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Discrimination and Exclusion in Higher Education Is Reflected in Multiple Autoethnographies

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Abstract

A synthesis review of 17 autoethnographic (AE) studies revealed experiences of 33 academic staff and graduate students in higher education, the majority of whom are women. These papers, from more than six countries, were found through a Google Scholar search. Most authors identified as marginalised and outsiders in their higher education contexts, whether because of gender, ethnicity, race, or intersectionality. Analysis of tacit and explicit themes in the papers resulted in creation of eight final superordinate themes. The themes represent experiences of fear and insecurity whereby personal vulnerability was exacerbated by lack of cultural and gender awareness in higher education, including obvious examples of White ignorance. Institutional diversity was claimed, but this contrasted with authors' experiences of exclusionary behaviour. Authors reported endemic racism and sexism, but that it was helpful when institutions provided support for these challenges. AE gives power, volume, and space to rarely heard minority voices. AE synthesis offers an overview of collective experience of similar phenomena or contexts. Such meta-studies are not common in the research literature, and this article provides both evidence of lived experiences of academic staff in 21st century higher education, and a purposeful guide to synthesizing AE research.

Keywords

higher education, autoethnography, minority experiences in higher education, qualitative research syntheses

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Discrimination and Exclusion in Higher Education Is Reflected in Multiple Autoethnographies

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A synthesis review of 17 autoethnographic (AE) studies revealed experiences of 33 academic staff and graduate students in higher education, the majority of whom are women. These papers, from more than six countries, were found through a Google Scholar search. Most authors identified as marginalised and outsiders in their higher education contexts, whether because of gender, ethnicity, race, or intersectionality. Analysis of tacit and explicit themes in the papers resulted in creation of eight final superordinate themes. The themes represent experiences of fear and insecurity whereby personal vulnerability was exacerbated by lack of cultural and gender awareness in higher education, including obvious examples of White ignorance. Institutional diversity was claimed, but this contrasted with authors' experiences of exclusionary behaviour. Authors reported endemic racism and sexism, but that it was helpful when institutions provided support for these challenges. AE gives power, volume, and space to rarely heard minority voices. AE synthesis offers an overview of collective experience of similar phenomena or contexts. Such meta-studies are not common in the research literature, and this article provides both evidence of lived experiences of academic staff in 21st century higher education, and a purposeful guide to synthesizing AE research.

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Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are perceived as difficult places to work and thrive. HEI staff have produced multiple written accounts of the challenges they face in day-to-day working life, termed here “dissatisfaction narratives.” Authors of peer-reviewed journal papers in this genre report a particular kind of anguish caused by multiple sources of stress, including demeaning treatment, marginalisation, and emotional and mental burden (Knights & Clarke, 2014). Workers in research and educator roles report overwork, personal dissatisfaction, stress, and mental strain (Anonymous, 2020; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Emergence of these dissatisfaction narratives aligns with the process over many years whereby universities increasingly moved away from a collegial style of management (Blaschke et al., 2014) towards management approaches focused on an ideology of leaderism (Morley, 2013), a new managerialism (Grummell, et al., 2009), and typified by pervasive managerial audit culture (Erickson, et al., 2021).

Worker dissatisfaction is noted in commentary about greater emphasis on commercialisation of teaching and learning, and expectations of immediate social and community impact of research outcomes (Palumbo & Scott, 2018). These various factors impact the contract between universities as profit-making entities versus public institutions with missions to serve the public good (Gretzky & Lerner, 2021). Similarly, individual workers experience increased accountability for time use and outputs, compliance with internal and

external regulations, and responsibility to expertly access and use learning management systems in which their course materials are held and/or delivered. These expectations of staff time usage and presumed generic expertise results in extensive workload creep which is apparent to staff but hidden in institutional reporting when accounting for academic worker activity and success (Kouritzin, 2019).

Increasing numbers of dissatisfaction narratives produced by academic staff are aligned with greater instability in workforce structures in universities, including the ongoing enlargement of the proportion of contract and casual workforce, referred to by the neologism *precariat* (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019; Stringer et al., 2018) and an addiction to change (Anonymous, 2020). The agenda of ongoing change creates destabilisation and as such affects some parts of the institution more than others, especially for those working in precarious positions or with fragile or vulnerable – non-mainstream – identities. The purpose of these changes in many cases is not institutionally necessary but rather invoked in order for a manager or executive to demonstrate performance, with each change designed for display via the *résumé* or interview, as a vital marker of successful leadership, rather than as evidence of key competence in university leadership such as delivery of effective degree programs and higher degree attainment.

Palumbo and Scott (2018) noted that HEI changes are accompanied by well-worn tropes including that external factors have drastically impacted the needs and means of business; the organisation is not capable of responding to the challenge and must adapt (restructure) or irrevocably fail. They note the concept of the burning platform is often evoked to berate people in the organisation who are perceived as failing to see the need for change, abusing them as lacking the intellect to perceive what is obvious to everyone else using the moniker “change resistant” (Palumbo & Scott, 2018).

These challenges increase for individual workers if they fall outside the characteristics of what is described as the tacitly assumed intellectual superiority of the White male professor (Clavero & Galligan, 2020). Cultural templates as to the presumed identity and behaviour of leaders are found in descriptions of other roles, such as professor or teacher (Morley, 2012). University appointments continue to reflect unconscious assumptions of superiority in their gender imbalance, especially regarding attainment of seniority within the organisation for other than White men. Women's increased participation in higher education at all levels is obvious, but advancement to the most senior academic roles is rarely correlated with women's greater representation as a proportion of students and staff (Bothwell, 2022). Women's dissatisfaction narratives are ubiquitous (Brabazon, 2014; Franklin, 2015).

In this study, I examine recent autoethnographic accounts of experiences of staff and graduate students in HEI contexts. Two goals guided the study reported here: (1) to better understand how synthesis of multiple published autoethnographic reports provides a lens by which to perceive and interrogate the culture of higher education beyond the personal toward collective experience, and (2) to demonstrate a method for synthesising multiple autoethnographic studies on a specific topic. AE provides a suitable means by which to explore personal experiences of a context and/or phenomena. Synthesising multiple studies on the same topic affords discovery and reporting of connections and synergies.

Autoethnography and HEIs

Autoethnography is a highly regarded research methodology whereby the researcher is deeply immersed in reflective self-experience while observing, writing, and journaling. Ellis et al. (2011) posit that the tenets of ethnography and autobiography are engaged in AE which results in AE being both a process and product. Intended outcomes of AE include to better understand multiple complex dimensions of culture and interpersonal dynamic whether in a

community (Schmid, 2019), or an organisation (Murphy, 2008). Some AEs focus on troubling personal experiences; for example, loss through bereavement (Furman, 2006; McKenzie, 2015). AE permits space for reflection on organisational contexts, bringing introspective and reflective experiences into authored product by turning neutral third person investigations into personal storied accounts about working and the workplace (Ellison & Langhout, 2016). Some propose AE as a pathway to healing by reflection on post traumatic growth and resilience in the face of damage and distress (Kim, 2019).

AE is also a method used by many scholars to explore and report their experiences of working, researching, and teaching in HEIs. The number of publications on this topic has increased since 2000. For example, five papers appear in a Google Scholar (GS) search result that have both “university” and/or “higher education” and *AE* in the title for the time period 2000-2010. From 2010-2020, however, the total number of papers is 70.

Reflexive Context of the Author

I consider myself to embody social and economic privilege as a White, middle class, university-educated woman. I have worked in a variety of roles in higher education across four countries to date. I held roles with responsibility to support and advise early career researchers, or I sought out this responsibility. I variously held contracted executive roles of three to four years, short-term visiting professor positions, and permanent senior academic positions. My career started with several years of casual hourly-paid teaching while studying for a master’s research degree. I have worked full-time in higher education for the past 30 years. Currently, I serve as a Faculty Dean on a three-year contract responsible for two schools and formerly was Head of School with large undergraduate degree programs and over 100 academic staff.

I engaged in external complementary roles while working full-time as an academic; for example, as a part-time psychosocial care practitioner at a children’s hospital for seven years, as Chair of the Board for a not-for profit organisation, as Editor-in-Chief for an international journal, and inaugural President of an international association. Before gaining my main income from university employment, I worked in aged-care, including a two-year period as director of a community support, home-care program for people with dementia. I gained wide experience of different types of work environments and developed my leadership expertise. These roles gave me opportunity to reflect on the impact of different managerial cultures. Because of these experiences and contexts, I am highly sensitised to the need for greater accountability of leadership for HEIs in both hiring and training staff for leadership positions and teams. I also use my consistent experience of attacks based in envy and/or bullying, whether as observed against others in the workplace, or as a target of such behaviour myself, to reflect on and challenge behaviours in others, whether at individual or organisational level.

I published an autoethnography about experiences of sexism in higher education (Edwards, 2017) at a time when I contemplated leaving the HEI sector to work elsewhere. Although sexism was not the only oppressive and divisive factor in my decision, I was fed up being treated in ways that did not reflect my achievements, competence, and experience, especially when receiving feedback for unsuccessful job applications which were, in most cases, subsequently filled by male applicants with minimal leadership experience and a research track record not comparable to my own. I perceived the strong message from these multiple rejections that I did not fit into the higher education sector, and I recall a strong irrelevance narrative accompanying my day-to-day thoughts. I focus on gender discrimination as an institutional norm and barrier (Edwards, 2017), but I appreciate that another personal barrier might be my interdisciplinary research career and outputs, potentially confusing for selection panels because it was, until recently, quite rare.

Method

I am aware of no existing method for specific meta-synthesis of AE studies. However, numerous methods are available for evaluation and synthesis of multiple qualitative studies (Edwards & Kaimal, 2016). In this study, I examined contemporary use of AE to represent experiences of working in higher education and developed an iterative process based on former experiences of conducting qualitative synthesis reviews.

I engaged a twofold approach: I experimented with development of a method for qualitative synthesis of autoethnographic papers, and to achieve this, I sought to analyse a series of AE studies focusing on workers' experiences in higher education. The outcomes provide both a guide for conducting meta-synthesis of AE papers for researchers within and outside of higher education, and guidance for changes needed in higher education as reflected in these accounts. To achieve the goal of synthesising AE reports about experiences in higher education, I sought out published reports in peer review journals which use AE. I sought to comprehend the content of these papers as deeply as possible, undertaking a process of synthesis to ensure these collective voices contribute to improvement of standards of cultural and social accountability in higher education.

Although I have access to multiple university library databases, I chose to use the free public Google Scholar (GS) search engine. I perceived this as easy to use and accessible, which permits this method to be emulated in future research involving meta-synthesis of AE, whether by students or other scholars. I considered it is less important how many papers are included, or their perceived impact and quality, but rather the main criterion was they should deal with the issue in question: experiences in higher education. The only quality marker was that papers be published in a peer reviewed journal.

In October 2021, I searched for relevant papers in GS using the terms "autoethnography higher education" OR "university" with a date range from 2016 to 2020, with the goal to ensure such accounts reflected contemporary university experiences. I selected peer-reviewed journal papers if they included an autoethnography about individual or collective experiences of researchers, graduate students, and/or academic staff working in higher education. My goal was to find enough accounts of experiences of working in higher education to be able to make explicit a series of themes and narratives for analysis and synthesis. I perceived I would potentially find hundreds of papers which would be an unworkable number to include in my planned manual analysis, so I decided to work with the page structure in GS, whereby each result page presents ten items. I sought an external process to override my involvement in the search so that what was in the literature could emerge rather than being triaged or sought out by me in some way.

I went through the first two pages of results, reading titles and abstracts and found 13 papers that met the criteria. Thirteen papers did not quite seem enough, so I decided to keep looking through the results pages until I had at least 20 papers. I viewed this number as manageable in terms of time needed for deep reading and collation of key findings and observations. I made no attempt to search thematically, nor to identify papers with topics I found personally engaging. I used one list of papers collated from the order they were generated by the GS search (this order is reflected in the list of papers in Appendix 1).

I removed some initial papers of the original 20 because they were not technically AE. I decided on their removal based on the author's publication of a narrative about their experiences which they termed AE, but which lacked any kind of synthesis, analysis, theoretical treatment, or positioning of their narrative. Each time a paper was removed for this reason a further replacement paper using the same method as above was sourced from the GS results pages and added, so the total number of papers in the emergent list was always 20. A couple of the original 20 papers were duplicates and were replaced using the same method. The

final list consisted of 20 papers. During the deeper reading and thematic analysis there were three in the list which are deemed not to be adequately autoethnographic in their method using the previous criteria for removal. I decided not to add further papers because the analysis was by then well underway. Therefore, 17 papers were included in the final analysis (see Appendix 1).

Analysis

I searched for full text versions of the papers using the library resources at the University of New England Dixson Library. I recorded the focus of each autoethnography in a table including the author's gender, cultural, and HEI context as identified in the paper, and the explicit themes stated in the paper. I found that not all of the papers used the concept "themes," nor sought to generate themes as part of the AE, but many did. Therefore, I also developed a list of tacit themes, as they emerged during the close reading period (see Table 1, column 4). The tacit themes emerged from memos and notes I wrote about the paper during the analysis and were sometimes developed from a statement in the paper. For example, in a group authored paper, the researchers described the value in co-writing so that possible perceptions that they had betrayed their work context were minimised when discussing institutional problems (Boss, et al, 2019).

I then combined these explicit and tacit themes to create a synthesis. Similar to my prior experiences when using meta-ethnographic method (O'Callaghan et al., 2016), I translated the findings of the studies into one another (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). I read each of the papers several times and created the explicit and tacit themes by reading and re-reading each paper while creating notes and memos to prompt recall of connections between the findings of the papers. Through this process, all themes are represented in a superordinate thematic typology. I aimed to represent each of the themes of the original papers in each of the final eight superordinate themes. I used constant comparison between the themes and I frequently went back to read a paper again if I perceived my written summary notes were an inadequate memory aid.

Findings

Seventeen papers are included in the final analysis with 33 authors, wherein 29 are women, and four are men, including one trans man (see Appendix 1). Seven of the papers are sole-authored, four by women and three by men. Of the co-authored papers, the highest number of co-authors is six. More than half (N=10) of the papers are based on experiences of HEI work in the USA. The next largest group by country is the UK (N=2). Of the remaining four papers, one each is based on experiences in HEIs in Australia, Brazil, Ireland and Israel, with one which reported experiences of working in HEIs in four countries: Australia, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The final list of papers included one published in 2016, eight in 2017, three in 2018, two in 2019 and three in 2020. Most papers were written by educators in higher education with a few authored by graduate students or graduate students who also had teaching responsibilities. Most of the authors identified as marginalised, including having immigrant status (13), minority status (1), being Black or Brown (15), and/or experiencing outsider status because of gender identification (5). I did not commence with an intent to examine experiences of marginalisation in HEIs; it emerged as a function of the content in the papers.

The final list of papers appears in 15 discrete journals relating to Education (6), Higher Education (5), Qualitative Research (3), or Other (3). Two papers are published in the journal, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, and two in *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Seven of

the articles appear in journals with “race,” “culture,” “gender,” or “diversity” in the journal title. All paper titles include “autoethnography,” and nine also include “higher education.”

Superordinate Themes

Eight superordinate themes were revealed through the analysis. The AEs indicated that working life is difficult in higher education contexts because of endemic racism and sexism. Most of the papers described managing minority status in a context where individual needs and identity were not acknowledged or appreciated; instead overlooked in service of the dominant culture. The authors chose AE as a way to give power and space to their minority status.

The researchers’ accounts of interactions with staff, students, and fellow graduate students indicate that the context of higher education retains a Whiteness and male superiority that is baked into its foundations. Authors described feeling insecure, exhausted, experiencing others’ lack of awareness of their minority status and diversity as abusive, and encountering embedded normative tropes which exacted a toll on them through continual misunderstandings and problematic expectations not aligned with their capacities and expectations.

I present each of the themes below and discuss the experiences outlined in some of the papers. I link experiences outlined in the original papers to the outcomes of the analysis. The experiences of authors and their voices are intended to be enlivened through this presentation of the analysis.

Theme: There is a starting place of fear and insecurity in the care-less academy and advice to be more confident does not help

Multiple authors referred to feelings of fear and insecurity (e.g., Tsalach, 2020) and reported that managers and advisers are careless and uninformed about academic staff needs and experiences (Valentim, 2018; Warren, 2017). Although many authors represented their experiences as negative, they additionally reflected contexts in which they sought advice and the advice did not help. One example that stood out in the analysis was the advice to be more confident. Warren (2017), a mid-career tenured academic in Ireland, advised the need to consistently appear competent, coping, and productive in the higher education workplace, even while feeling distress and actually mired in personal anguish.

Authors frequently referred to stress and anxiety about their circumstances, and some reported the experience of constant anxiety. Vicary and Jones (2017) perceived that no-one they worked with had any idea of their vulnerability and uncertainty with regards precarious contract work. Inability to sleep in some cases resulted in need for sick leave and medical attention. However, many reported that when they sought help within the institution it was as if no-one cared. Unhelpful advice was sometimes received when authors encountered challenges. Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) indicated that often this advice was unsolicited and shared in a parental tone, with little or no accountability as to whether the advice assisted or promoted necessary change.

Cortes Santiago et al. (2017) reported that they were advised to be more confident when experiencing obstacles in a racist higher education context. However, they also described that for one author, a complaint was sent to her university manager from a school principal because she was perceived to be too self-confident and too professional when coming into the grade-school environment. She wrote, “it appears I had disrupted some essentialist trope of the docile, naïve, unprofessional, and caring Brown Woman TA [teaching assistant] – I had become too much, too soon” (p. 59).

Edwards (2017), a White woman, received advice from a senior male university administrator to “tone it down” when she spoke up confidently in a meeting to contribute to

discussion on an issue on which she has extensive experience. She suggested this behaviour represents an operational function of sexism. The person to whom the sexist behaviour is directed is given the message they are out of alignment with cultural and social expectations of the context, and it is their behaviour that needs to change.

Theme: Personal vulnerability is exacerbated by lack of cultural and gender awareness in higher education (White ignorance)

Multiple AE authors referred to lack of understanding and awareness from an organisational stance towards their particular challenges. This was evident in policy, behaviour, and lack of consequences for policy violators. As a result, feelings of personal vulnerability were heightened, especially around bigotry discourse (Elbelazi & Alharbi, 2019). Ai (2017) described frequent examples of lack of cultural awareness in his HEI.

Vicary and Jones (2017) indicated that while one might feel vulnerable, it can be challenging for managers to perceive and support vulnerability in their staff. For example, Ngunjiri and Hernandez (2017) described the inability of a manager to perceive that by sending hostile student feedback to one of them, the manager was performing and colluding in an act of aggression. Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) in their AE also pointed out that managers seemed to have no idea that Women of Colour (WOC) receive different, and often more negative, student evaluations than their White peers.

Ellison and Langhout (2016) described naive avoidance of racial matters in what others have termed White ignorance (Maiese, 2022). They reported that issues of racism in higher education are only addressed when White people are impacted, and they raised concerns that behaviours are interpreted with reference to the person's intent, rather than the outcomes.

Valentim (2018) expressed concern about the current dynamics and culture in higher education, and he proposed that a spotlight is needed to expose inadequacies and weakness by undertaking further research, reflection, and discussion about the nature of HEIs and the means of production.

Theme: The institution engages in oppressive silencing, at the same time silence can be used by individuals as a way to avoid risk

Multiple authors referred to experiencing silencing of their views and ideas within the institution (silencing), and others chose silence as a way to stay safe and avoid confrontation (silence). For example, in regard to silencing, Ashlee et al. (2017) described how as “womxn” of colour in higher education they felt isolated, as holding intersecting identities is the antithesis of the ivory tower, and the result is that their voices are marginalized and silenced.

Tsalach (2020) referred to her research findings whereby the “silence and fragmented stories of... marginal women is related to the missing legitimate comprehensive model to which they can tie their own life experiences. The result is segmented, noncoherent reporting” (p. 10). Incoherence is not acceptable in the rational academy. Edwards (2017) described that in many of the sexist vignettes on which she based her AE, she only noted in later reflection that she could have said something in reply to sexist remarks but instead remained silent.

Many of the AEs used collective writing as a way to ensure safety when criticising the endemic racism and sexism experienced by the authors working in higher education. However, there was also opportunity to explore values and implications in silence and silencing. One of the authors, Valentim (2018), when describing experiences of moral harassment - a term sometimes used interchangeably with workplace mobbing - suggested that in order to ensure we do not suffer in silence, and do not respond to silencing, we should bring to the surface and discuss themes and subjects that affect our lives within HEIs.

Theme: *Claims of institutional diversity are contrasted with exclusionary behaviour*

Multiple authors referred to university claims of diversity but actions within disciplines and departments that strayed far from published ideals. Valentim (2018) reflected that there is quite some distance between teaching, researching and/or writing on critical, emancipatory theories, and acting in ways that align with the values of these theories in exposing power dynamics and political systems. As Ashlee et al., (2017) described, “To be a womxn and a person of colour is to hold intersecting identities that are the antithesis of the ivory tower” (p. 101). This antithesis contrasts with claims made by many HEIs to be inclusive and welcoming.

Many of the AEs included in the analysis described experiences of being excluded from workplace events and not having the same welcome extended as they saw offered to others. Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) reported not being invited to social events for staff. Tsalach (2020) described her experiences as a member of a Jewish minority in Israel where her cultural group has low participation rates in university. She described pacing the university hallways and corridors, concerned about whether she had a place, and if she did, where was it? She concluded that people from minority backgrounds find it extremely difficult to come to the university, and if they manage it, they experience alienation and symbolic exclusion.

Theme: *Racism and sexism are endemic otherness and othering regularly occurs*

Many AE authors described how sexism and racism within universities can occur unremarked and unchecked because the bar for behaviour is set too low and the policy governing discrimination lacks consequences for those behaving in ways that exclude and/or discriminate. For example, McCoy (2018) referred to her doctoral studies experience as surviving an intellectual war zone. Her AE described how African American students repeatedly experience being confronted with a) microaggressions, b) reduced academic expectations, and c) threats to identity development. In their collaborative AE, Cortes Santiago et al. (2017) reflected the dilemma that they were expected to be grateful to have entry to the ivory tower while at the same time being unwelcome and excluded. Ashlee et al. (2017) referred to the *double bind* of racism and sexism which results in oppressing development of new ideas and knowledge.

Ellison and Langhout (2016) called out the hidden betrayal in safety discourse within higher education whereby race is only ever discussed to the extent that Whites can feel safe and comfortable.

The safety discourse in race dialogues maintains White comfort, is a symbolic form of violence enacted on people of colour, and regulates emotions and actions. Accordingly, White safety discourse forecloses understandings of race, and ultimately deeper relationships, so Whites can avoid being considered racist. (Ellison & Langhout, 2016, p. 1321)

A further explored theme in their collaborative AE related the experience whereby the intention of the perpetrator was privileged and overrode responses of those who witnessed or were a target in discriminatory events. When perpetrators are released from obligations about the impact of their behaviour by referring to their intentions as benign, victim-blaming occurs. Therefore, sexist and racist behaviours and attitudes are able to crush ambition and attainment.

Theme: *Oppression of intellectual identity promotes conformity to institutional norms*

Multiple authors indicated that their ideas, along with cultural and personal values, were absent from the institutional culture of the university, or that in order to belong, they had to bend themselves into the shape of the organisation. Ngunjiri and Hernandez (2017) stated that “bring[ing] all of who we are as women of colour to an institutional context that is permeated by cultural values – such as rugged individualism...and competitiveness rather than collaboration—represents a significant intrapersonal challenge” (p. 400). They perceived that implicit bias limits views of their capacities by others. Behaviour within the institution reflects the ubiquitous stereotypes and implicit biases about immigrants and Black people.

Multiple reports reveal how Faculty of Colour (FOC) have lower rates of promotion and tenure. Reyes et al. (2020) pointed out that these results are “associated with FOC experiencing racism, feeling isolated, receiving messages that their race-based or community-based scholarship is devalued, being overly taxed with the expectation to do service work, and teaching highly contentious (usually race-based) coursework” (p. 2). Therefore, the research, service, and teaching they do is undervalued which results in unavailability of career attainment through promotion.

Warren (2017) described his struggle to be visible while navigating academic normativity, including norms of academic practice localised in interpersonal negotiated practices and other performative demands such as auditing and metrics. In realising for the second year in a row that a program he directed had not been included in his workload calculation because of an administrative error, he was distraught. The administrative is personal.

For McCoy (2018), the oppressive institutional socialization she experienced in a doctoral program contrasted with the intellectual identity development she sought. One of the main areas of conflict and discomfort was the expectation that she use existing Western theories to understand and explain marginalisation.

As I sought to sort through the conflicting realities between developing of my unique intellectual identity and fitting into the academy, the pressure was traumatizing. Not only was my intellectual identity threatened, but I found my very sanity to be contingent upon my ability to endure and survive the oppression of institutional socialization that plagued my doctoral pursuit. (McCoy, 2018, p. 327)

In describing years of insecure university contract work, Vicary and Jones (2017) reported that they were compelled to engage in “building an identity which submits, at least publicly, to the norms of the workplace culture” (p. 4). As a White woman in higher education roles over decades, Edwards (2017) described, “I have frequently felt like a naughty child to whom the explanations of how things work need to be carefully explained” (p. 629). Rather than engaged as a critically inquiring colleague, she is perceived as ignorant and responded to condescendingly by virtue of her gender. Two Black authors, Ngunjiri and Hernandez (2017), described frequent experiences of being presumed incompetent working in HEI.

Valentim (2018) noted that it is expected that academics maintain the institutional status quo and continually reproduce and uphold expectations and norms. Reyes et al. (2020) identified the need to push back against the norms. but it is not easy.

Theme: *There is an exhausting challenge in standing out by being different, and being the only one*

Many of the accounts indicated that some of the tension and dissatisfaction in working in higher education was due to being the only Black person, or woman, in a meeting or teaching context. Some hostility about authors' differences/uniqueness came from students (e.g., Elbelazi & Alharbi, 2019; Warren-Gordon & Mayes, 2017; Wilkinson, 2020). Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) described the student feedback received as highly differentiated from the feedback received by White male professors, and the need for academic managers to understand and calibrate for this difference.

McCoy (2017) reported her experience of frequently being the only Black woman in class or in meetings. She spoke up to correct negative views of Black people which appeared in the prescribed literature, and subsequently in the class leaders' presentations. This experience was painful for her. Wilkinson (2020) stated that being viewed as young and student-like contributed to her feelings of being fraudulent and not fitting within the academy. Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) described ongoing challenges in being able to find a place of belonging while being the only African American woman on faculty in the department. Edwards (2017) described multiple occasions in which she was the only woman staff member, or one of a disproportionately few women, in the HEIs in which she worked. She indicated that noticing and calling out sexist policies and behaviour was exhausting; it would be more efficient if sexism was eradicated.

The following is part of a poem from the arts based autoethnography by Elbelazi and Alharbi (2019) included in their analysis:

All I see is "White" everywhere
That's what it looks like in my class
It is not that I only see skin colour
I want to see mine,
I would love to belong'
(p. 664)

As Brown and veiled women working in a university, the ubiquitous Whiteness inevitably invokes "othering" (Elbelazi & Alharbi, 2019). Similar to other authors, they reflect that only the dominant culture is represented.

Ai (2017) resigned himself to the need for him to change because of the different cultural context as a Chinese student studying for a higher degree in an Australian university. However, Reyes et al., (2020) described consciously trying to find a sweet spot whereby they owned and acknowledged their identities and used their recognition of the challenges they experienced to inspire graduate students of colour to aim high. They sought to be authentic and to show that they belonged so that more students of colour could see themselves as future professors.

Other authors reflected on student engagement in the classes they led. Boss et al., (2019) wrote that it was burdensome to be one of only a few female instructors of colour, and in interactions with some students realised this was the first time that students had encountered such a phenomenon. McCoy's (2018) experiences echo these:

My norm has always been either the only, or one of few, people of colour within each of my doctoral classes. This required me to develop a skill for speaking on behalf of African Americans collectively. Although I hated doing this, it was the only way I could enter the conversation. I *was* diversity, and I was called upon to represent diversity often. (p. 336)

Theme: *Institutions could be more supportive and when support is provided it helps*

Multiple AEs reflected the need for effective mentoring (e.g., Wilkinson, 2020). Many also advised experiences of having no-one to talk to about their difficulties and challenges (e.g., Cortes Santiago et al., 2017; Wilkinson, 2020). While the value of mentoring was endorsed in multiple AEs, authors also indicated that paternalistic advice-giving is not appreciated (Warren-Gordon & Mayes, 2017). Warren-Gordon and Mayes (2017) advised that the provision of appropriate mentoring provides African American academic women with a more positive experience in navigating the promotion and tenure process. Wilkinson (2020) repeatedly mentioned the need for support and advice when starting out as a lecturer and experiencing manifest and unrelenting imposter syndrome.

Hill (2018) reported benefitting from the domestic violence support service at the university where he was a graduate student. However, he also acknowledged that as a trans man, he had to work quite hard to ensure his unique circumstances were understood and validated. He wrote, that “[a] university’s implementation of critical survivor support must better understand and acknowledge survivors’ many identities and experiences” (Hill, 2018, p. 38).

Discussion

Two goals focalised this study: (1) to better understand how synthesis of multiple published AE reports provide a lens by which to perceive and interrogate the culture of higher education beyond the personal toward collective experience, and (2) to demonstrate a method for synthesising multiple AE studies on a specific topic. This review and synthesis of multiple autoethnographic papers affords deeper and wider consideration of issues raised in the context of one or more authors creating a more powerful and impactful collective voicing of experiences.

Results of this examination of 17 papers authored by 33 academic teachers and graduate students indicate that academic life can be impossibly challenging, especially for people in minority groups who do not see themselves represented within the structure and culture of the university. Ahmed (2018) proposed that when we try to transform institutions to open them to be more inclusive, this is diversity work, which is also the work we are doing when the norms of an institution are unable to be inhabited by us. Many of the AEs pointed to ways in which the HEIs in which the authors worked limited and devalued diversity while concurrently the same institutions made claims of progress with regards to inclusion.

AE holds promise as a de-colonising methodology (Pham & Gothberg, 2020). Eleven of the papers included here are co-authored, indicating that collaborative AE may be a way to safely voice collective concerns without becoming a target. Corey (1998) proposed personal writing about lived experience works against the master narrative in which powerful societal tropes are embedded. As many AEs are written from the perspective of people with less access to power within the hierarchy and who lack access to an institutional voice through which their concerns are heard, a meta-synthesis serves to amplify voices and needs, potentially with greater impact than individual AE papers.

As Ahmed advised (2018), in the context of being a woman of colour in the Academy, when you share experiences of coming up against walls within the system, it can help to keep going by becoming each other’s support system. Also, it is noted that researching through AE can be scary and painful (Wiesner, 2020). Collective or collaborative AE may serve as a way to mitigate potential distress and to buttress against descriptions of vulnerability in the narratives resulting in experiences of shame and harm.

Self-awareness on the part of minority cultural groups within HEIs is racialized (Mobley & Haywood, 2020; Ngunjiri & Hernandez, 2017). In describing the challenge of authentic leadership from the position of Black women in higher education, Ngunjiri and Hernandez (2017) wrote that they simultaneously see themselves through their own eyes as well as the dominant groups with which they interact. They described “Blackness as a primary and confrontational presence” (p. 399). Other scholars have described “icy and unwelcoming institutional climates” for minority staff (Casado Pérez, 2019, p. 170). Haynes et al., (2020) described their experiences whereby “...the academic terrain is precarious for Black women and Black queer men faculty, especially for those without tenure, who place their bodies on the line in White, hetero cis-patriarchal academic spaces” (p. 715). Casado Pérez (2019) reflected that “to succeed, the minoritized must become akin to the status quo” (p. 174). Mohr and Purdie-Vaughns (2015) described how “...in a world where one aptly timed game-changing idea can be the catalyst for promotion, being rendered invisible can severely truncate Black women’s career opportunities” (p. 395).

Throughout their AEs, authors expressed the pain and discomfort of marginalisation within predominantly White western university contexts. I am not surprised to find this, but I was not aware before completing this synthesis of the extent to which this experience of marginalization is represented in the recent AE literature. Most authors used AE as a way to reflect upon and protest their treatment in the academy. AE provided a vehicle for legitimacy of self-experience. This synthesis provided a collective voicing of grievous concerns and the need for change.

Women’s lack of participation and attainment in professional life is problematic, especially for WOC. Many of the proposed solutions are limited because of the focus on “fixing the women” (Kang & Kaplan, 2019). These approaches enact unconscious bias because they advise women to act more like men, presumably because men’s actions are normalised and valued within the institutional culture and provide the model for success. During the analysis it became apparent that some authors experienced advice to be more confident to overcome bias against them. “Confidence culture” is a term coined by Gill and Orgad (2017) to refer to the advice to women in particular to be more confident in order to achieve their professional and personal goals. They proposed that confidence is considered a key to self-achievement and social equality whereby diversity can be contemplated and engaged. They suggest this aligns with the concept of the “balanced life” that women, especially mothers, are expected to achieve by any number of effective methods depending on the source of the advice (Gill & Orgad, 2017). As Franklin (2015) described, the system of HEI functions with no behavioural bar at all because “...sexism continues to be denied a name, it is ignored as a force, and persists as a problem to be tolerated, excused and perpetuated through neglect, lack of effort and a refusal to take stronger measures to eliminate it” (Franklin, 2015, p. 30).

The results show that even while HEIs are becoming more inclusive, it is not making any material difference to these authors in their experiences of isolation and discrimination. The findings suggest the perception of inclusion is prioritised over safety in HEI. It is intended that amplification of these collective voices will contribute to improving standards of cultural and social accountability in higher education, even a few of these AE reports must compel every HEI to do more to ensure a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for all workers. Further, as McCoy’s (2018) experience reflects, where staff or graduate students represent the only person of their characteristics in a class or staff group, it is burdensome to be a spokesperson for their community by default or assumption.

The general outcomes for higher education institutions revealed in this review are challenging and complex, but straightforward supports developed within the HEI may assist. Staff who do not fit mainstream academic profiles need opportunities for additional mentoring and support. This should not be in the form of advice but rather listening and caring with the

goal of supporting *flourishing*. Durkee (2022) recommends that mentoring commence before the staff member is on board, and the mentoring should include advocating for the staff member and involve the mentor putting the person forward for promotions and awards. All staff are implicated in deficiencies of cultural awareness within institutions. Staff training is often provided, but more attention to evidence-based trainings is necessary. It is challenging to raise critical race consciousness across an institution, but it is the only way to avoid the impact of bias and the repetition of irrelevant yet deeply ingrained tropes related to the expected class, race, and gender of HEI faculty members. As Johnson et al. (2016) noted regarding organisational change, it is complex and difficult, and only possible with buy-in from every level of leadership in the organisation. Leaders must encourage those who report to them to account for their inclusivity and call out inappropriate behaviour.

Diversity rhetoric abounds in HEI, but expansion of the diversity of role holders, especially in senior positions, does not always follow (Khan, et al, 2019). Many staff who do not fit a long-held Western concept of professor have consistently demonstrated the intellectual endeavour required in HEIs through research, teaching, and scholarship, yet nonetheless experience what Settles et al (2021) describe as epistemic exclusion. Many diverse opportunities are needed to achieve success in HEIs. HEIs are tasked with highlighting and celebrating achievements of people outside accepted normative assumptions of HEI achievement to challenge embedded tropes as to what academic leaders look like. HEIs must do more to evaluate the effects of training and development programs, and only support those with evidence of producing change, to ensure that the experiences of the 33 authors in this review are not further repeated.

Limitations

The findings of this study, based on AEs located in and about higher education since 2016, reveal multiple limitations and challenges within the structural biases of the higher education sector. However, I do not claim this is comprehensive or complete; it is a review study undertaken to examine and integrate contemporary autoethnographic accounts of studying, working, and researching in higher education. It was unexpected to find that more than half (N=11) of the papers were primarily concerned with issues of race and cultural minority identity, as it was not intended at the outset to focus on any one aspect of working in higher education. The use of GS to search the literature may have impacted the process and outcomes. GS uses multiple ways to rank papers, including by numbers of citations, clicks, and downloads. This may mean certain topics are advantaged over others in ranking of the results.

As a privileged White scholar and someone who has read but is not expert in critical race theory, my scholarly background is not adequate to do justice to the thematic and lived concerns of people who are clearly excluded and treated differently as revealed in many of the papers. My experiences of exclusion on the basis of gender, while problematic, cannot be compared in terms of the long-term harms of racism, and I do not claim that I can understand or adequately empathise with all of the experiences the authors described. I was moved by the accounts and often felt overwhelmed wondering how people survived in these hostile, unwelcoming environments. I am resolved by this effect on me to work to create safe places for all staff through my leadership role.

As I allowed the themes to emerge through the analysis, I resisted *forcing* the themes and sought to document all voices, following the guidance that themes must emerge from the data and also be linked conceptually to the wider context (Williams, 2008). I felt inadequate to the demands of the task at times, perhaps due to the delicate nature of aspects of the topic.

Finally, there may be some limitations in trying to encapsulate the findings thematically. Some themes may be perceived to overlap. However, closer reading may assist

perceiving nuanced differences, for example between the fear and insecurity highlighted in the first theme, and the personal vulnerability of the second.

This study demonstrates a viable and useful process for synthesis of AE studies. Greater specificity in topic is advised for future AE syntheses. The topic “higher education” is vast, with the challenge that voices may be muffled as, although in this case all authors described marginalisation, it was difficult to refer to further intersectional dimensions with clarity. For example, a further study might focus on AE by staff without tenure and add a further dimension such as gender or race.

Appendix 1: Journal papers included in the analysis ordered by ranking in GS search

1. Ashlee, A. A., Zamora, B., & Karikari, S. N. (2017). We are woke: A collaborative critical autoethnography of three “womxn” of color graduate students in higher education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 19(1), 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v19i1.1259>
2. Edwards, J. (2017). Narrating experiences of sexism in higher education: A critical feminist autoethnography to make meaning of the past, challenge the status quo and consider the future. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(7), 621-634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1286405>
3. Ngunjiri, F. W., & Hernandez, K. A. C. (2017). Problematizing authentic leadership: A collaborative autoethnography of immigrant women of color leaders in higher education. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 19(4), 393-406. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422317728735>
4. Cortes Santiago, I., Karimi, N., & Arvelo Alicea, Z. R. (2017). Neoliberalism and higher education: A collective autoethnography of Brown Women Teaching Assistants. *Gender and Education*, 29(1), 48-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1197383>
5. Warren, S. (2017). Struggling for visibility in higher education: Caught between neoliberalism ‘out there’ and ‘in here’—an autoethnographic account. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32(2), 127-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1252062>
6. Warren-Gordon, K., & Mayes, R. D. (2017). Navigating the academy: An autoethnographic approach to examining the lived experience of African American women at predominantly White institutions of higher education. *Qualitative Report*, 22(9), 2356-2366. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2881>
7. Ellison, E. R., & Langhout, R. D. (2016). Collaboration across difference: A joint autoethnographic examination of power and Whiteness in the higher education anti-cuts movement. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19(6), 1319-1334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1150825>
8. Elbelazi, S. A., & Alharbi, L. (2019). The “exotic other”: A poetic autoethnography of two muslim teachers in higher education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26(6), 661-666. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419843943>
9. Valentim, I. V. L. (2018). Between academic pimping and moral harassment in higher education: An autoethnography in a Brazilian public university. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 16(2), 151-171. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-018-9300-y>
10. Boss, G. J., Karunaratne, N., Huang, C., Beavers, A., Pegram-Floyd, V., & Tullos, K. C. (2019). “It’s a double-edged sword”: A collaborative autoethnography of women of color higher education and student affairs administrators who teach in the college classroom. *Journal of Women and Gender in Higher Education*, 12(2), 166-185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407882.2018.1546193>

11. Ai, B. (2017). Constructing an academic identity in Australia: An autoethnographic narrative. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(6), 1095-1107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1303459>
12. Wilkinson, C. (2020). Imposter syndrome and the accidental academic: An autoethnographic account. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 25(4), 363-374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2020.1762087>
13. Tsalach, C. (2020). Lost wants? An autoethnography of class and ethnicity on the long path to higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 25(5), 722-737. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1718073>
14. Reyes, N. A. S., Carales, V. D., & Sansone, V. A. (2020). Homegrown scholars: A collaborative autoethnography on entering the professoriate, giving back, and coming home. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 14(4), 480–492. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000165>
15. Vicary, A., & Jones, K. (2017). The implications of contractual terms of employment for women and leadership: An autoethnographic study in UK higher education. *Administrative Sciences*, 7(2), 20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ADMSCI7020020>
16. Hill, R. L. (2018). Surviving domestic violence and navigating the academy: An autoethnography. *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*, 4(1), 27-41.
17. McCoy, S. Z. (2018). The intellectual war zone: An autoethnography of intellectual identity development despite oppressive institutional socialization. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11(3), 325-346. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000062>

Table 1
Summary of papers included

Author – year and gender	Summary (paraphrased from paper by Edwards)	Explicit Themes (mentioned in article text)	Tacit themes (coded by Edwards)	Cultural context (as identified by the article text)
Ai, B 2017 One male	Student from China reflected on identity construction while in Australia as doctoral student	Early fear Student supervisor relationship Finding community Thesis examination	Lack of cultural awareness in the Academy	Chinese student in an Australian University
Ashlee, Zamora, and Karikari, 2017 Three women	Autoethnographic collaboration between three womxn of colour.	To be a womxn of colour graduate student in higher education is isolating as holding intersecting identities is antithesis of the ivory tower and occupies the margins of the academy. A double bind of racism and sexism results in methodical marginalization of these voices, suffocating and shackling construction of new knowledge.	Lack of cultural awareness in the Academy Lack of gender awareness Marginalisation of difference Intersectional vulnerability	Black woman experiences within USA Higher Education
Boss, Karunaratne, Huang, Beavers,	Six Women of Colour (WOC) applied Critical Race Feminism to represent through autoethnography their	Navigating identity Social justice Additional responsibilities	Safety in writing together so that none can be found	Black woman experiences within USA higher education.

Pegram-Floyd and Tullos 2019 Six women	experiences of working in the Academy.	Context – institutional/classroom	out as betraying their work context	
Cortes Santiago, Karimi and Arvelo Alicea 2017 Three women teaching assistants	Descriptions of lived experience of teaching in higher education by three Brown teaching assistants; presenting a “collective autoethnography of an Iranian hijabi Muslim woman and two Puerto Rican women, one Catholic and one agnostic” (p. 51)	Brown woman as ethnic trope Otherness and othering Bilingual persona considered problematic – not celebrated Advised to be confident to over-ride negative perceptions The use of silence to avoid risk Dilemma of the privilege of having entry to the ivory tower yet at the same time being unwelcome	No-one to talk to Awareness of policies and procedures that exclude vulnerable students while at the same time espousing institutional level wish to be more diverse	Brown women - academics in Higher Education USA
Edwards, 2017 Woman academic	Experiences of encountering sexism as a university worker through different career stages	Womanness as problematic Dichotomy of perceived as not being enough yet needing to do enough Using silence as a reaction to blatant sexism	Not calling out sexism Ignoring sexism Sexism is endemic yet invisible	White woman academic with sector experience of higher education in four countries – with diverse role experience including senior management
Elbelazi and Alharbi, 2019 Two women - university teachers	Reported experiences as Muslim woman academics to raise awareness about the struggle to be recognised and appreciated, and to promote more inclusive environment for Muslims in educational sphere. Multiple levels of oppression and marginalization faced. Islamophobia and similar bigotry discourse encountered- rights are lacking and diminishing.	Hijabophobia Conceptualizing agency The Muslim ban Challenging diversity	Writing poetry as a way to heal after treatment in the US Higher Education system	Two Muslim women USA
Ellison and Langhout, 2016 2 women academics	Division of race, class, and gender creating challenges to solidarity and harming progress Whites who are aware that Whiteness is oppressive are race cognizant if they do not adopt a colour-blind perspective White safety discourse forecloses understandings of race, and ultimately deeper relationships, so Whites can avoid being considered racist	(1) enforcing specific language, discourse, communication, and morals; (2) defining oppression based on intentions, not outcomes; (3) issues becoming important when they directly affect Whites; (4) naïvely interpreting racial matters (i.e., White ignorance), often via not seeing within group	Some Whites in the meeting wanted to learn directly from black students, but then challenged their authority and experiences, which is common in White liberal spaces	Two White women academics at USA university

		variability or being oblivious to structural attributes for oppression; (5) defining who can use and enjoy spaces; (6) defining who can exclude; and (7) defining the form and nature of contact with “the Other”	Whites fear being called racist, and this creates multiple levels of anxiety and impairs communication Recognition of privilege is not enough	
Hill, 2018 Trans Man graduate student	Experiences of interpersonal violence from partner and need to access campus support services. Critical trans framework	Male victim of DV is not exemplified in understandings of interpersonal violence Higher education institution subjects individuals to identities - <i>constantly reproducing dominant meanings and boundaries of gender</i> A doctoral student sits in a paradox of advantage and disadvantage. For example, he refers to a meager stipend was a challenge. Being in the academy as opportunity to heal. Many of the individuals and resources that helped were connected to the HEI. The academy provided me with the opportunity to process, to reflect, to heal.	Institutional support can assist mental and physical healing from abuse	Graduate queer/trans student USA
McCoy, 2018 Woman African American PhD graduate	Experiences of an African American woman who battled 7 years of oppressive institutional socialization within a doctoral program	Endemic racism Oppressive institutional socialization contrasted with intellectual identity development Instead of being supported intellectual identity was coerced to align with the racially and ideologically homogenous culture	Misinterpretation of the author’s reality allowed former instructors to celebrate their perceived success in producing an African American scholar without ever acknowledging or examining the war zone that she had to fight through in order to succeed. Awareness of needing to tame one’s rage to “get through”	African American doctoral candidate USA
Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2017	Authentic leadership is often seen as acontextual and unproblematic—a leader merely needs to be self-aware and act in	The Intrapersonal Challenge of Being Black Presumed incompetency		Non-US born academic leaders in Higher Ed USA

Two foreign-born women of colour in leadership roles in higher education in the USA	a way that is true or consistent to their self-knowledge. Although authenticity is a relational concept, it remains uncontextualized for those whose social identities set them apart from the majority within organizations and society Both shared that their experiences in the USA were the first time they were aware of being Black	Occupying Liminal Space As Outsiders/Within		
Reyes, Carales and Sansone, 2020 Three WOC	Three scholars of colour who were from the same doctoral program conceptualized <i>giving back</i> as an act of critical agency, transformational resistance, and active engagement in reciprocity. The author/participants began their academic careers in their home communities following graduation so that they could give back	Contributing to communal well-being Doing research responsibly Connecting with students who look like them Pushing back against the norms of the academy Feeling grounded and supported	Writing and research was experienced as hard but rewarding with the added dimension that others in their community had not had the same opportunities – it added to the responsibility to strive	Three women of colour USA
Tsalach, 2020 Mizrahi woman	Multi-layered reflection on author's educational biography and her path, as a working-class Mizrahi woman, to higher education, tracing how intersection of class and ethnicity reveals itself in structures of education.	Otherness encountered by ethnic minorities in academic spaces, exposing an ongoing sense of alienation: not belonging, unease, a threatening fragility.	Mizrahi identity often writes itself from a wounded place, here located in academia where participation of Mizrahim is lower than general population	One Jewish but outsider woman in Israel
Valentim 2018 One man professor Brazilian university	Management accused author incorrectly of missing classes, being unable to be found when sought out, and being uncooperative... Concepts of moral harassment questioning relational values in Academia	Colleagues not being prepared to step in or counter bullying Feeling of danger	Moral harassment: - destructive intentions of the behaviours - consistency of provocation, harassment and maltreatment - lack of sensitivity	Professor in Brazil – man
Vicary and Jones 2017 Two women higher education UK	The AE account of a worker in higher education with ongoing contractual employment over a time period of nine years. The result of this precarious work arrangement was a feeling of not belonging. When the access route to a community of practice is blocked the person will often	HE organizations, which aim to be vibrant, forward-looking centers of learning should reconsider their current workplace culture, policies and practices Managers may not perceive workers coming back year on year as vulnerable or insecure.	Recommendations are included and this allows reflection and consideration what may be missing from the experience of insecure workers, and how they may	UK Higher Ed – two women

	find another way to re-invent their identities – conflict and exclusion.	Managers should be more aware of the symbols of inclusion, that serve to mark out temporary employees as different	come to be better valued.	
Warren, 2017 Male academic	Employing a critical autoethnographic approach, this paper explores technologies of research performance management, specifically, work to produce academics (and academic managers) as particular kinds of neoliberal subjects. The struggle to make oneself visible occurs under the gaze of academic normativity – the norms of academic practice that include both locally negotiated practices and the performative demands of auditing and metrics that characterise the neoliberal university.	Universities engage in a status economy within a neoliberal ideology The (managed) academic self Becoming unwell as a response to stress of academic life Stress as existential dislocation Costs of trying to deal with the divided self of academic life of the personal impact of the careless academy Academics are exhorted to align their work with institutional objectives overdetermined by the global political economy of higher education	Audit as pseudo event Re-prioritise from student's needs to research outputs Requests to fabricate or perform a different self to appease managerial requirements	Irish university - man
Warren-Gordon and Mayes, 2017 Two WOC	This study explores the lived experience of two African American women working at predominately White institutions of higher education. Their review of the literature found research that examines the experiences of African American women in academe is limited. Using an autoethnographic approach, they presented their experiences and how roles were navigated. When the appropriate mentoring is in place African American women have a more positive experience navigating the promotion and tenure process.	Faculty and staff impart unsolicited advice often with parenting tone, with little acknowledgement or desire to see what is actually needed. As the only African American and woman in the department the position is challenging - not only because of race and gender but also as the sole tenured associate professor in the department. There are four Anglo male full professors and one Asian male full professor - with six tenure-track faculty member all Anglo males. Excluded from social outings The challenge in <i>finding our space</i> and <i>being the only one</i>	Student evaluations can be an Achilles heel for African American women. Senior faculty and administrators must recognize that African American women are often perceived and evaluated differently than their counterparts	Two African American women in US Higher Ed
Wilkinson 2020 Woman UK higher education	An AE account of experiences of imposter syndrome, presenting the ways it manifests in teaching.	Managing classroom behaviour with adults	Lack of mentoring and support for early career academics	UK university - woman

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