) theorizing that Black women's knowledge is situated in how we understand the world in both individual and collective processes. We agree with Collins that Black women must convey our ways of knowing in manners that are true to us. Given our call for a shared governance that is inclusive, as a path toward justice, it is important for us to leverage this argument in our own voices. Throughout this (counter)narrative of our lives as faculty, we move in and out of sharing direct quotations from our individual meaning making to broader, collective understandings of our experiences.

Othering

As we alluded to in the first part of this narrative, despite their protest, we recognized our labor around scholarship did not matter to our colleagues or institutions. Our realizations that we were devalued came at different points and were the result of a multitude of explicit and covert messages. Two of us provided examples of how this messaging was manifested explicitly in institutional policy. LaVaughn wrote,

At my institution, contingent faculty cannot receive large grants because of the way we are put into the system. This is frustrating to me on a number of fronts. What I do not understand, is why this type of restriction would occur. Even if a contingent faculty member were doing a major research project, it would only bring prestige to the department, college, institution. If they were able to engage the research on their own time, it would not be a burden to the department. This is one of the major ways where I feel like contingent faculty labor is exploited: the benefit is very unequally weighted in favor of the institution with little support for the contingent faculty to position themselves for something better.

LaVaughn was frustrated with policies that precluded her from applying for and receiving major funding for research, despite her commitment to engage research in excess of her contractual responsibilities. Ironically, her research and scholarly output were highlighted among other faculty accomplishments during departmental promotional activities, such as recruitment of students. Moreover, during annual evaluations she received feedback from colleagues that she needed to engage in more research if she desired to advance professionally. Campbell, shared a similar experience:

As I learned in the most recent salary bonus discussion, I'm not evaluated relative to my position. In other words, I didn't get a raise because I'm not that impressive when

compared to tenure-track faculty who are doing the research and getting research dollars. Over the past two years, I've contributed to book chapters, authored/co-authored journal publications, presented at least five academic papers, and I am currently in the midst of four research projects.

Outside of these institutional policies, we would occasionally become aware of activities from which we were excluded. If we inquired after these activities, we were often met with responses similar to the one our hypothetical colleague gave in the first paragraph of this narrative. Resultantly, we found ourselves working tirelessly with little recognition and at the margins of our departments.

Campbell wrote that despite her work and contributions to the department, she was still overlooked and excluded from certain activities. She shared, "I am expected to review doctoral prospectuses and give feedback to students as part of the prelim process; yet, I have not been asked to serve on a single dissertation committee." On the one hand, her colleagues deemed her capable of providing input to students during critical milestones in the students' processes, yet she was never invited to the parts of the process that would have helped her professionally: service on dissertation committees. Another of us, Nia, also expressed the feeling of being an outsider among colleagues. She wrote, "Being in a non-tenure track [faculty role] is political. It's tough, because regardless of what my colleagues say, I am treated differently because of my non-tenure status." Additionally, Oprah wrote,

While I am confident in my decision to be a career track faculty member and [recognize how this role will] advance my career goals with this kind of role as my starting point, I occasionally think, where do I belong? Am I challenged by the lack of acceptance due to my professional role and classification or am I uneasy because I am faced with the possibilities of the intersections between my race as a Black person, working a career track faculty role that [go] unappreciated. So, I ask...does my work really speak for me in the same way a tenure track faculty person's work may speak for him/her/them? As I saw the intersection between being a contingent career track faculty member, Black, and woman, I began to see a clearer picture of being the help, as described by Dr. Patton Davis. I was *That Help Over There* (AERA, 2016). I often did my expected job responsibilities and so much more. It was difficult for me to reconcile ALL that I was doing to show myself approved, a (wo)man whom need not be ashamed, as the Bible reminds me, and yet, even after three years of my employment, my faculty colleagues withheld their sincere appreciation and respect for me and my work. Instead my colleagues, dismissed my work by saying, "I'm not sure what all she does, I just know her work is different."

Our narratives detailing experiences of othering are illustrative of what Collins (1990) coined an outsider within standpoint. It was frustrating, maddening, hurtful, and, at times, infuriating to realize there were barriers, tied to our identities, that prevented us from fully being a part of a community; yet, being an outsider within also presented unique opportunities. Our standpoint allowed us to "see patterns that may be more difficult for [insiders] to see" (Collins, 1990, p. 515). It is from this standpoint we write about the insidious nature of racism, sexism, and classism in Black contingent women faculty's experiences. It is from this standpoint that we can point out, though many of our experiences mirror those of tenure-track Black women faculty,

we are even further cast aside. It is from this standpoint we can assert that until we have a space and place to leverage this knowledge in governance, inequities will persist and to dire ends.

Other thoughts? There is increased complexity involved in documenting, researching, and detailing the particular intersected injustices experienced by Black women who are contingent faculty members. While we can point to institutionally-sanctioned policies that serve to other us, short of egregious acts, it is harder to provide evidence of how the stratification experienced by contingent faculty is exacerbated by their other marginalized identities. Amid the gendered racial battle fatigue described by Carter Andrews (2015), we also had to contend with the effects of academic classism. We recognize that our narratives describe the experiences of full-time contingent faculty, and that the situation for our part-time colleagues is even further nuanced. This signals a need for all of us to be more intersectional in our thinking about how people move through, are treated in, and have access to faculty work.

Caring

Marina and Ross (2016) advanced a similar narrative to the one we have shared so far. They, and the numerous contributors to their book, described the cost of racism, sexism, and classism on women of Color in the academy. They argued it is imperative that efforts to address the issues experienced by women of Color faculty must be justice-oriented, and not merely a means of retention. Regarding contingent faculty and the historical roots of labor justice, Gonzales et al. (2018) emphasized the following:

...over the last 30 years, managerial tactics have resulted in major shifts in the constitution of the academic profession. Whereas most college and university professors used to be hired into tenurable lines, the majority of today's college and university professors work in non-tenure-track, contingent, and part-time positions. (p. 506)

They go on to explain, not only are women of Color overrepresented in these contingent roles, but contingent appointments are high in “institutions that are more likely to enroll working class, students of color, or otherwise non-traditional students” (Gonzales et al., p. 506). We do not believe this is purely happenstance. The students Gonzales and colleagues described are students who have traditionally been in need of extra support navigating the academy. Some research offers deficit frameworks to suggest these students struggle because they are underprepared, and more egregiously, less capable, but that research fails to address a historical and sociopolitical climate in which many higher education institutions were built to exclude those very students. What tends to happen when marginalized faculty are on college campuses is what Joseph and Hirschfield (2011) called cultural taxation—the undervalued and often unrecognized labor faculty engage in support of marginalized students. We experienced this in our own work.

Throughout our experiences, cultural taxation was most felt where our identities intersected. We often engaged academic and social mentoring with students of Color who were navigating their own experiences of marginalization within the academy (Bertrand Jones, Osborne-Lampkin, & Wilder, 2016). Because of our intersected identities, students sought us out for this labor and support, and colleagues would informally ask us to make these student connections. We took up this labor when it came to recruiting new or wooing prospective students of Color, many of whom later disclosed to us they chose to enroll in our programs based on our presence within them. Much of our labor went unnoticed or unappreciated by our colleagues though the positive benefits to our programs were celebrated without reference or

attribute to us and our work. Our morale decreased as our labor continued to go unrecognized and our workloads increased due to this hidden service.

England's (2005) writings on care work helped us to make meaning of the external and internal tensions we experienced with cultural taxation. The following excerpts from our individual narratives illustrate subconcepts embedded in care work. Oprah wrote the following related to the subconcept of public good, which involves engaging work for its benefit beyond those being cared for:

I often held meetings with my advisees and those who were not my advisees (on the doctoral and master's levels) to discuss their sense of belonging in the program. Although I recognized the importance of this role, it was (and still remains) very taxing.

Nia recognized the subconcept of devaluation associated with cultural taxation in her work. Devaluation theorizes that those whose work primarily involves caring for and nurturing the development of others results in less pay and fewer accolades. Nia wrote the following about devaluation:

I am expected to provide proficient leadership to the program, while also teaching a full course load, and advising a majority of the masters' students. The parts of my role however that go unnoticed and are not affirmed are the unspoken aspects (e.g., increasing students of Color each year as a result of my participation in their recruitment; indirectly advising ALL of the students, not just my individual advisees; spending more time engaging potential and current students via email, phone, and in person; and being present/visible at conferences so that I am more than just the face, but the actual personality/soul of the program).

Another subconcept is the prisoner of love, which "emphasizes altruistic motivations for and intrinsic rewards of care work" (England, 2005, p. 382). England suggested that the prisoner of love care worker often puts up with substandard conditions in sacrifice to the intrinsic reward. Campbell, wrote about this dissonance saying,

I end up doing so much more [on top of what I am expected to do]. Sometimes I am not sure whether it's because I want to, feel the need to, or am lightweight expected to do. For example, some of the projects/initiatives that I coordinate or work on tend to be considered 'mine' and I feel like I have to force my faculty colleagues to participate and prioritize. On one hand, it's because they trust me, but on the other hand, it's because they don't want to do it.

Campbell was not the only one of us who had difficulty distinguishing between internal motivations or external pressures of cultural taxation. Indeed, all of us felt obliged to help students because of shared cultural backgrounds and experiences. We have all experienced difficulty navigating the academy as students, and even still as faculty. We felt a sense of duty to support students in ways they were not otherwise being supported. It is also not lost on us that our colleagues and administrative leaders asked us to engage this labor directly or indirectly by referring students to us for consultation.

Who cares? Our experiences add to “a growing literature [that] provides evidence that the historical alignment of women of Color with caring or social reproduction thwarts their recognition and advancement in academe” (Cardozo, 2016, p. 8). In addition to what we described above, a function of our caring was evidenced in our research, which often centered minoritized and marginalized populations. Despite the resulting publications, conference presentations, and invited talks, some of us were told our research was not valued or acceptable for funding or eventual pursuit of tenure-track status. Similar to arguments made by England (2005) and Gonzales and associates (2018), given the history and sociopolitical climate of the United States, we are not surprised that labor primarily taken up by women of Color, and involves care work, is devalued. Patton Davis (AERA, 2016) characterized this devaluation in the quote that opens this manuscript and decries Black women being viewed as “the help” in academia.

(Re)visioning

So where do we go from here? We turn to our compounded conceptual framework to (re)vision the impact of care work and the power of Black feminist thought toward labor justice. Gonzales and associates (2018) suggested that labor justice involves both critical management and collective leadership. In the context of our study, critical management begins with formal leaders listening to Black women contingent faculty and (re)considering how institutional goals may thwart our value-added work and threaten our presence in the academy. This act of listening must have an intersectional bent and recognize Black contingent faculty as experts on their own experiences. Leveraging this knowledge, critical managers engage an act of (re)visioning by considering, “to what extent they can use their platform to orient the academic hiring and evaluative process towards equity” (Gonzales et al., p. 522).

The important action step of labor justice involves extending beyond listening and considering, to the enactment of collective leadership. Gonzales and colleagues describe this collective leadership as not only involving traditional notions of shared governance—collaborative institutional goal setting, policy-making, and role defining—it also recognizes the unique understanding faculty have of the increasingly complex nature of their work. In relation to our work, formally inviting Black women contingent faculty into collective leadership works “to conserve the creative tension of outsider within status by encouraging and institutionalizing outsider within ways of seeing” (Collins, 1990, p. S29). Collective leadership that operates in this manner goes a long way in addressing inequities faced by marginalized faculty across identity categories and professional status. Similar to what we have done in this narrative, through collective leadership a representative member can advance the issues and priorities impacting contingent faculty by presenting their colleagues with an intersectional analysis of unjust policies and practices.

Since our engagement of this study, two of us have moved on to tenure-track positions and two of us have, purposefully, remained in contingent positions. All of us have continued to bring awareness to and hold colleagues and administrators accountable for equitable practices concerning contingent faculty. For example, LaVaughn, shared,

Since entering the tenure-track, I am acutely aware of the codified and unspoken inequities experienced by contingent faculty on my campus. Though I am pre-tenure and vulnerable, it has been worth the risk to speak out against these inequities when I encounter them; not too long ago I would have been on the other end of these policies

and practices. At my institution we have been in a process of revising important governance documents, I and other tenure-track colleagues have been strategic and vocal about arguing for more inclusion of contingent faculty in our policies.

This is one aspect of (re)visioning: advocating for faculty who are contingent, women of Color, and contingent women of Color when they are not in the room. Given the current state of many institutions' governance bodies, it is an important first step in (re)visioning. However, we are arguing for a more radical (re)visioning that not only invites them into the room but privileges their perspectives and ideas for advancement.

Why (re)vision? “A college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems” (AAUP, ACE, & AGB, 1966/1990, para. 6). The current condition and state of work for contingent faculty is abysmal, even more so for contingent faculty with other marginalized identities. As England (2005) described, care work, which involves investing in and developing others, is often devalued because it is seen as women's work. As such, reward structures rarely make room for recognition of the amount of labor that goes into care work. The benefits of care work are also not attributed to those who have taken up the labor of developing others. In our own experiences, we have worked with students on research teams, read and given methodological and theoretical mentoring on student dissertations (as non-committee members), counseled students through identity crises and struggles in addition to a host of other activities that are too exhaustive to list here. Our efforts, and those of many women of Color in the academy, have resulted in higher student retention and persistence. Yet these public good benefits of our care work remain undervalued. The result of these conditions not only impact the institution—failure to retain talented faculty—but have very real and harmful psychological, physical, and economic impact on the faculty members themselves (Anyaso, 2008; Patitu & Hinton, 2003). These issues are exacerbated for contingent faculty who do not have the hope of leveraging their labor for tenure and promotion.

Understanding the inequities between tenure-track faculty and contingent faculty is important and strengthens the power of faculty as a whole on campuses (Gonzales et al., 2018; Tirelli, 2014) as well as their capacity to improve students' learning conditions (Rhoades, 2015). Minoritized faculty are more likely to engage identity-based mentoring of students (Ahmed, 2012). This is paramount for a national climate in which students of Color, particularly Black students, on college campuses feel targeted and unwelcomed. Yet, policies aimed at increasing voice among contingent Black women faculty must be a part of an academic culture that values difference across social identities and faculty appointments (Gonzales et al., 2018; Haviland, Alleman, & Allen, 2017). Duncan (2014) referring to women's studies programs argued, “simply adding race and women of color to white-dominated programs and paradigms, without transforming the contexts, actually undermines the potential contributions of women of Color” (p. 41). We argue much can be gained from enacting a labor justice framework (Gonzales et al., 2018) in higher education. Without (re)visioning labor justice, efforts toward reducing inequity lack impact and distribution of labor remain inequitably burdensome to marginalized faculty members.

Conclusion

Our narrative indicates there is still much work to be done around uncovering and addressing racism and sexism in the academy. In particular, Bird (2011) suggested research findings provide powerful and tangible evidence of the need for more attention by university leaders in eradicating barriers that disproportionately disadvantage women. Our work situated Gonzales et al.'s (2018) ideas of labor justice, England (2005) and Cardozo's (2014) ideas of care work, and Collins' (1990) conceptualizations of Black feminist thought in the lives and experiences of contingent Black women faculty. Our call to action is that we all (re)vision faculty work toward a collective leadership that reduces stratification and inequities across the faculty. Otherwise, inequitable policies or practices that impact those at the margins in profoundly negative ways will continue to be reified as those making decisions feel little impact of those decisions (Davis et al., 2020). Black women contingent faculty find themselves at the intersections and the margins of social identity and faculty appointment. If progress is to be made, it must be done in service to supporting, recognizing, and rewarding all faculty labor and contributions. While the work of contingent Black women faculty may be different, it is not less valuable nor less impactful.

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