



STRATHCLYDE BUSINESS SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

Bodies out of Place:

How Black women navigate consumer spaces

Tlholohelo Lekoro

Submitted for the Degree of PhD

April 2026

DECLARATION

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination, which has led to the award of a degree.

The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by the University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

Signed: Tlholohelo Lekoro

Date: 26 April 2026

Abstract:

This research investigates how Black women navigate and experience consumer spaces that continue to centre whiteness as the normative standard. Within the contemporary marketplace, often perceived as a “white space” (Anderson, 2022), their presence is frequently marked as exceptional, surveilled, and implicitly unwelcome. Such exclusionary dynamics erode feelings of belonging and self-worth, shaping how Black women perform and negotiate their consumer identities. The vulnerability of “Black bodies in white spaces” highlights the persistence of racialised structures in everyday consumption, influencing behaviour, emotion, and identity formation.

A review of existing scholarship shows that consumer spaces reproduce racial hierarchies through microaggressions, surveillance, and routine acts of exclusion (Pager, 2007; Pachankis et al., 2018). As a result, Black women engage in heightened vigilance to anticipate discrimination and navigate environments that often cast their Blackness as suspect (Winters, 2020; Anderson, 2015, 2022). This continuous psychological and embodied self-monitoring constitutes a form of emotional labour that shapes well-being, identity, and marketplace participation. Understanding these dynamics is essential for examining how racial identity, fatigue, and coping strategies intersect in consumer life.

Theoretically, the research integrates Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to explore how structural racism and cultural meaning-making co-produce marketplace experiences. Incorporating Black Feminist Theory (BFT) foregrounds the lived experiences and epistemic authority of Black women as central to understanding consumer culture. Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative Black feminist approach, drawing on in-depth interviews with Black women in Edinburgh and Glasgow to illuminate how everyday consumption is shaped by racialised power relations.

The findings demonstrate that consumer encounters are not isolated events but recursive cycles of anticipation, navigation, and reflection. The research introduces the Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle, theorising racialised consumption as an ongoing process unfolding across three interconnected stages: pre-space (anticipatory labour and strategic preparation), in-space (performing legitimacy under surveillance), and post-space (processing harm and recalibrating future strategies). This model operationalises CRT’s principle of racism’s permanence, showing how racialised encounters accumulate over time to shape identity, emotion, and future consumer practices. All those spaces are looked through, navigating identity, navigating emotions and navigating safety.

The research advances Race in the Marketplace (RIM) scholarship through two key contributions. First, it conceptualises the Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle as a temporal-spatial framework demonstrating that marketplace discrimination is cyclical rather than episodic, unfolding across anticipatory, performative, and reflective stages. Drawing on Anderson’s (2015) “white space,”

McKittrick's (2006) "space as race," and Lipsitz's (2011) "white spatial imaginary," the framework reveals consumer spaces as racialised geographies that actively produce and police racial difference. Second, it operationalises Black feminist epistemology as methodological praxis, showing how the researcher's shared positionality as a Black woman enabled conditions for authentic knowledge production, challenging extractive research traditions and offering an ethical model for studying marginalised consumers.

Acknowledgements

To every Black woman who has ever walked into a room and felt the weight of being watched, questioned, or made to feel like she did not belong, this work is for you.

To those who have navigated marketplace spaces with grace, resilience, and dignity, often in silence, your experiences are not invisible. They are valid, they are documented, and they matter.

And to all who came before us, whose stories were never told, I carry you with me.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and generosity of many people, and it is with profound gratitude that I acknowledge them here.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, **Dr Paul Hewer** and **Professor Kathy Hamilton**, whose intellectual rigour, unwavering encouragement, and thoughtful mentorship shaped this work in immeasurable ways. Your belief in the importance of this research and in me gave me the courage to keep going when the journey felt long. I could not have asked for more dedicated guides through this process.

To my **committee and academic community**, thank you for challenging me to think deeper, argue more sharply, and never settle for less than the full complexity this topic deserves.

To the **Black women who generously gave their time, their voices, and their truth** to this research, this dissertation exists because of you. You opened your lives to a conversation that is not always easy to have, and your honesty is the heartbeat of every page. I hope I have honoured your stories with the care they deserve.

To my **family and loved ones**, thank you for your patience, your love, and your faith in me, especially on the days I doubted myself. Your support has been my foundation.

To my **friends and peers** who walked alongside me, through the late nights, the breakthroughs, and the moments of uncertainty, your companionship made this road far less lonely.

And to my wider **community of Black women**, scholars, activists, and everyday warriors, your existence is resistance. This work is rooted in the belief that **Blackness, culture, history, ethnicity, and identity matter**. They have always mattered. And as long as there are stories left untold, the work continues.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background and Context of the Research.....	1
1.2. Scope of the Topic.....	4
1.3. Significance of the research	7
1.4. Research Aim and Questions	9
1.5. Overview of Dissertation Structure.....	10
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Critical Race Theory: Structural Racism	14
2.3 Theorising Whiteness: Invisibility and Normativity.....	23
2.4 Consumer Culture Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Marketplace Inequality	35
2.5 Conclusion	36
Chapter 3: Black Women Navigating Consumer Spaces	39
3.1. Introduction.....	39
3.2. Producing White Space.....	40
3.3. Conceptualising Stigma	47
3.4. Conceptualising Microaggressions	55
3.5. Identity and Consumer Culture Theory.....	62
3.6. Resistance and Consumer Agency	67
3.7. Race-Based Stress, Trauma, and Anticipation	70
3.8. Conclusion	80
Chapter 4: Methodology.....	82
4.1. Introduction.....	82
4.2. Research Philosophy	83
4.3. Research design	92
4.4. Reflexivity.....	99
4.5. Ethical considerations	102
4.6. Limitations	103

4.7. Conclusion	104
Chapter 5: Findings - Navigating Consumer Spaces Through Temporal-Spatial Consciousness	106
5.1. Introduction.....	106
5.2. Pre-Space - Anticipatory Navigation Before Entry	109
5.3. In-Space - Active Navigation Within Consumer Spaces	131
5.4. Post-Space - Reflection, Processing, and Recovery.....	159
5.5. Conclusion	184
Chapter 6: Contributions	187
6.1. Introduction.....	187
6.2. Contribution 1: The Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle - A Temporal-Spatial Framework	188
6.3. Contribution 2: Methodological Contribution - Operationalising Black Feminist Epistemology	199
6.4. Limitations and Future Directions	203
6.5. Practical Implications and Recommendations	204
6.6. Conclusion: Toward Marketplace Justice	205
References:.....	207
Appendices:	228
Appendix 1: Call for participants.....	228
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet	229
Appendix 3: Consent Form.....	234
Appendix 4: Interview Questions	235

List of tables and figures

Figure 1: The Stigma Turbine (Mirabito et al., 2016).....	49
Figure 2: Hermeneutic Circle.....	97
Figure 3: Recursive process of navigating consumer spaces	107
Figure 4: Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle.....	194
Table 1: Types of discrimination.....	56
Table 2: Types of microaggressions	60
Table 3: Introducing Racial Battle Fatigue. (Descriptions sourced through Winters (2020) and Smith et al. (2006)).....	77
Table 4: Participants.....	95

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context of the Research

This dissertation is framed around the concept of *Black bodies out of place*, a phrase that captures both geographic displacement and ontological misrecognition. Black women are not “out of place” because they do not belong materially in consumer spaces; they shop, purchase, and participate fully in economic life. Rather, they are rendered out of place because the spatial and cultural logics of these spaces are organised around whiteness as the default consumer identity. To be “out of place” thus signifies a disjuncture between embodied presence and presumed belonging. Drawing on Doreen Massey’s (1994) understanding of space as socially produced and Sara Ahmed’s (2007) phenomenology of whiteness, this research examines how consumer spaces are structured to facilitate white movement and comfort while producing friction, resistance, and scrutiny for racialised bodies.

When Black women enter predominantly white consumer spaces, their bodies become hypervisible: marked as exceptional, suspect, and in need of explanation. Their presence disrupts the assumed racial order of the space, activating surveillance practices designed to restore white spatial dominance. The notion of “bodies out of place” therefore captures both the material realities of spatial policing and the existential burden of occupying spaces that were not designed for, and do not readily accommodate, Black embodiment.

As Collins (2002) observes, “Living life as a Black woman requires wisdom because knowledge about the dynamics of intersecting oppressions has been essential to Black women’s survival” (p. 257). This wisdom manifests as hypervigilance, a cultivated awareness developed through navigating racialised and gendered hierarchies that structure everyday life, including seemingly mundane acts such as shopping. Racial consciousness rarely emerges as abstract knowledge. Instead, it often develops through visceral encounters in which racial difference becomes impossible to ignore. Winters (2020) recounts such a moment from childhood, describing the dawning realisation of being Black, different, and considered lesser, long before fully understanding the implications of that knowledge. These moments show how racism is learned through embodied experience rather than intellectual discovery and how early encounters with exclusion shape lifelong practices of self-monitoring and strategic navigation. Racism, in this sense, is not exceptional or episodic but endemic, systemic, and embedded within everyday social interactions and spatial arrangements (Banaji et al., 2021).

In Scotland, these dynamics are especially pronounced. According to the 2022 Census, there are 65,414 individuals of Black, African, Caribbean, or Black Scottish descent residing in Scotland, representing 1.2% of the overall population (Staddon Foster, 2024). This numerical rarity produces a condition of heightened visibility, in which Black women frequently find themselves as the only, or one of very few,

Black people in consumer spaces. Their presence is marked as exceptional and often implicitly unwelcome. However, contemporary Scottish racial dynamics cannot be understood without reference to the nation's historical entanglement with colonialism and slavery. Scotland's substantial involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and British imperial expansion generated immense wealth that shaped its economic development (Mullen and Newman, 2018; Finlay, 2023). These profits depended on racial hierarchies that positioned Black bodies as labour, property, and capital. While the formal structures of empire have receded, the logics that sustained them persist, rearticulated within contemporary consumer spaces.

Despite growing institutional efforts to acknowledge these histories, public recognition remains limited, and the experiences of Black women in Scotland are underexamined in both academic and public discourse. Black women in Scotland navigate intersecting forms of marginalisation, including racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and, for Muslim women, Islamophobia (Sobande and Hill, 2022). These layered oppressions shape their consumer lives in profound ways, influencing which spaces feel accessible, how they must present themselves, and what forms of vigilance are required to secure basic service. The historical construction of whiteness as civilised, respectable, and legitimate consumer subjecthood continues to surface in subtle but powerful ways: assumptions that Black shoppers lack purchasing power, surveillance practices that cast Black bodies as potential thieves, and expressions of surprise when Black women display cultural capital or economic authority. Scotland's colonial past is not merely a historical background; it is an active force shaping whose presence in consumer spaces appears natural and whose requires continual justification.

The marketplace functions as a microcosm of broader power relations, simultaneously reflecting and reproducing cultural norms, hierarchies, and inequalities (Banaji et al., 2021). Far from neutral sites of exchange, consumer spaces actively generate racialised outcomes through spatial design, service interactions, surveillance practices, and aesthetic norms that centre whiteness as unmarked and universal. Black consumers routinely encounter racial profiling, differential treatment, and heightened scrutiny (Hudson et al., 2020). These experiences are patterned rather than incidental, revealing how racism structures marketplace access and participation. As Johnson et al. (2019) argue, race remains inseparable from racism precisely because racial categories derive their meaning from systems of power that materially shape everyday life.

Marketplace exclusion operates through mechanisms that restrict access to resources, recognition, and opportunity (Saren et al., 2019). For Black women, this exclusion manifests through racial profiling in retail spaces (Pittman, 2017; Harris et al., 2005), biased customer service that fails to give attention or respect (Gunaratne et al., 2021), and limited or tokenistic representation in marketing and advertising (Saren et al., 2019). These practices do more than inconvenience; they marginalise, alienate, and

produce psychological harm. They communicate that Black bodies are suspect, Black purchasing power is questionable, and Black presence must be explained. Such treatment reinforces stereotypes rooted in centuries of constructing Blackness as inferior, dangerous, or incompatible with full citizenship (Gallego, 2021; Hobson, 2003).

Understanding these dynamics requires theoretical frameworks that capture both structure and lived experience. Critical Race Theory (CRT), intersectionality, and whiteness studies provide essential lenses for this analysis. CRT foregrounds racism as ordinary rather than aberrational, embedded within laws, institutions, and practices that claim neutrality while reproducing racial advantage (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Intersectionality demonstrates how race and gender intersect with class, sexuality, and other axes of identity to produce forms of oppression that cannot be understood in isolation (Crenshaw, 1991). Whiteness studies expose how white identity operates as an unmarked norm, conferring material and symbolic advantages while remaining largely invisible to those who benefit from it (Frankenberg, 1993). Together, these frameworks highlight how consumer spaces function as racialised spaces in which Black women perform continuous emotional, temporal, and spatial labour to participate.

It is for these analytical reasons that this dissertation centres Black women explicitly. Black women remain largely invisible in academic consumer research, receiving minimal scholarly attention (Addie et al., 2019). This is striking given the historical influence of Black consumer markets on mainstream marketing strategies. Contemporary ethnic consumer literature that focuses specifically on Black populations is scarce, and much of the existing research highlights concerning trends rather than consumer experiences. There is a pressing need for research that centres Black consumers, and particularly Black women, to understand their identities, preferences, and experiences within the marketplace (Addie et al., 2019).

Black women occupy a distinct structural position shaped by the simultaneous operation of anti-Black racism and gendered oppression. These forces do not operate independently or additively; instead, they interact to produce experiences that cannot be captured through single-axis analyses of race or gender alone. Within consumer contexts, Black women encounter a hypervisibility–invisibility paradox: they are rendered hypervisible as bodies subject to surveillance, sexualisation, and stereotyping, while simultaneously being made invisible as consumers whose needs are marginalised in product development and excluded from the narrative centre of marketing practices. Racial analysis can explain surveillance but not sexualisation; gender analysis can account for beauty norms but not racial exclusion from femininity. Only an intersectional lens captures how Black women are positioned as both excessively visible as suspect bodies and insufficiently visible as legitimate consumers.

Black women are also subject to distinctive stereotypes that are not reducible to those applied to Black men or white women. Whereas Black men are often framed through narratives of criminal threat and white women through ideals of fragile femininity, Black women are simultaneously constructed as aggressive and hypersexual. These stereotypes shape marketplace encounters in specific ways, from heightened security surveillance and sexualised remarks to being ignored as customers or mistaken for service staff. Such experiences reflect misogynoir, a form of oppression that cannot be understood as racism or sexism operating separately.

Finally, Black women navigate racialised respectability politics that differ markedly from those imposed on Black men or white women. Norms of professionalism and femininity, constructed around white womanhood, render Black women's natural hair, speech patterns, and embodied styles deviant or unprofessional. Behaviours interpreted as assertive when enacted by white women are frequently recoded as hostility or captured by the "angry Black woman" stereotype when expressed by Black women. In both consumer and professional spaces, Black women must carefully manage these intersecting expectations to minimise surveillance, sanction, and exclusion.

Centring Black women is therefore not a matter of prioritising gender over race or excluding Black men from analysis. Rather, it reflects the recognition that Black women's experiences illuminate how racism and sexism operate relationally and unevenly. Attending to their positionality exposes the limits of single-axis frameworks and demonstrates that intersectional analysis generates insights into power, inequality, and consumption that would otherwise remain obscured. These dynamics form the foundation of this dissertation. They are examined in greater depth in Chapter 3, where hypervisibility and invisibility, stereotype formation, surveillance, beauty exclusion, and racialised respectability politics are analysed in detail.

1.2. Scope of the Topic

Racism has evolved from explicit, legally sanctioned discrimination to more ambiguous forms that are less visible yet pervasive. Overt racism, involving intentional, obvious acts of exclusion such as "Whites Only" signs or explicit verbal slurs, has declined due to legal reforms and shifting social norms (Ruparelia, 2009). However, for Black people, racism persists through subtle forms: microaggressions, unconscious bias, and institutional practices that maintain racial hierarchies while denying racist intent. Unlike overt racism's clear perpetrators and victims, contemporary racism operates through "small behaviours and everyday interactions that reinforce harmful stereotypes and restrict people of colour" (Williams, 2019, p. 6). This subtlety makes racism harder to name, challenge, and prove, placing the burden on Black people to interpret ambiguous encounters and decide whether to confront potential discrimination or preserve their emotional resources.

This research examines Black women's marketplace experiences through the lens of microaggressions, exploring how these subtle acts intersect with spatial exclusion, how Blackness is navigated in predominantly white consumer spaces, and how Black women reclaim agency despite systemic delegitimisation. Understanding distinctions between related concepts clarifies this focus. Stereotypes are generalised beliefs about groups based on oversimplified or inaccurate assumptions (Fiske, 2017). Stigma involves negative attitudes attached to specific characteristics or identities (Rocha and Veloso, 2024). Discrimination refers to unfair treatment or actions based on these beliefs (Heath and Di Stasio, 2019). While these terms are often used interchangeably, their distinctions matter for analytical precision.

This dissertation centres on microaggressions, adopting Arday's (2018) definition, which positions these mechanisms as tools for maintaining white cultural dominance while harming people of colour. Arday (2018) observes: "the experience of encountering racial micro-aggressions demonstrates that overt and traditional forms of racism have now been replaced with thinly veiled racialised barbs which are interwoven into the fabric of modern society, which proclaims that we have moved beyond racism and are now operating in a post-racial era, whilst collectively residing within an egalitarian utopia" (p. 148).

Microaggressions in consumer spaces manifest through everyday interactions, behaviours, and institutional practices that subtly reinforce racial hierarchies: the security guard who follows a Black shopper while ignoring white customers, the sales assistant who asks "Can I see your receipt?" only to Black consumers, and the assumption that a Black woman cannot afford luxury goods. These "thinly veiled racialised barbs" accumulate over time, shaping Black women's sense of belonging, self-worth, and capacity to participate fully in marketplace life (Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007).

This research conceptualises navigation as a practice encompassing multiple dimensions, including physical movement, mental strategising, and emotional management. Navigation is not just about passively accepting things or making choices freely; it is a complex process that shows how Black women assert their agency in challenging market spaces. The metaphor of navigation is intentional: Black women must constantly read the surroundings, anticipate dangers, adjust their paths, and put in a lot of effort to reach destinations that others find easy to access.

Navigating spaces refers to the physical movement through shopping spaces, deciding which stores to enter, which aisles to walk down, where to position themselves in relation to products and security cameras, and when to make eye contact with staff or avoid it (Cross and Ekpo, 2024). Psychological navigation involves the mental effort of anticipating discrimination, interpreting unclear situations (Is that security guard following me because I am Black or for a legitimate reason?), deciding whether to confront microaggressions or save emotional energy, and managing the conflict between knowing they

have a right to be in a space and feeling questioned all the time. Emotional navigation includes managing feelings, suppressing anger at unfair treatment, acting friendly to counter stereotypes of Black anger, managing anxiety and hypervigilance, and processing the accumulated trauma from racial experiences.

Importantly, navigation represents both limitations and agency. Black women navigate because they must; failure to do so can lead to real consequences (being denied service, removed from a location) and psychological harm (humiliation, reduced self-worth). However, within these constraints, Black women develop clever strategies that show resilience, cultural understanding, and shared knowledge passed down through generations. Navigation, therefore, is both a burden imposed by racism and a space for Black women's creativity, resistance, and survival.

These dynamics reveal how contemporary racism operates less through explicit exclusion, 'certain groups are not allowed here', and more through coded regulation, 'everyone is welcome, but only if you conform to Eurocentric norms of appearance, behaviour, and legitimacy' (Miller and Stovall, 2019). Such practices expose how racialised expectations continue to structure inclusion and belonging in ostensibly open spaces, sustaining persistent marginalisation beneath claims of neutrality and accessibility. When this research was imagined, the aim was not simply to document instances of racism or prove that individuals or systems are racist. Rather, the intention was to examine how racism, even when unspoken and unacknowledged, continues shaping consumer spaces in subtle yet powerful ways. While overt exclusions like explicit bans or open hostility are less visible today, the legacies of discriminatory systems remain embedded in everyday practices, particularly through the unconscious biases of frontline staff who wield power over who receives service, who is surveilled, and who must prove their legitimacy.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as this research's guiding framework because it insists that racism is not limited to individual prejudice or isolated acts but is structurally embedded in institutions that claim neutrality while reproducing racial hierarchies (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). CRT directs attention to how consumer spaces, while appearing universally accessible, sustain racial inequalities through hidden mechanisms of exclusion and control. It reveals that seemingly race-neutral policies, such as "the right to refuse service to anyone" or heightened security in certain neighbourhoods, disproportionately impact Black consumers. Most critically, CRT's principle of racism's ordinariness, the idea that racism is not aberrational but endemic to social structures, frames this research's examination of how racialised encounters accumulate over time to shape identity, emotion, and future consumer practices.

1.3. Significance of the research

Race profoundly influences consumer experiences and outcomes, yet marketing scholarship has historically marginalised race-focused research. Grier et al. (2017) observed a troubling pattern at academic marketing conferences: a general absence of race-focused research and a lack of critical, intersectional perspectives in existing race-related studies. This realisation sparked the creation of the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) Research Network. The RIM framework conceptualises the marketplace broadly, beyond economic transactions to include cultural exchanges, service interactions, political power, ideology, and persuasion (Johnson et al., 2019). It recognises that marketplaces are not neutral spaces but areas where racial hierarchies and power dynamics profoundly influence experiences, opportunities, and outcomes for racialised communities.

Scholars within RIM, including Rosa-Salas (2019), Johnson et al. (2019), Pittman Claytor (2019), and Vega-Centeno (2019), have pioneered research on Black consumers, examining their experiences and developing frameworks for ethical engagement. Their work demonstrates that understanding race in marketplace contexts requires moving beyond demographic segmentation to critically analyse how structural racism shapes consumer identity, well-being, and economic participation. This research contributes to RIM scholarship by foregrounding Black women's voices, examining the temporal dimensions of racialised consumption, and applying Black feminist epistemology to transform research relationships from extraction to collaboration.

Despite RIM's contributions, significant gaps persist. According to Poole et al. (2021), marketing research has historically prioritised mainstream paradigms that overlook race and ethnicity in consumer behaviour. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) has expanded understanding of identity formation and cultural meanings attached to consumption, yet race remains undertheorised within this tradition. Davis (2018) identified only 75 scholarly articles and books on marketing and racism published between 1969 and 2017, a staggering deficit given racism's pervasive impact on marketplace experiences. There has been evidence of declining attention to Black consumers in highly ranked marketing journals since the 1970s, with most published articles approaching race superficially or in ways that run counter to how race operates in actual marketplace contexts (Poole et al., 2021).

Pittman Claytor's (2019) content analysis of prestigious journals, *Journal of Marketing* (JM), *Journal of Marketing Research* (JMR), *Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR), *Journal of Consumer Psychology* (JCP), and *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (JAMS), raises critical questions. First, how have theories of race and racism evolved, and how do contemporary manifestations of racism differ from those examined in studies from nearly half a century ago? Second, existing research paradoxically portrays Black consumers as both an untapped, desirable market segment and as facing exclusion and

inferior treatment compared to white consumers (Pittman Claytor, 2019). This contradiction reveals the failure of marketing scholarship to grapple with the complexity of structural racism.

The limited articles in top journals suffer from additional flaws: reliance on outdated or oversimplified racial categories and promotion of "hegemonic Whiteness" by making claims that assume neutrality while positioning whiteness as normal and privileged (Lewis, 2004; Pittman Claytor, 2019). This research addresses these gaps by contributing to a theoretical framework that empirically examines Black women's marketplace engagement through lenses that recognise both systemic oppression and heterogeneity within Black communities. Black people are not monolithic; differences exist based on nativity, region, mixed-race identity, class status, and other factors (Charles et al., 2015). However, it remains crucial to document how symbolic differences are racialised and deployed to define racial boundaries, shaping Black consumers' preferences and practices in diverse ways (Pittman Claytor, 2019). Advancing research on Black consumers means recognising intra-group diversity "while also acknowledging that cultural practices are instrumental in drawing racial boundaries" (Pittman Claytor, 2019, p. 159).

Contemporary racism's evolution from overt prejudice to subtle, covert phenomena rooted primarily in cultural difference requires updated analytical frameworks (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2005). Aversive racism captures this shift: individuals who exhibit aversive racism genuinely believe in racial equality and consider themselves non-prejudiced, yet harbour conflicting, often unconscious negative feelings about Black people rooted in basic psychological processes like social categorisation (Dovidio et al., 2016). These unconscious biases enable microaggressions, everyday slights that communicate hostility or dismissiveness toward people of colour (Sue et al., 2007). Black people recognise seemingly innocent questions like "Where are you REALLY from?" or "Can I see your receipt?" as microaggressions. In contrast, white people often fail to recognise the harm or underlying bias (Sue et al., 2007). Contemporary racism's insidious nature lies precisely in this subtlety, making it harder to identify, name, and challenge.

As societies become increasingly diverse, marketers must understand how race intersects with consumer behaviours, preferences, and experiences (Poole et al., 2021). Intersectionality, a concept originating in critical race and feminist theories, emphasises the interconnectedness of identity dimensions and their effects on marketplace interactions (Crenshaw, 1991). By examining Black women's experiences, this research highlights unique challenges and opportunities arising from race and gender, alongside socioeconomic status, and other factors. It challenges conventional thinking, encourages socially responsible approaches to understanding racial inequalities, and promotes the embrace of diversity and complexity within consumption studies.

In Scotland, Black people routinely navigate predominantly white consumer spaces where their Blackness visibly marks their presence, exposing them to the burden of constantly proving their value and worth (Sobande and Hill, 2022). This visibility makes them vulnerable to microaggressions that create significant barriers to equitable economic participation through both overt and subtle discrimination. Biased customer service, limited representation in product offerings, spatial arrangements that facilitate surveillance, and racial profiling reinforce power structures that marginalise Black consumers (Pittman, 2017; Crockett, 2021). However, this is not solely a narrative of victimhood. Resilience, agency, and sophisticated coping strategies emerge as crucial elements. Black women do not merely respond to discrimination; they assert their presence, challenge the status quo, create alternative consumption communities, and find moments of pleasure and affirmation even within hostile spaces. This research examines the intricate dynamics of race, discrimination, resilience, and empowerment within the marketplace, refusing to reduce Black women to victims while honestly documenting the harm they endure.

1.4. Research Aim and Questions

This research examines how Black women navigate racialised consumer spaces, exploring how spatial experiences shape their identity, emotional well-being, and safety, and the practices they develop in response.

1. **RQ1:** How do Black women negotiate and perform identity in consumer spaces of racialised consumer encounters?
2. **RQ2:** How do racialised consumer spaces shape the emotional and embodied experiences of Black women across marketplace navigation?
3. **RQ3:** What navigational and coping practices do Black women employ to preserve safety, dignity, and well-being within exclusionary consumer spaces?

Despite microaggressions' prevalence in consumer spaces, comprehensive research on Black women's specific experiences remains limited. This gap hinders understanding of how racial biases and microaggressive practices influence Black women's consumer behaviours and overall well-being. Existing studies often fail to consider the intersectionality of race and gender's intersectionality, neglecting the unique challenges and opportunities Black women face in consumer contexts. Furthermore, current research rarely theorises the temporal dimensions of racialised consumption, how discrimination is anticipated before entering spaces, managed during encounters, and processed afterwards in ways that shape future marketplace participation.

Methodologically, this research advances RIM scholarship by applying Black feminist epistemology, transforming traditional data collection into collaborative knowledge production. This methodological approach challenges extractive research relationships and centres Black women's experiential authority as valid, essential knowledge. Following Black feminist commitments to self-definition (Collins, 1989), this research centres on how Black women name their own experiences and articulate their own survival strategies. Even within oppressive structures, Black women find moments of joy, self-expression, and cultural celebration through consumption, refusing to allow racism to determine their consumer lives completely.

Empirically, this research provides the first in-depth examination of Black women's marketplace experiences in Scotland, a context where numerical rarity intensifies hypervisibility and where national narratives of egalitarianism obscure persistent racism. By centring Black women's voices and lived experiences, this research reveals how contemporary consumer spaces reproduce historical hierarchies, positioning Blackness as inferior, suspect, and requiring justification. It contributes to broader conversations on racial justice, equity, and inclusivity in consumer culture by exposing marketplace spaces as racialised, where Black women perform continuous emotional, temporal, and spatial labour to claim legitimacy, thereby revealing structural racism's persistence within the ostensibly neutral domain of everyday consumption.

1.5. Overview of Dissertation Structure

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework provides an in-depth examination of Critical Race Theory and its application to marketplace contexts, establishing the conceptual foundation for analysing systemic racism, racial dynamics, and power relations in consumer settings. It explains how CRT's core tenets, racism's ordinariness, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling, inform this research's analytical approach. Then we examine the social construction of race and whiteness, exploring how these constructs shape marketplace dynamics and maintain racial hierarchies.

Chapter 3: Literature Review investigates embodiment and spatial navigation, focusing on how Black women experience and move through white-dominated consumer spaces, the microaggressions they encounter, and the emotional labour required to navigate hostile spaces. The second addresses consumer identity and vulnerability, exploring how intersecting identities influence marketplace experiences, well-being, and access to material and symbolic resources.

Chapter 4: Methodology details the research approach, integrating hermeneutic phenomenology with Black Feminist Thought and epistemology. This combination enables exploration of participants' lived experiences while foregrounding power dynamics, intersectionality, and Black women's voices. The

chapter outlines data collection through in-depth interviews with Black women in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the analytical process of coding and interpretation, and addresses reflexivity, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations. It explains how the researcher's positionality as a Black woman researcher shaped research relationships and knowledge production.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion presents empirical findings organised around the three temporal stages of the racialised consumer navigation cycle: pre-entry preparation (anticipatory labour, strategic planning, emotional forecasting), active in-space experiences (performing legitimacy, managing surveillance, navigating microaggressions), and post-space reflection and recovery (processing harm, recalibrating strategies, cultivating resilience). Each stage examines how Black women navigate identity, emotions, safety, and dignity within consumer spaces, revealing the continuous, cyclical nature of racialised consumption rather than discrete, isolated incidents of discrimination.

Chapter 6: Conclusion synthesises key findings, articulates theoretical and practical contributions, acknowledges limitations, and proposes directions for future research on race, gender, and marketplace dynamics. It reflects on implications for marketing practice, policy interventions, and continued scholarship advancing racial justice in consumer culture.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This dissertation examines how Black women navigate consumer spaces where their presence, legitimacy, and belonging are continuously contested. Understanding these experiences requires theoretical frameworks capable of analysing power across multiple dimensions: how racial hierarchies are institutionally embedded, how whiteness operates as an invisible norm, and how race and gender intersect to produce distinct patterns of marginalisation and resistance. This chapter develops an integrated theoretical framework combining Critical Race Theory (CRT), theories of whiteness, Black feminist intersectionality, and selective engagement with Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to examine how marketplace racism operates structurally and how Black women interpret and respond to these conditions.

The framework addresses a fundamental question: *How do structural racism and intersectional identity shape the experiences of Black women in consumer spaces?* Answering this requires theories that can simultaneously analyse systemic operations of power, the specific mechanisms through which that power is exercised and maintained, and the lived realities of those navigating hostile spaces. No single theoretical tradition adequately captures this complexity. CRT reveals racism's structural persistence, but it was developed primarily through single-axis racial analysis. Whiteness studies illustrate how racial dominance is naturalised but can inadvertently re-centre white people in antiracist discourse. CCT offers insights into identity construction through consumption, but has historically operated with implicit whiteness that marginalises racially minoritised consumers.

This chapter integrates these traditions not through simple combination but through critical synthesis that addresses each framework's limitations while amplifying their collective analytical power. The integration is necessary rather than supplementary: understanding Black women's marketplace experiences requires analysing both *what* happens (structural racism), *how* it happens (mechanisms of whiteness), *to whom* specifically (intersectional positioning), and *how subjects make meaning* from these encounters (interpretive processes).

The chapter proceeds through four major sections that build toward an integrated framework. Firstly, CRT is established as the overarching critical lens, examining its foundational principles, its application to consumer research, and its epistemological commitments. This section demonstrates why CRT is essential for understanding marketplace racism as systemic rather than aberrational, as serving material interests rather than resulting from individual prejudice, and as requiring structural transformation rather than individual remediation. The next section examines how whiteness operates as the invisible structuring principle within consumer markets, establishing normative frameworks against which all

other racial identities are measured. This analysis reveals that marketplace "neutrality" is itself a racialised construction that privileges white consumers while marginalising others.

Throughout, the framework maintains productive tension between structure and agency, analysing how marketplace systems constrain Black women while simultaneously examining how Black women contest, navigate, and sometimes transform these constraints. This dialectical approach refuses both structural determinism, which positions Black women as passive victims of systems beyond their control, and liberal individualism, which celebrates consumer "agency" and "choice" while ignoring racist structures that fundamentally limit those choices. The framework recognises that Black women exercise intelligence, creativity, and strategic thinking within consumer spaces, but insists that this agency operates under constraints that white consumers do not face. Understanding marketplace racism, therefore, requires analysing both the structures that produce harm and the interpretive and practical strategies through which Black women survive, resist, and demand transformation.

The theoretical framework used here has implications beyond this specific research project. By demonstrating how CRT, whiteness theory, and intersectionality can be integrated for consumer research, it offers a model for analysing how multiple systems of domination operate simultaneously in marketplace contexts. By foregrounding Black women's experiences in the UK, it challenges the US-centrism of much critical race scholarship while demonstrating that racism operates through nationally specific mechanisms that require contextualised analysis. By centring lived experience as authoritative knowledge, it models methodological commitments to epistemic justice that consumer research has historically neglected. The framework thus contributes not only to understanding Black women's marketplace experiences but to developing more robust, justice-oriented approaches to consumer research more broadly.

Critical Race Theory is indispensable for establishing racism as structural, ordinary, and materially consequential (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Without CRT, marketplace discrimination could be misread as individual prejudice, leading to better training rather than systemic transformation. However, CRT was developed primarily through single-axis racial analysis in legal contexts. Applied alone, it cannot fully capture: (1) how gender shapes which specific stereotypes Black women face ("angry Black woman"); (2) how consumption practices serve as sites of identity construction beyond victimisation; or (3) how Black women's experiential knowledge constitutes authoritative expertise.

Consumer Culture Theory offers sophisticated frameworks for analysing identity construction, meaning making, and marketplace resistance (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2018). Without CCT, this research would miss how Black women creatively navigate constraints and construct dignified identities despite exclusionary systems. However, CCT was developed primarily through studies of white, middle-class

consumers and has historically treated race as peripheral. Its emphasis on consumer "agency" and "choice" can obscure structural constraints that render some choices unavailable or psychologically costly for racialised consumers (Varman and Vikas, 2007).

The integration operates dialectically: CRT reveals structural constraints (white spatial organisation, surveillance systems); BFT shows how these constraints operate through intersectional mechanisms (misogynoir, controlling images); CCT illuminates how Black women interpret and respond to constraints through consumption practices; and BFT again demonstrates how individual responses connect to collective resistance traditions. No single framework captures this complexity. The integration is therefore methodologically and analytically necessary, not merely theoretically eclectic.

2.2 Critical Race Theory: Structural Racism

2.2.1 Origins, Development, and Core Principles

Critical Race Theory emerged in the mid-1970s from the work of legal scholars who recognised that civil rights legislation, despite its formal achievements, had failed to produce substantive racial equality. Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, and others developed CRT to explain this persistence of racial inequality despite legal prohibitions against discrimination (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Their fundamental insight was that racism is not aberrational, the result of individual prejudice or ignorance, but rather structural, embedded in legal systems, institutional practices, and cultural norms in ways that appear normal, natural, and inevitable.

Delgado and Stefancic (2017) describe CRT as "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (p. 3). This definition highlights CRT's dual commitment: it is simultaneously an analytical framework for understanding how racism operates and a political project oriented toward transformation. CRT scholars reject the possibility of neutral, objective scholarship about race, arguing instead that all research either challenges or reproduces racial hierarchies. This explicitly normative stance distinguishes CRT from conventional social science approaches that claim value neutrality.

While CRT includes diverse perspectives and ongoing debates, several foundational principles structure the approach. First, racism is ordinary rather than aberrational. CRT positions racism as deeply embedded in social structures, legal frameworks, institutional practices, and cultural common sense rather than as exceptional acts by prejudiced individuals (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). This ordinariness makes racism simultaneously pervasive and difficult to remedy, because what appears normal requires no justification and escapes scrutiny as problematic. In consumer contexts, this principle directs attention away from exceptional incidents of discriminatory service toward examining

how routine marketplace practices, product development, marketing strategies, retail location decisions, and service protocols systematically privilege white consumers while marginalising Black consumers.

Second, race is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. CRT scholars argue that racial categories are human creations, produced through historical processes (colonialism, slavery, immigration law, scientific racism) that classify people to justify unequal treatment (Omi and Winant, 2020). Race lacks a biological basis; there is more genetic variation within racial groups than between them (Witherspoon et al., 2007). However, race has a profound social reality, shaping life chances, resource distribution, and embodied experience. Understanding race as socially constructed reveals that racial hierarchies are political arrangements that could be organised otherwise, opening conceptual space for transformation while acknowledging the material consequences of racial classification.

Thirdly, differential racialisation means that racial groups are constructed differently across historical moments. The stereotypes, legal restrictions, and cultural narratives applied to Black people differ from those applied to Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, or Middle Eastern people, and these constructions shift historically as dominant groups' interests change (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). In consumer research, this principle suggests that marketplace racism operates through group-specific mechanisms that require contextual analysis rather than universal models.

Fourthly, anti-essentialism recognises that no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity. People's identities are multifaceted, shaped by race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, ability, and other factors that interact in complex ways (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). This principle, closely related to intersectionality, challenges both racist essentialism (all Black people are the same) and anti-racist essentialism (there is one authentic Black experience). For analysing Black women's consumer experiences, anti-essentialism demands attention to how multiple identity dimensions shape marketplace encounters in ways irreducible to race alone.

Finally, marginalised voices provide unique perspectives on how power operates. CRT's epistemological commitment to "voice" and "counter-storytelling" positions those experiencing oppression as uniquely qualified to interpret their own realities (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Dominant narratives about race, typically produced by white scholars and institutions, systematically misrepresent or marginalise minoritised experiences. Counter-storytelling challenges these narratives by centring experiential knowledge of those targeted by racism, revealing aspects of racial reality invisible from dominant positions. This epistemological stance has profound implications for research methodology, as Section 2.4 develops further.

These principles constitute CRT's conceptual core, yet their application requires careful attention to context. CRT was developed by analysing US legal institutions and racial formations shaped by slavery's legacies, Jim Crow segregation, and civil rights struggles. Applying CRT to UK contexts or to consumer markets rather than legal systems requires theoretical translation that preserves core insights while adapting to different institutional arrangements and historical trajectories. The next section addresses these challenges directly.

2.2.3 CRT in Consumer Research: A Developing Application

Despite CRT's influence across disciplines such as law, education, sociology, ethnic studies, and political science, its integration into marketing and consumer research remains limited. This gap is striking given marketing's powerful role in constructing racial meaning through advertising, branding, product development, and consumption norms. Consumer research has historically treated race as a demographic variable for market segmentation rather than as a structural condition shaping all aspects of consumption.

The limited application of CRT to consumer research reflects broader patterns in the field. Grier et al. (2024) document how consumer research long marginalised race, treating it as a peripheral concern rather than a fundamental organising principle. Recent scholarship has begun addressing this theoretical deficit. Poole et al. (2021) provide foundational work operationalising CRT in marketing contexts, arguing that the field lacks "a cohesive critical perspective that addresses issues of power, privilege, and oppression within existing marketing strategies, as well as a framework that promotes inclusive, fair, and just marketplaces" (p. 127). Their research demonstrates how ostensibly race-neutral marketing practices, algorithmic targeting, retail site selection, advertising imagery, and product naming systematically reproduce racial hierarchies. They identify three mechanisms through which marketplace racism operates: exclusion (denying access), exploitation (extracting value while providing minimal benefit), and appropriation (commodifying Black culture while marginalising Black people).

Rosa-Salas and Sobande (2022) extend this critique by examining how marketing scholarship systematically marginalises Black feminist epistemologies. They reveal that concepts like intersectionality are frequently co-opted and diluted when adopted by mainstream marketing journals, which treat them as supplementary diversity considerations rather than as fundamental critiques of how knowledge is produced and validated. This epistemic marginalisation mirrors the structural racism CRT exposes: decisions about whose knowledge counts as legitimate theory versus whose experiences are relegated to "special topics" reflect and reproduce racial hierarchies within academia itself.

Grier et al.'s (2024) comprehensive review of race in consumer research provides crucial context for understanding both CRT's limited application in the field and the broader trajectory of racial

scholarship. Tracing the evolution from early demographic approaches that treated race as a simple segmentation variable to contemporary critical frameworks, they document how consumer research has slowly and unevenly moved toward theoretically sophisticated analyses of racism's structural operations. Their review identifies persistent gaps that justify this dissertation's approach: limited research outside US contexts despite racism's global operations; insufficient intersectional analyses examining race *and* gender together; undertheorisation of spatial and temporal dimensions of racialised consumption; and minimal engagement with Black feminist epistemologies that could reorient the field's knowledge production practices.

Significantly, Grier et al. (2024) acknowledge that, while the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) research stream has productively documented the prevalence and patterns of marketplace discrimination, the field requires more qualitative investigation into how consumers experience and make meaning of discrimination, not only *that* it occurs. This call for interpretive, phenomenologically oriented research validates this dissertation's methodological commitments (Chapter 4) while positioning its theoretical integration of CRT, whiteness theory, and intersectionality as addressing the conceptual fragmentation Grier et al. identify in existing scholarship.

Johnson et al. (2019) apply CRT to analyse how whiteness functions in marketing history and practice. They demonstrate that twentieth-century marketing's "default consumer" was implicitly white, with "ethnic markets" treated as supplementary. This whiteness was not incidental but constitutive, marketing knowledge developed by studying white consumers, marketing education trained predominantly white practitioners, and marketing organisations excluded people of colour from decision-making roles. Contemporary marketing claims colour-blindness while reproducing historical patterns through path dependency, in which past exclusions shape current practices.

Crockett (2017) employs CRT concepts to examine how Black consumers navigate marketplace stigma, though her framework could be further developed through more explicit engagement with CRT. Burton (2009) and Williams et al. (2001) document marketplace discrimination through frameworks compatible with CRT, even when they do not explicitly invoke it. This growing body of work demonstrates the analytical value of CRT for consumer research, while also revealing the extent of work that remains.

2.2.4 CRT's Epistemological Commitments: Counter-Storytelling and Voice

CRT makes distinctive epistemological claims about how knowledge is produced and whose perspectives count as authoritative. These claims directly challenge the dominant positivist research paradigms in consumer research, which position researchers as neutral observers producing objective knowledge about consumer behaviour. CRT insists that knowledge is always situated, produced from

particular social locations that shape what researchers can see and how they interpret it (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

The concept of "voice" centres experiential knowledge of those targeted by oppression. CRT scholars argue that marginalised communities develop sophisticated understandings of how power operates precisely because their survival depends on accurately reading power's dynamics. W.E.B. Du Bois's (1903) concept of "double consciousness", seeing oneself both through one's own eyes and through the hostile gaze of dominant society, describes the epistemic advantage of marginalised positioning. Black people must understand both their own realities and how white society misperceives them, while white people need not reciprocally understand Black perspectives. This asymmetry means marginalised groups possess more comprehensive knowledge of social reality than dominant groups, whose privilege shields them from recognising their own advantage.

Counter-storytelling emerges from this epistemological stance. Dominant narratives about race, typically produced by white scholars and institutions, systematically misrepresent minoritised experiences (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002; Hauber-Özer et al., 2021). These narratives claim objectivity while reflecting dominant perspectives: they treat white experience as universal, frame racism as exceptional, and position racial justice demands as "special interests" rather than as claims to basic human dignity. Counter-storytelling challenges these narratives by foregrounding perspectives of those experiencing racism, revealing aspects of racial reality that dominant accounts obscure or deny.

Counter-storytelling serves multiple functions in CRT scholarship. First, it challenges dominant narratives' claims to objectivity by revealing their particularity; they reflect white perspectives rather than universal truth. Second, it provides psychological sustenance for marginalised communities by validating experiences that the dominant society denies or minimises. Third, it builds community among those who share experiences of oppression, fostering solidarity through recognition. Fourth, it offers alternative conceptual frameworks for understanding social reality, expanding imaginative possibilities for transformation.

For this dissertation, CRT's epistemological commitments shape methodological choices detailed in Chapter 4. Centring Black women's accounts of marketplace experiences rather than treating them as "data" requiring external interpretation follows from CRT's insistence that experiential knowledge is authoritative. Analysing how Black women make sense of discrimination rather than imposing researcher-defined categories respects Black women's interpretive capacity. Presenting findings through extended narrative accounts alongside analytical commentary creates space for counter-storytelling within academic discourse. These methodological implications demonstrate how theoretical commitments translate into research practice.

2.2.5 Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) concept of intersectionality fundamentally transformed scholarly approaches to analysing identity and oppression. Developing this framework through examination of legal cases where courts failed to recognise discrimination against Black women, Crenshaw demonstrated that single-axis frameworks, analysing race alone or gender alone, systematically marginalise multiply subordinated subjects. Her critical insight revealed that Black women's experiences cannot be understood by examining racism plus sexism as separate, additive oppressions. Rather, race and gender are mutually constitutive; they shape and transform each other, producing distinct experiences irreducible to single-axis analysis.

Crenshaw's framework emerged from her disillusionment with both feminist and anti-racist movements, which often marginalised the experiences of women of colour. By emphasising the interconnectedness of racism and sexism, particularly in Black women's encounters with the American legal system, she exposed the limitations of movement organising and policy-making that failed to account for multiply marginalised identities (Rosa-Salas and Sobande, 2022). 30 years later, Kimberlé Crenshaw says during an interview:

“Intersectionality is simply about how certain aspects of who you are will increase your access to the good things or your exposure to the dreadful things in life. Like many other social-justice ideas, it stands because it resonates with people’s lives, but because it resonates with people’s lives, it is under attack.”

Since its inception, intersectionality has evolved to take in broader understandings of how various social categories, race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and others, intersect and compound to create complex forms of privilege and oppression. It posits that every person in society occupies a particular position at the intersection of various social identities. These identities are neither separate nor independent but intersect and interact in complex ways to shape experiences of advantage and disadvantage. A Black woman, for instance, may experience forms of discrimination and marginalisation qualitatively different from those encountered by white women or Black men, as her positionality emerges from the specific confluence of race and gender.

King (1988) introduced the term "multiple jeopardies" to describe how different social identities intersect to create unique experiences of marginalisation, while Bristor and Fischer (1995) employed "simultaneous oppressions" to capture similar dynamics. Critically, the term "multiple" signifies not merely the presence of various simultaneous oppressions but emphasises their compounding relationships. These oppressions interact multiplicatively rather than additively, akin to racism multiplied by sexism multiplied by classism (King, 1988). As King (1988) articulates: “In the interactive model, the relative significance of race, sex, or class in determining the conditions of Black women's

lives is neither fixed nor absolute but, rather, is dependent on the sociohistorical context and the social phenomenon under consideration. These interactions also produce what to some appears a seemingly confounding set of social roles and political attitudes among Black women” (p. 49).

The concept of multiple jeopardy provides a critical corrective to frameworks that treat gender and race as separate, independent forms of oppression. Rooted in intersectional theory, multiple jeopardy posits that the combined effects of various social categorisations, race, gender, class, sexuality, compound and intensify experiences of discrimination and marginalisation for individuals occupying multiple marginalised identities. This concept challenges reductionist approaches to social justice that fail to capture the complexities of lived experiences.

When gender and race are viewed as unrelated and isolated categories, the unique experiences of Black women become invisible. Such frameworks neglect the specific ways these axes of identity interact and shape each other, leading to the erasure of Black women's realities. Multiple jeopardy emphasises the necessity of an intersectional approach: for Black women, experiences are not merely a sum of race-based and gender-based oppressions but emerge from their unique and often more severe intersection. In marketplace settings, Black women may face combinations of racial stereotyping, gender-based discrimination, and additional biases related to socioeconomic status or other identity markers, creating compound disadvantages that shape their embodied experiences in consumer spaces.

Marketing systems, as socially constructed and economically driven institutions, do not uniformly racialise consumers. This process becomes more complex when viewed through an intersectional lens, revealing how marketing both responds to and influences multi-layered consumer identities. Intersectionality challenges simplistic identity categories by demonstrating that consumers hold multiple social positions simultaneously. A Black woman consumer's experiences are shaped by the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, faith, class, and other identity factors, creating distinct positionalities within marketplace systems (Britannica, 2022).

However, significant tensions emerge when marketing operationalises identity within consumer research. Intersectionality emphasises that lived experience cannot be reduced to single-axis identity categories (McCall, 2005). According to Poole et al. (2021), certain intersections, especially those involving whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality, provide compounded competitive benefits through preferential treatment, aspirational brand positioning, and perceived customer legitimacy. Conversely, for multiply marginalised consumers, intersectionality reveals that navigating the marketplace requires managing compounded barriers rather than merely additive disadvantages (Corus and Saatcioglu, 2015).

A Black, low-income, immigrant woman does not simply face racism plus classism plus xenophobia plus sexism; rather, she encounters a unique configuration of marketplace exclusion that cannot be effectively addressed by tackling each axis of oppression independently. This insight poses significant challenges for consumer research: if intersectional identities produce qualitatively distinct marketplace experiences, then research methodologies that treat race, class, and gender as separate variables fundamentally misrepresent the phenomenon under investigation.

The understanding of intersectionality in marketing theory continues to evolve. Historical alignment exists between intersectionality theory and works in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), critical theory, and Transformative Consumer Research (Steinfeld et al., 2019; Tadajewski et al., 2014; Aya Pastrana et al., 2022; Rosa-Salas and Sobande, 2022). These studies made important contributions by emphasising the interaction of consumers' identity categories and raising awareness of the need for perspectives from multiply marginalised consumer groups. Marketing scholars continue building on this foundation, enriching the understanding of consumers' navigation and experience of oppression (Blocker et al., 2013; Steinfeld et al., 2019), vulnerabilities (Hill and Sharma, 2020; Yap et al., 2021; Shi et al., 2017), and discriminatory practices (Yinger, 1998; Grier et al., 2021).

For intersectionality to be theorised and applied meaningfully in marketing, understanding its connection to social justice is essential. Intersectionality draws attention to systemic oppressions that impact knowledge production and hinder marginalised people's contributions to it (Rosa-Salas and Sobande, 2022). Roland (2018) explains that intersectionality supports social justice by exposing unequal power relations produced by interconnected structural oppressions. It emphasises how power operates through various identifying traits and their intersections, resulting in inequitable experiences and outcomes for racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups (Steinfeld et al., 2019).

Rosa-Salas and Sobande (2022) extend this understanding, noting that intersectionality encompasses more than gender, sex, and class; it reflects entanglements of knowledge production, the politics of representation, and the marketisation of social justice within marketing studies. This broader conceptualisation proves particularly relevant for examining how marketplace systems simultaneously exploit and erase the complexity of intersectional consumers.

2.2.5.1. Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory in Consumer Research

According to Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars, race is a social construct without a biological foundation. A central assumption of CRT is that racism and differential racial outcomes result not solely from implicit or purposeful individual prejudices but from complex, dynamic, and frequently subtle social and institutional dynamics (Gillborn, 2015). Crenshaw (2011) identifies intersectionality as capturing the multiple ways privilege and oppression are experienced differently because of converging social categories. Poole et al. (2020) elaborate that intersectionality "enables CRT scholars to address

how race and racism affect and are affected by other forms of structural oppression, including (but not limited to) sexism, classism, ableism, and homophobia" (p. 7). This approach acknowledges the complexity and ever-changing dynamics of race while capturing its fluid nature.

Steinfeld et al. (2019) highlight that identity is formed through both individual experiences and interactions with others. While consumers shape their own identities through their choices of spaces, these identities are also strengthened and confirmed through interactions with other consumers in the marketplace. This underscores that consumers' experiences of identity are both personal and subjective; even when consumers share certain identity markers, their encounters remain distinct and individual. The intricacy of intersectionality reveals that identity is influenced not only by personal choices but also by external factors. As an analytical framework, intersectionality demonstrates how institutions and marketplace systems may magnify oppression rather than privilege when identity categories overlap. What proves problematic are not the categories themselves but the systems that reproduce and reflect structural inequalities such as sexism, racism, and heterosexism (Steinfeld et al., 2019).

This dissertation focuses on intersectionality to enhance understanding of how race and racism are influenced and shaped by social structures and market spaces. Racial discrimination may intersect with sexism, resulting in unique experiences for women of colour who face barriers in obtaining leadership positions due to both race and gender. These examples illustrate how race and racism manifest differently based on individuals' intersecting identities and specific social contexts, demonstrating how various forms of oppression lead to distinct experiences of discrimination, marginalisation, and privilege.

Intersectionality as an analytical framework allows researchers to examine how power relations embedded in social identities shape both marketplace access and navigational strategies (Roland, 2018). However, adoption of this framework in consumer research remains limited, frequently invoked to acknowledge identity complexity without fundamentally altering research design or challenging marketers' segmentation logics. Critical questions emerge: Can intersectionality be meaningfully operationalised within capitalist marketing systems that rely on categorisation and segmentation? Or does its incorporation risk domesticating a radical analytical tool originally intended to expose interlocking oppressions? Understanding how intersectional consumers navigate marketing systems that both exploit and erase their complexity remains an urgent empirical and theoretical challenge.

Steinfeld et al. (2019) argue that intersectionality theory can be enhanced by moving beyond a narrow focus on identity markers toward attention to power structures and the interplay of multiple oppressions. Power structures refer to the distribution and exercise of power in society and how this affects diverse groups. Intersectional oppressions refer to how different forms of oppression intersect and interact to create unique experiences of marginalisation and exclusion. By including assessments of power

structures and intersectional oppressions, scholars can gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of sources of oppression and inequality in society and the marketplace.

The marketplace frequently treats intersectional identities as temporary acknowledgements during specific observances, such as Black History Month and Pride Month, when heightened focus on supporting diverse identities occurs (Banet-Weiser and Glatt, 2023). However, these identities are not temporary attributes people can discard once designated months conclude; they constitute integral aspects of daily lived experience and warrant continuous representation. While highlighting the importance of these identities during certain periods is commendable, businesses must recognise their year-round significance. Consistently and meaningfully embracing intersectionality demonstrates a genuine commitment to connecting with consumers and fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty, reflecting a dedication to inclusivity and understanding diverse consumer experiences.

Current marketing techniques often feature representation, yet many represented individuals remain outside the ethnic minority community. This reality resonates with Crenshaw's observation about intersectionality being "under attack" precisely because it exposes structural inequalities. To fully understand underrepresentation and inequality, grasping intricately connected social structures, gender and racial hierarchies, patriarchy, sexism, and heteronormativity proves essential. Businesses should not integrate intersectional frameworks into communications as trends, but rather as valuable perspectives that align brands with authentic values (Hautéa, 2021).

Examining the nuances of various identities and perspectives in depth remains necessary for intersectionality. Addressing intersectionality cannot occur through one-size-fits-all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Moving leaders and the marketplace in productive directions benefits the leaders themselves, the communities they serve, and their organisations (Hautéa, 2021). In marketplace contexts, examining how different social identities overlap and interact enables addressing the underlying causes of systemic disadvantages and working toward more inclusive and equitable consumer spaces. This approach facilitates thorough analysis of how race, gender, class, and other intersecting identities impact consumers' marketplace experiences while illuminating the adverse consequences of stigma and discrimination that contribute to mental trauma experienced by Black consumers.

2.3 Theorising Whiteness: Invisibility and Normativity

Race and whiteness are integral to understanding how power functions within social, cultural, and economic spheres. This section introduces the theoretical foundations necessary for analysing how these constructs shape consumer experiences, particularly for Black women, in contemporary marketplaces. Instead of viewing race as a biological or fixed category, this chapter highlights its sociocultural

construction and examines how these constructions affect access, representation, and participation in consumer spaces. By emphasising the historical and structural dimensions of race, this section situates consumer experiences within broader systems of racial meaning-making.

Building on the principles established by CRT, this section expands the theoretical framework by critically examining race, specifically the construction and operation of whiteness within consumer spaces. While CRT illustrates that racism is structural, systemic, and ordinary, its full analytical potential becomes clearer when considered alongside scholarship on racial formation and whiteness. These bodies of work demonstrate how race is continuously produced and reproduced through social, cultural, and institutional practices, and how whiteness serves as an invisible, normative standard against which all other racial identities are measured.

This section highlights how the marketplace simultaneously reinforces and contests racial hierarchies. While consumer spaces often perpetuate structural racism through exclusionary practices, representational gaps, and cultural devaluation, they also provide venues for resistance, identity repair, and counter-narratives that challenge the dominance of whiteness. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing a nuanced analysis of Black women's consumer experiences and forms of agency. In doing so, this chapter lays the groundwork for examining how race and whiteness operate within a broader context shaped by histories of colonialism, institutional discrimination, and cultural norms, elements that continue to influence marketplace interactions today (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Pager and Shepherd, 2008).

2.3.1 Whiteness as Unmarked Category

The term "Whiteness" refers to the social and economic advantages that come with being white in a society that values whiteness over other races (Francis and Robertson, 2021). White scholars, who are typically trained in Euro-American research traditions, may be reluctant to acknowledge their investment in whiteness and may avoid being perceived as racist (Cabrera et al., 2016; Lipsitz, 1995; Burton, 2009a; Burton, 2009b). This reluctance to acknowledge whiteness can perpetuate systemic racism and hinder progress towards racial equality.

According to Davis, (2017), "as a counterpoint to CRT – which emphasises race and racialisation – whiteness theory was advanced by white scholars in the 1990s to maintain a white European orientation concerning research concerning race issues" (p. 139), this means that Whiteness theory recognises the centrality of white interests and dominion in society and how it has been organised to reproduce and reinforce white perspectives as customary, universal, fair, and reasonable (DiAngelo, 2018). The institutionalised aspects of whiteness are accompanied by a deeply internalised sense of superiority and entitlement, which can lead to a fear reaction when challenged or threatened. This fear reaction can

manifest in aggressive actions and policies to control those deemed inferior, perpetuating systemic racism (Davis, 2017).

If Critical Race Theory reveals that racism is structural, theories of whiteness analyse the specific mechanisms through which racial dominance is organised, maintained, and naturalised. Whiteness functions as an unmarked norm, the invisible standard against which all other racial identities are measured, compared, and found lacking. Understanding whiteness as a system of power rather than merely an identity category is essential for analysing how consumer spaces become racialised.

Richard Dyer's (1997) observation that "white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular" (p. 44) captures the peculiar power of whiteness. Unlike Blackness, which is hypervisible and marked as different, whiteness presents itself as neutral, universal, and simply human. White people are individuals; Black people are representatives of their race. White culture is just culture; Black culture is ethnically different. This asymmetry means whiteness escapes scrutiny precisely through its normativity, by appearing as no position at all rather than as a powerful position requiring examination.

Frankenberg (1993) argues that whiteness is simultaneously "a location of structural advantage, a standpoint from which to see selves, others, and national and global events, and a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (p. 1). As a location, whiteness positions people within hierarchies, conferring unearned advantages. From a standpoint, whiteness shapes perception in ways that normalise white experience while rendering other perspectives partial or biased. As a cultural practice, whiteness operates through norms presented as universal rather than as particular white ways of being. All three dimensions are essential for analysing consumer markets.

2.3.2 Whiteness in Consumer Culture

Consumer markets operationalise whiteness as the default standard by positioning people of colour as distinct from the "normal" consumer (Johnson et al., 2019). Whiteness serves as the unmarked consumer identity, shaping how products, services, and retail spaces implicitly define notions of belonging (Burton, 2009). Market segmentation practices, while ostensibly designed to reach diverse communities, can inadvertently perpetuate this dynamic. When demographic research categorises consumers by race and ethnicity (Cleveland et al., 2011), it may identify behavioural patterns but also reinforces racial differences by treating non-white identities as "other." Targeted campaigns aimed at racial or ethnic groups risk reducing these communities to stereotypes, simultaneously reflecting and reproducing racial divisions (Rosa-Salas, 2019).

For example, advertising campaigns aimed at Black consumers often rely on narrow or stereotypical portrayals, such as associating Blackness solely with athleticism, music, or urban lifestyles, rather than recognising the full diversity and complexity of Black communities (Crockett, 2008; Thomas et al., 2023). This reductive approach not only limits authentic representation but also signals to consumers that their identities are being commodified rather than genuinely understood and appreciated. Such practices contribute to a cycle of invisibility and hypervisibility: Black consumers are either excluded altogether from mainstream campaigns or highlighted only in ways that conform to existing stereotypes. Thus, even well-intentioned segmentation strategies can sustain the social hierarchies they purport to transcend, embedding racial inequality within ostensibly race-neutral market practices.

The beauty industry provides a particularly illustrative example of how whiteness operates as the normative standard in consumer markets. Historically, beauty standards have primarily centred on white features, including fair skin, straight hair, a slim or petite body, and specific facial attributes, such as a particular type of nose (Mady et al., 2022). Lukate (2022) strengthens this argument: “Who/what is desirable is, however, often defined by hegemonically determined standards of beauty that normalise Whiteness and position afro-textured hair, and, by extension, Black women outside of what is deemed beautiful by mainstream society” (p.110). This ideal, rooted in histories of white colonisation and European expansion, positioned whiteness as synonymous with power and privilege (Davis, 2017).

Moreover, Black people were portrayed in a negative light, based on derogatory stereotypes. Davis (2018) stated that “Blacks were often caricatured based on derisive stereotypes and often presented in servile, ridiculous or dehumanised portrayals in advertisements, on product packaging and common household goods” (p. 147). One infamous example is the exploitation of Sarah Baartman in South Africa. Her distinctive 'African' features were put on public display, and her body was commodified, with white men paying money to view her (Mothoagae, 2016). This dehumanising and objectifying treatment of people based on their racial features demonstrates the deep-seated racism and discrimination prevalent in various historical contexts (Mothoagae, 2016).

Contemporary advertising perpetuates colourism by predominantly featuring light-skinned models, codifying proximity to whiteness as the beauty standard (Mady et al., 2022). These historical hierarchies shape current marketing practices, restricting non-white representation and entrenching whiteness as normative. Black women experience this exclusion acutely in beauty markets: brands systematically fail to develop products that address their specific hair and skincare needs (Ndichu and Upadhyaya, 2018), while marketing campaigns omit Black women entirely, signalling their exclusion from the intended consumer base (Davis, 2017). This invisibility is structural, not incidental, revealing how white beauty ideals dominate market practices and construct racialised consumer identities. Product

categorisation reinforces this exclusion by framing "ethnic" products, haircare, or skincare for Black consumers as niche or speciality items, thereby positioning whiteness as the unmarked default.

"White solipsism," a concept describing how unconscious racial assumptions among white people marginalise minorities (Garcia and Baack, 2022), operates powerfully in consumer spaces. Stemming from racial obliviousness, it prevents white people from recognising perspectives beyond their own racial experience. In consumer markets, white solipsism manifests through products, advertisements, and retail experiences designed exclusively for a presumed white audience, rendering Black and minority consumers invisible or aberrant. This configuration determines not only whose needs merit attention but also how minority consumers are perceived and treated within marketplace interactions.

Similarly, "othering" occurs through advertising that deploys stereotypes, tokenistic diversity gestures, or exoticises minority cultures, reducing consumers to caricatures rather than acknowledging their complexity (Jensen, 2011). When brands do include Black consumers, representation often follows predictable tropes, the "strong Black woman," the hypersexualised body, or the "urban" aesthetic, flattening diverse experiences into consumable narratives that reinforce rather than challenge racial hierarchies (Davis, 2017). This superficial inclusion, sometimes termed "diversity washing," extracts cultural capital from Black communities while maintaining structural exclusion, allowing brands to signal progressiveness without substantively addressing discriminatory practices or power imbalances within their operations.

For Black women, consumer identity is negotiated in relation to this unspoken standard, whether through code-switching in dressing and consumption choices or by actively investing in brands that affirm cultural pride. This dual positioning affects how Black women navigate consumer spaces, shaping both their purchasing experiences and their sense of belonging in the marketplace. While there has been some progress in including ethnic minorities in beauty standards, the influence of the whiteness benchmark persists, potentially diminishing the appreciation of diverse cultural appearances (Baboolall et al., 2022).

Baboolall et al. (2022) shed light on the dynamics that explain how, despite advancements, the concept of beauty in the marketplace still often leans heavily on Western ideals rooted in whiteness. The influence of the whiteness benchmark persists in the marketplace, inadvertently downplaying the beauty of diverse backgrounds and shaping not only the marketing and promotion of beauty products but also consumers' experiences (Madan et al., 2018). By privileging whiteness as the normative standard and framing non-white consumers through stereotypical lenses, marketing not only reflects but actively reproduces racial hierarchies in everyday consumer spaces.

Applying whiteness theory to British contexts requires attention to how class stratifies whiteness in ways that complicate simple white-Black binaries. British whiteness is internally hierarchical, with working-class whiteness positioned differently than middle-class and upper-class whiteness (Bonnett, 2002). This internal stratification does not protect Black people from racism; working-class white people can and do perpetrate racism, but it means whiteness operates through more complex mechanisms than in US contexts where class is less explicitly acknowledged.

British class hierarchies create situations where white working-class consumers may face marketplace exclusion in ways that share surface similarities with racial exclusion (being monitored in upscale stores, having purchasing power questioned) while remaining fundamentally different because working-class white people can improve their class positioning through consumption performance in ways Black people cannot escape racial marking. A working-class white person dressed in expensive clothing may be treated as legitimately middle-class; a Black person in identical clothing still faces racial profiling. This difference reveals how class operates differently from race, even when both produce marketplace exclusion.

The "chavs" moral panic in Britain exemplifies how class stigma operates for white working-class people (Jones, 2011; Tyler, 2013). Working-class consumption styles, leisure practices, and aesthetic choices are pathologised and mocked, producing marketplace stigma. However, this class stigma operates through different mechanisms than racial stigma, and conflating them obscures racism's specificity. White working-class people's experiences of stigma are real. However, they do not face racial profiling, are not excluded from product development, and can potentially escape stigmatisation through class mobility in ways racial marking prevents.

Contemporary British marketplace racism reflects these imperial legacies. When Black British consumers face assumptions that they are immigrants regardless of being second, third, or fourth generation, this reflects colonial logics positioning Britishness as inherently white. When Black cultural practices, foods, or aesthetics are exoticised in marketing, this reproduces colonial frameworks where non-European cultures were spectacle for white consumption. When retailers concentrate in white neighbourhoods while disinvesting from areas with significant Black populations, this reflects colonial patterns of differential investment based on racial hierarchies.

Brexit nationalism has reanimated these imperial fantasies, with rhetoric about restoring Britain's greatness and controlling immigration often implicitly coding whiteness as authentic Britishness (McGeever and Virdee, 2018). This political context shapes contemporary marketplace racism, as consumer spaces become sites where national belonging is performed and contested through

consumption. Black British consumers asserting their right to be treated as legitimate customers contest these exclusionary nationalisms by insisting that Britishness encompasses racial diversity.

2.3.3 White Fragility: Defensive Reactions to Challenge

DiAngelo's (2018) concept of "white fragility" identifies a crucial mechanism through which whiteness protects itself from examination and challenge, with direct implications for how Black women navigate consumer spaces. White fragility describes the defensive reactions, anger, fear, guilt, argumentation, silence, and withdrawal that white people often exhibit when confronted with racial discomfort or when their racial privilege is named. Rather than engaging with racism's realities, white fragility deflects, denies, or dismisses challenges to white comfort, thereby maintaining white dominance. Understanding white fragility is essential for this research because it explains why Black women's attempts to address marketplace discrimination are often met with defensive responses that re-centre white comfort rather than addressing racial harm.

DiAngelo argues that white fragility stems from white people's socialisation in racially insulated spaces where their racial comfort is protected, and racial stress is minimised. Most white people live in predominantly white neighbourhoods, attend predominantly white schools, work in white-dominated workplaces, and consume white-centred media. This insulation means white people develop minimal stamina for racial discomfort. When forced to confront racism, even mildly, they experience disproportionate distress and react defensively to restore comfort. In consumer contexts, this fragility shapes how service workers, managers, and other customers respond when Black women name or challenge discriminatory treatment, often making it emotionally costly for Black women to advocate for themselves.

These defensive reactions serve material functions beyond individual psychology, directly impacting Black women's consumer experiences. When white consumers accused of racist behaviour (such as making assumptions about a Black woman's purchasing power or commenting on her appearance) respond with tears, anger, or claims of being unfairly attacked, this re-centres white people's feelings while deflecting attention from the racial harm experienced by Black women. When white store managers respond to discrimination complaints by insisting "we treat everyone the same," this colour-blind rhetoric dismisses Black customers' experiential knowledge and positions their concerns as invalid or exaggerated. When white business leaders respond to racial justice demands by emphasising how hurtful accusations of racism feel, this positions white people as victims rather than accountability-holders, inverting the actual power dynamics at play.

For Black women navigating consumer spaces, white fragility creates significant barriers to addressing discrimination. Moreover, this impact could contribute to what Winters (2020) terms "Black fatigue," which will be discussed further in the literature review (chapter 3).

White fragility thus operates as a systemic defence mechanism protecting racial hierarchies within consumer spaces. By making conversations about racism emotionally costly, requiring Black women to manage white people's fragile feelings, pre-emptively soften critiques to prevent defensive reactions, and provide endless reassurance that white people are "good", white fragility exhausts Black women's energy for challenging racism.

Based on DiAngelo's definition and explanation of white fragility and whiteness, Hill et al. (2021) assert that typical responses from white people frequently involve outward displays of emotions like anger, fear, and guilt, as well as behaviours like argumentation, silence, or removing themselves from stressful situations. White people are labelled as "fragile" because they live in a protected space of racial privilege, which encourages racial comfort expectations while also lowering their ability to manage racial stress (Resane, 2021; Hill et al., 2021).

White fragility is more than just individual defensiveness; it is a means of defending, maintaining, and enforcing white supremacy institutionally, which results from the socialisation of white people into systems of white supremacy (Hill et al., 2021). In marketplace contexts, white fragility manifests at both interpersonal and organisational levels. When companies respond to criticism about racial exclusion or discriminatory practices with defensiveness, arguing they are "already diverse," dismissing concerns as "too political," or claiming that addressing racism would "alienate" their "core" (implicitly white) customer base, they exhibit organisational white fragility. These responses prioritise white comfort over racial justice, effectively silencing Black women's legitimate demands for equitable treatment.

DiAngelo provides a scenario that illustrates how white fragility operates in institutional settings, which parallels dynamics Black women encounter when attempting to address marketplace discrimination:

I am a white woman. I am standing beside a Black woman. We are facing a group of white people who are seated in front of us. We are in their workplace and have been hired by their employer to facilitate a dialogue about race with them. The room is filled with tension and charged with hostility. I have just presented a definition of racism that includes the acknowledgement that whites hold social and institutional power over people of colour. A white man is pounding his fist on the table. His face is red, and he is furious. As he pounds, he yells, "White people have been discriminated against for 25 years! A white person cannot get a job anymore! I look around the room and see 40 employed people,

all of whom are white. There are no people of colour in this workplace. Something is happening here, and it is not based on the racial reality of the workplace. I am feeling unnerved by this man's disconnection with that reality and his lack of sensitivity to the impact this is having on my cofacilitator, the only person of colour in the room. Why is this white man so angry? Why is he being so careless about the impact of his anger? Why are all the other white people either sitting in silent agreement with him or tuning out? We have, after all, only articulated a definition of racism
(DiAngelo, 2018, pp. 54-55).

This scenario resonates with Black women's experiences in consumer spaces when they attempt to name discrimination. The angry white man's disconnection from workplace racial reality mirrors how white service workers or managers often respond to complaints about discriminatory treatment, with outrage, denial, or dismissal that ignores the empirical evidence of racial harm. The other white people's silence or passive agreement reflects how bystanders in consumer spaces rarely intervene when Black women experience microaggressions, leaving Black women isolated in their attempts to address harm. The impact on DiAngelo's Black co-facilitator, feeling the weight of white hostility while her experiential knowledge is dismissed, parallels how Black women feel when reporting marketplace discrimination, only to have their concerns invalidated through white fragility.

This fragility stems from the position of white people within a system of racial privilege, where they are often unaccustomed to, or uncomfortable with, direct conversations about race and racism (DiAngelo, 2018). While these responses may appear as individual discomfort, they carry significant structural consequences for Black women's ability to navigate consumer spaces with dignity and safety. By exhibiting white fragility, both individuals and institutions inadvertently protect the status quo, thereby reinforcing systems of white supremacy across organisations and the broader marketplace. Crucially, this behaviour is not neutral. It serves to maintain unequal distributions of power and resources by silencing or delegitimising conversations that challenge racial hierarchies.

For Black women consumers, white fragility operates as a barrier to justice at multiple levels. When individual service workers respond with defensiveness to being called out for microaggressions, Black women must choose between pressing the issue (risking escalation and emotional exhaustion) or letting it go (allowing harm to continue unaddressed). When store managers exhibit fragility by dismissing discrimination complaints as "misunderstandings" or insisting "that is not who we are," they delegitimise Black women's experiential knowledge while absolving the organisation of responsibility. When corporate leaders respond to demands for racial equity by framing such conversations as "divisive" or claiming they would make white customers "uncomfortable," they prioritise white feelings over Black women's material wellbeing and safety.

White fragility shields existing systems of marketplace advantage from scrutiny by making it psychologically and emotionally costly for Black women to challenge discriminatory practices. Understanding white fragility as a structural barrier within consumer spaces is therefore essential to this research. It helps explain why Black women engage in code switching, why they carefully regulate emotions and language when addressing discrimination (attempting to avoid triggering fragility). White fragility is not merely an interpersonal dynamic but a systemic force that shapes every stage of Black women's marketplace navigation, reinforcing the permanence of racism that CRT identifies as fundamental to understanding contemporary racial inequality (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Bell's (1992) thesis of racism's permanence, that racism is a permanent feature of American (and by extension, Western) society, may appear empirically questionable given apparent progress: legal equality, increased representation, and corporate diversity initiatives. However, CRT's permanence thesis does not deny change; rather, it argues that racism adapts rather than disappears.

Contemporary marketplace racism illustrates this adaptation. Explicit "No Blacks Allowed" signs have vanished, yet participants describe systematic surveillance, product exclusion, and microaggressions that produce similar exclusionary effects through different mechanisms. The shift from overt to covert racism is not progress but restructuring; racism becomes harder to name, challenge, and prove while maintaining material consequences.

Moreover, "progress" often reflects interest convergence (Bell, 1980): changes occur when they benefit dominant groups, not from a genuine commitment to racial justice. Corporate diversity marketing, for instance, targets Black consumers' purchasing power while maintaining discriminatory service practices. Fenty Beauty's shade expansion is laudable, yet participants still struggle to find products in physical stores, face surveillance while shopping, and encounter staff untrained to assist them.

The permanence thesis is not politically demobilising but analytically realistic. It prevents mistaking cosmetic changes for structural transformation and warns against complacency. Recognising racism's permanence enables more effective resistance by identifying where it operates rather than assuming we have moved "beyond race." As participants' experiences demonstrate, marketplace racism remains pervasive, systematic, and structurally embedded, evidence that supports rather than contradicts the permanence thesis.

In the UK marketplace, this CRT examines how systemic factors shape racial inequalities in consumer life. Historical legacies, such as colonialism, continue to have enduring effects that influence the opportunities and experiences of racial minority groups. Bleich (2005) argues that these histories should

not be viewed as distant events; instead, they actively shape the everyday realities of individuals and communities.

The ongoing impact of these systemic barriers is evident in various consumer spaces. For instance, colonial hierarchies have left lasting imprints on beauty standards, with Eurocentric ideals dominating advertising campaigns and marginalising the features and hair textures of Black women (Boutté et al., 2025). For racialised consumers, particularly Black women, participation in the marketplace often involves navigating these barriers while simultaneously negotiating identity and belonging. Understanding these dynamics requires recognising the consumer spaces as a contemporary site where the historical and structural dimensions of racism continue to shape everyday life.

Savas (2013) observes that “Overall, CRT contends that people occupying the highest levels of multiple. Social categories have the greatest privilege, power, and prestige” (p. 509). While racism manifests differently across countries due to distinct historical and cultural trajectories, its persistent presence globally stresses a shared structural reality. These insights from CRT into privilege and power are particularly valuable for analysing racial dynamics and inequality in the UK, where whiteness continues to structure access to opportunities and recognition (Wing-Fai et al., 2015; Hylton, 2010). For example, Randle et al. (2014) demonstrate that the UK film and television industry remains dominated by a workforce that is disproportionately “white, male and middle class” (p. 590), failing to reflect the diversity of the wider population. Both industry professionals and academics have acknowledged this imbalance, highlighting the systematic underrepresentation of women and people of colour.

However, while research has documented privilege and exclusion in creative and professional sectors, there remains a significant gap in examining how these same dynamics manifest within consumer marketplaces. We know comparatively little about how privilege shapes who is seen as the “ideal consumer,” whose cultural identities are legitimised in branding and retail spaces, and whose participation is systematically constrained. Similarly, while workforce diversity in industries has received some attention, the sociological composition of consumer-facing spaces, from luxury retail to everyday consumption, remains underexplored. This gap is critical, as consumer spaces are everyday areas where racialised dynamics of privilege, exclusion, and identity negotiation are enacted, often in subtle but consequential ways.

2.3.5 Possessive Investment in Whiteness

Lipsitz's (2006) concept of "possessive investment in whiteness" extends whiteness analysis by examining how white people collectively benefit from and protect racial hierarchy even when not personally racist. Lipsitz argues that white Americans hold "possessive investment" in whiteness through accumulated wealth transferred across generations via housing, education, and employment

advantages systematically denied to Black people. This investment is "possessive" because white people defend it as rightfully theirs rather than recognising it as an illegitimate advantage gained through racial exclusion.

In consumer contexts, possessive investment manifests through white consumers' accumulated purchasing power (wealth from home equity, inheritance), access to credit (better terms based on higher wealth), and ability to live in neighbourhoods with quality retail (because retail investment follows affluent populations). These advantages appear as individual achievements ("I worked hard," "I saved money") rather than as racial windfalls, making white consumers resistant to acknowledging how racial advantage shaped their market position.

Possessive investment also explains white resistance to racial justice initiatives that might redistribute resources or opportunities. If white advantage is understood as rightfully earned rather than as a racial windfall, then demands for redistribution appear as unfair attacks on white people's legitimate achievements. This explains why diversity initiatives face white backlash: from perspectives shaped by possessive investment, racial inclusion appears as unjust preference rather than as remedying historical exclusion.

Applying Lipsitz's US-focused analysis to UK contexts requires attention to different mechanisms through which white British people accumulated advantages. British welfare state policies, council housing allocation, and grammar school access created different pathways for white advantage than American suburbanisation, yet similar patterns emerge in policies ostensibly race-neutral, systematically advantaging white people while disadvantaging Black people. Contemporary white British consumers' market advantages reflect the compounding effects of these historical policies, even when not consciously recognised.

Although Lipsitz's "possessive investment in whiteness" helps explain the structuration and maintenance of racial capital in consumer societies, this theoretical tool does not account for how this capital is experienced and contested at the point of consumption. To critically examine this knowledge gap, this chapter will turn next to Consumer Culture Theory and explore how cross-disciplinary dialogue with Critical Race Theory throws this theoretical approach under scrutiny and helps to examine racial capital's structuration and experience in consumer society. The next section introduces Consumer Culture Theory and explores its relevance to this chapter's research questions.

2.4 Consumer Culture Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Marketplace Inequality

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) has significantly advanced consumer research by examining how individuals use consumption to construct identities, negotiate social positions, and generate meaning within marketplace contexts (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2018). By framing consumers as active meaning-makers who creatively appropriate marketplace resources for identity projects, CCT moves beyond behavioural models that portray consumers as passive recipients of marketing stimuli. However, when applied to racially marginalised consumers, CCT's analytical strengths also reveal important limitations that require critical interrogation.

CRT deepens analyses of consumer identity by situating consumption practices within enduring systems of racial domination rather than treating them as isolated or purely individual acts. While CCT illuminates how consumers express belonging or resistance through brands and practices, CRT foregrounds that such negotiations occur in marketplaces already structured by inequality, where whiteness operates as the normative standard and Blackness is frequently devalued or stigmatised. From a CRT perspective, racialisation is embedded in marketplace structures, representations, and interactions, shaping who is recognised, who is marginalised, and how resistance is understood as a response to power relations rather than merely a symbolic expression (Poole et al., 2020).

CRT also reframes consumer behaviours often interpreted as preferences or lifestyle choices. Practices such as avoiding hostile retail spaces, shifting to inclusive brands, or demonstrating loyalty to companies that meaningfully represent racial diversity are not simply individual expressions of taste. Instead, they constitute rational and adaptive responses to systemic marginalisation. Consistent with CRT's assertion that racism is ordinary and enduring, consumer behaviours reflect strategies for navigating exclusionary structures. Avoidance of certain consumer spaces, for example, is less an idiosyncratic choice than a form of self-protection against racial profiling and everyday microaggressions.

Black feminist theory extends CRT within consumer research by foregrounding intersectionality and the lived experiences of those positioned at the intersection of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Black women's encounters with surveillance in retail spaces illustrate how racism and sexism converge through misogynoir, producing forms of exclusion that race-only analyses cannot adequately capture. These intersecting oppressions necessitate identity-repair and survival strategies, including investment in culturally affirming consumption, the cultivation of safe consumer spaces, and resistance through alternative or community-based economies. Black feminist scholarship also insists that embodied, lived experiences of marginalisation constitute legitimate and vital knowledge (Collins, 2000), challenging disciplinary hierarchies that have historically devalued such narratives in consumer research.

While CCT identifies four central research domains, consumer identity projects, marketplace cultures, sociohistorical patterning of consumption, and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), its development has largely been shaped by studies of white, middle-class consumers. As a result, the framework often assumes a marketplace organised to enable self-expression, where constraints function as productive tensions rather than as forms of violent exclusion. For Black women navigating surveillance, limited product availability, and discriminatory service, consumption is not primarily a site of creative play but one of defensive negotiation and survival.

CCT's emphasis on agency and creative appropriation also risks reproducing neoliberal assumptions that equate market participation with freedom, obscuring how capitalism determines which identities are profitable, legitimate, or even tolerable. Although later CCT work acknowledges that marketplace freedoms are unevenly distributed and can entail costs such as microaggressions directed at stigmatised consumers (Arnould and Thompson, 2018), these acknowledgements often remain peripheral. Racism does not merely constrain consumer agency; it fundamentally reshapes consumption as labour, vigilance, and risk management.

The value of integrating CRT into consumer research lies in its capacity to link macro-level inequalities, such as systemic racism and the normalisation of whiteness, with micro-level consumer practices, including brand resistance, avoidance, loyalty, and efforts toward transformation. Although CRT remains underutilised in marketing and consumer studies, its integration with CCT offers a powerful framework for identifying entrenched inequities and for imagining consumer spaces oriented toward equity, recognition, and justice rather than exclusion.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has developed an integrated theoretical framework that brings together Critical Race Theory, whiteness theory, Intersectionality, and Consumer Culture Theory to analyse how Black women navigate consumer spaces structured by racialised and gendered hierarchies. This integration is not supplementary but essential. Understanding Black women's marketplace experiences requires the simultaneous analysis of structural racism and its material interests (CRT), the invisible normativity and defensive operations of whiteness (whiteness theory), the intersectional positioning that produces experiences irreducible to single-axis accounts, and the processes of meaning-making and identity negotiation within consumer culture (CCT).

CRT establishes racism as ordinary, systemic, and institutionally embedded, locating marketplace discrimination within organisational practices rather than individual bias. It also makes an epistemological commitment to counter-storytelling, positioning Black women's experiential

knowledge as a legitimate and authoritative source of insight rather than merely a subjective perspective. Whiteness theory specifies how racial dominance is reproduced through unmarked norms that privilege white consumers while presenting themselves as universal, and it illuminates the affective and discursive mechanisms, such as white fragility, through which this dominance resists critique. Intersectionality demonstrates why race-and-gender analyses cannot be disentangled, showing that Black women's positioning at intersecting systems of oppression generates distinct marketplace realities that demand focused theoretical attention. CCT enables analysis of identity work and meaning-making while remaining attentive to the structural constraints that delimit what identities and meanings are possible in the first place.

Taken together, these frameworks generate analytical capacities unavailable to any single theory. They enable intersectional and structural analysis, attention to the temporal unfolding of racism across anticipation, encounter, and aftermath, and a dialectical examination of constraint and agency. They also reorient epistemology toward centring Black women's knowledge, combine material and cultural analysis, and adapt predominantly US-based theories to the specificities of the British context. From this integration emerge five analytical categories that organise the empirical investigation: the structural production of racialised consumer spaces, intersectional positioning, temporal dimensions of marketplace encounters, meaning-making processes, and strategic responses.

The chapter has also demonstrated how whiteness operates as both a structural and symbolic force within consumer markets, shaping how products are designed, distributed, and promoted. Historical legacies of white beauty ideals continue to inform product development and advertising logics, positioning whiteness as the normative benchmark of aspiration, value, and desirability. In this context, Black identities are rendered peripheral or supplementary, reinforcing enduring racial hierarchies within consumer culture.

Market segmentation practices, often framed as inclusive, frequently reproduce racial stereotypes or homogenise Black consumers into a singular, commodified category. This reveals a persistent tension between visibility and invisibility: Black consumers may be targeted while remaining marginal to mainstream narratives that centre whiteness as universal. Whiteness thus retains symbolic power by defining the norms, tastes, and priorities around which markets are organised, privileging white aesthetics, cultural references, and consumer experiences.

These dynamics have concrete material consequences. Limited product ranges, restricted shade availability, the positioning of Black-oriented products as "niche," and the scarcity of culturally affirming representations contribute to a marketplace that systematically undervalues and underserves Black women. Consequently, routine consumer interactions become saturated with racialised

assumptions about legitimacy, purchasing power, and belonging. Even in ostensibly race-neutral spaces, such as supermarkets, technology retailers, and financial institutions, Black women often encounter scrutiny, misrecognition, or suspicion. Mundane transactions, therefore, require ongoing self-monitoring, respectability performances, and emotional labour.

Collectively, these practices reveal whiteness not merely as an identity category but as an organising logic shaping the architecture of consumer markets. Its effects are evident across key domains: market representation, where whiteness determines who is visible and how identities are framed; product accessibility, where white consumers are treated as the default; and cultural authority, where whiteness defines what is considered aspirational, beautiful, or valuable. These processes do more than limit choice; they shape Black women's lived experiences, well-being, and sense of self as consumers.

At the same time, Black women's marketplace practices also reflect agency and resistance. Supporting Black-owned businesses, reclaiming cultural aesthetics, and building community-based consumption networks constitute forms of identity work, care, and collective strategy enacted within and against racialised market structures.

Having established how whiteness functions as an unmarked norm that structures consumer spaces, the next chapter shifts from conceptual analysis to a broader engagement with the empirical literature on navigating consumer markets, discrimination, identity, and well-being. This transition foregrounds how structural inequities are lived, embodied, and negotiated in everyday consumption, laying the groundwork for examining how Black women move through, respond to, and resist racialised marketplace contexts.

With these theoretical foundations established, Chapter 3 turns to the existing empirical literature on Black consumers' marketplace experiences. While this chapter has developed the conceptual tools, the next examines how such tools have been applied in prior research, what is currently known, and where significant gaps remain. Together, Chapters 2 and 3 provide both the theoretical lens and the empirical grounding necessary for the dissertation's original contribution.

Chapter 3: Black Women Navigating Consumer Spaces

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines how consumer spaces function as racialised spaces where Black women's presence, legitimacy, and belonging are continuously contested. Building on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and theorisations of whiteness, this chapter situates consumer research within a broader framework of racial capitalism and racialised power. Rather than viewing consumer spaces as neutral arenas for exchange, it treats them as crucial sites where racial hierarchies are spatially organised, embodied, and contested. Emerging research on Race in the Marketplace shows how consumer spaces contribute to the creation of “white” space and the marginalisation of racialised groups, raising important questions about visibility, surveillance, and belonging. In this context, Black bodies in predominantly white consumer spaces become essential for understanding how racialised identities are policed, disciplined, and sometimes strategically mobilised.

This dissertation builds on and extends the growing body of Race in the Marketplace (RIM) scholarship, which has transformed consumer research. The RIM network, formalised through the Association for Consumer Research's RIM working group and special issues in major journals (Grier et al., 2024), has systematically documented how race shapes consumer experiences, marketplace access, and brand relationships while challenging consumer research's historical whiteness and its treatment of race as a peripheral demographic variable rather than a fundamental organising principle. RIM scholars have examined consumer racial identity construction (Crockett, 2017), marketplace discrimination (Harris et al., 2005; Pittman, 2017), racially targeted marketing (Williams et al., 2001; Burton, 2009), and structural racism in marketplace systems (Johnson et al., 2019; Francis and Robertson, 2021).

The literature examined in this chapter focuses on consumer spaces, particularly concerning racialised spatial exclusion in retail and urban commercial spaces (McKittrick, 2006; Lipsitz, 2011; Anderson, 2022). It explores how Black consumers are positioned as out of place, how “white space” is constructed through everyday market practices, and how these processes shape consumer identity, wellbeing, and opportunities for resistance. Research on navigating white spaces, the embodied experiences of Black women in consumer spaces, and the relationship between race, consumption, and wellbeing provides a critical lens on how structural racism is experienced and negotiated in consumer contexts. Concurrently, this work highlights gaps in understanding the specific ways Black women contest and reconfigure these racialised geographies of exclusion.

3.2. Producing White Space

Anderson's (2022) concept of "White space" provides a critical framework for understanding how spatial segregation functions as an active tool of racial control. He documents how neighbourhoods, restaurants, schools, and commercial establishments remain characterised by "implicit White sensibility" (p. 13), where Black presence is rendered exceptional or marginal. However, this observation risks naturalising spatial segregation as static rather than interrogating the ongoing processes, zoning policies, lending discrimination, policing practices, and consumer profiling that continuously produce White space.

This resonates with marketplace discrimination scholarship. (Bay and Fabian, 2015) identified how store locations, product assortments, and service protocols communicate who belongs, establishing that Black consumers face taxation without representation. Harris et al. (2005) earlier work looked at this through their "shopping while Black" research, demonstrating how surveillance, service denial, and microaggressions constitute systematic patterns embedded in retail operations. However, RIM's primary US focus has left UK retail geographies underexamined. RIM network call for "global" research acknowledges that while racial capitalism operates transnationally, its manifestations require context-specific analysis. British high streets differ fundamentally from American suburban malls, suggesting that marketplace discrimination operates through mechanisms that are distinct to the national context.

Lefebvre's (1991) insistence that "social space is a social product" (p. 26) demands that we recognise space as simultaneously conceived (planned through design decisions), perceived (practised through everyday routines), and lived (experienced through embodied encounters). For Black women consumers, exclusion operates not through explicit prohibition but through ambient properties, arrangements communicating unwelcome, atmospheres generating discomfort, and designs presuming white bodies as default occupants, linking to the Eurocentric standards of beauty discussed in chapter 2. Consumer spaces embody power relations: who conceives store layouts (designers operating under capitalist imperatives), whose spatial practices are facilitated (white middle-class browsing patterns), and which bodies experience comfort versus constraint (where race becomes visceral).

However, Lefebvre's theory, developed in mid-century France, requires critical interrogation regarding its applicability to contemporary British contexts and its engagement with race as a structuring force. His framework privileges class over race, potentially obscuring how racial capitalism operates through spatial logics that cannot be reduced to economic relations alone. Bringing UK-specific analysis into conversation with spatial theory reveals how consumer geographies are nationally inflected as they participate in global racial capitalism. In British contexts, "conceived space" is shaped by planning

policies emerging from imperial town-planning traditions; "perceived space" is organised through British class geographies, where retail location signals social status; "lived space" for Black British women involves navigating imperial legacies, class hierarchies, and American cultural imports simultaneously. The abstraction of spatial theory requires grounding in the UK's particular historical geography, how postwar Afro-Caribbean migration shaped urban consumer landscapes, and how Brexit nationalism reanimates imperial fantasies about British consumer sovereignty.

Lipsitz's (2006) "possessive investment in whiteness" provides crucial racial analysis, yet its American genealogy demands critical adaptation. British whiteness is internally stratified (working-class versus middle-class white) in ways that complicate simple white/Black binaries (Abbas, 2019), and this stratification frequently provides ideological alibis ("it's class, not race") that deflect from racist structures. The possessive investment operates through different legal-political mechanisms: American redlining through federal housing policy versus British council housing allocation; American suburban incorporation versus British green belt restrictions; American mall culture versus British high street tradition. While Lipsitz identifies capital accumulation through racial dispossession as transatlantic, the question remains whether his concept adequately captures distinctively British formations or flattens significant differences.

McKittrick's (2006) geography offers vital counter-narratives, though her framework similarly emerges from African American contexts. Black British women navigate not plantation slavery and Jim Crow legacies but rather Caribbean migration, colonial "mother country" myths, and contemporary hostile space policies (Ellis, 2001; Hall, 2018). Their geographic knowledge, which London boroughs welcome versus exclude, which northern cities have supportive Black communities, and which retail chains acknowledge their presence, develops through specifically British racial geographies. McKittrick's core insight, that Black women produce space through struggle, remains powerful. Black British women create commercial alternatives (Black hair shops, Caribbean grocers, African textiles markets) within and against mainstream retail systems. However, theorising this spatial production requires attention to how these alternatives emerge from historical conditions different from those of American counterparts, challenging assumptions about shared diasporic spatial practices.

Maciel and Wallendorf's (2021) theorisation of space as a resource in consumer identity politics provides a conceptual foundation, though their framework undertheorises how race structures spatial access. They argue consumers strategically deploy spatial practices, choosing locations, controlling boundaries, and performing belonging, to construct identities. However, their research, developed through the analysis of class-based politics in Brazilian contexts, does not adequately theorise how race shapes which spatial resources consumers can access. For Black women in UK consumer spaces, spatial resources are not equally available: they cannot simply "choose locations" when retail redlining limits

options (Thomas and Blackmon, 2015); they cannot fully "control boundaries" when subjected to surveillance; they cannot straightforwardly "perform belonging" when their racialised bodies are read as inherently out of place. Integrating their framework with CRT reveals that space operates not only as an identity resource but as racialised property where whiteness confers spatial privileges (ease of movement, assumed belonging, freedom from monitoring) that Black women must strategically navigate.

Saatcioglu and Corus (2015) develop a spatial vulnerability theory that demonstrates how inequalities are materially and symbolically embedded in physical and social spaces. Unlike traditional frameworks that locate disadvantage within individuals, spatial vulnerability positions consumer contexts themselves as generators of precarity. For Black women consumers, this operates through physical spaces providing inadequate product selection, social spaces where they experience heightened surveillance, and symbolic spaces where marketing excludes or stereotypes them. This framework shifts analytical attention from "what makes consumers vulnerable?" to "what makes spaces produce vulnerability?"

Saatcioglu and Ozanne's (2013) claim that space "can liberate or constrain" (p. 32) warrants scrutiny. This conditional formulation suggests spatial effects are neutral possibilities rather than acknowledging how consumer spaces systematically favour some bodies while constraining others. The language of "can" performs ideological work, obscuring empirical patterns: for whom do consumer spaces typically liberate versus constrain? Examining actual spatial organisation reveals not indeterminate potential but structures shaped through racial capitalism to facilitate white comfort while impeding Black access.

Moreover, "liberation" and "constraint" suggest a degree of movement rather than fundamentally different relations to space. For white consumers, space extends hospitality, lighting flatters, products anticipate needs, and staff approach helpfully. For Black women, space withholds welcome, surveillance tracks, scarcity signals irrelevance, and ambient hostility exhausts. This is not a continuum but qualitatively different spatial productions. Consumer research requires language that captures not just how much freedom space allows, but also how space produces racially differentiated relations of belonging versus exclusion.

Francis and Robertson (2021) argue that "space is a tangible realisation of institutional and racial subordination" (p. 89). From this perspective, racism cannot be understood without attending to spatial organisation, because power operates through the material arrangement of spaces. Their contention that retailers construct "White Spaces" introduces productive analytical tension regarding intentionality. Does this suggest deliberate racial exclusion, or does marketplace exclusion operate through ostensibly race-neutral economic rationalities, targeting "affluent" consumers who are disproportionately white,

adhering to industry best practices, sedimenting historical bias, or reproducing competitor strategies without racial reflection? Whiteness may be reproduced not through conscious animus but through banal market logics treating white consumer norms as universal and commercially optimal.

This distinction matters analytically. If racism is intentional exclusion, the remedy is changing attitudes and policies. If racism is a structural effect of profit maximisation, the remedy requires transforming capitalism itself. Beauty retail products for darker skin, relegated to peripheral shelves, could reflect either deliberate marginalisation or inventory algorithms optimised for the majority of customers. Critical race theory's "interest convergence" (Bell, 1992) offers a third possibility: retailers include Black consumers only when profitable, explaining both historical exclusion and recent "diversity" initiatives. The question becomes not merely documenting exclusion but theorising its relationship to capital accumulation: Is marketplace racism incidental to or constitutive of contemporary consumer capitalism? As Johnson et al. (2019) argue, the dominance of Whiteness in mass marketing is not accidental but the outcome of long-standing professional and institutional knowledge systems shaped by broader racial segregation, normalising white consumers as default market subjects and situating everyone else on the margins.

3.2.1. Black Bodies in White Spaces

The dissertation's title, *Bodies out of Place*, deliberately centres the spatial-corporeal dynamic as both analytical framework and lived experience. It captures how Black women's bodies are constructed as spatial anomalies within consumer spaces designed for whiteness. By highlighting "bodies" rather than "consumers" or "shoppers," the title emphasises the materiality of racial experience: Black women's physical presence, not just their purchasing behaviour, triggers exclusionary mechanisms. The "out of place" construction functions diagnostically while prompting critical interrogation: out of place according to whom, by what logic, and through which mechanisms? The title thus signals a dual commitment: documenting Black women's spatial marginalisation and dismantling assumptions about white-centred consumer spaces.

Crockett et al. (2003) show that presumably neutral business practices often function as mechanisms of racial exclusion, revealing how discrimination is embedded in everyday operations. For Black women, entering consumer spaces involves anticipating and negotiating heightened scrutiny; movements, purchasing behaviours, and mere presence attract attention rarely afforded to white consumers. Anderson (2022) elaborates that persistent surveillance cultivates hypervigilance, rendering routine shopping emotionally depleting, the "psychological toll of existing in predominantly white spaces."

This phenomenon, often described as "shopping while Black" (Gabbidon, 2003; Pittman, 2017; Schreer et al., 2009; Bennett et al., 2014), parallels other racialised experiences such as "driving while Black"

(Lundman and Kaufman, 2003; Warren et al., 2006; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2004) and "learning while Black" (Stone et al., 2018), highlighting the pervasiveness of racialised scrutiny across domains.

Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me* (2015) similarly shows the centrality of the Black body in experiencing and navigating systems of oppression, emphasising the importance of protecting Black bodies and interrogating whiteness as a structuring principle. Historical exploitation, discrimination, and commodification of Black bodies (Gallego, 2021; Danquah, 2011) further situate contemporary marketplace marginalisation within a long lineage of racialised corporeal control.

In the UK context, these occupational assumptions have specific colonial implications. Francis and Robertson's (2021) analysis of "White Spaces" productively theorises how retail spaces reproduce historical racial hierarchies. However, their research requires extension to British contexts where colonial governance positioned Black subjects as labourers serving the imperial metropole. When a Black woman is assumed to be cleaning staff in Selfridges or John Lewis, this misrecognition draws on both American slavery's legacies (circulated through media) and the British empire's positioning of colonial subjects as servants, creating layered stereotypes that this research examines.

While much scholarship originates in US contexts, understanding Black women's experiences in UK marketplaces requires attention to Britain's racial formations and colonial legacies. Gilroy's (1993) *Black Atlantic* disrupts methodological nationalism, theorising Black identity as constituted through transnational circulation. This perspective shows that British marketplace racism draws on multiple geographic imaginaries and cannot be understood solely through US frameworks. However, Gilroy's focus on cultural production provides limited guidance for analysing concrete retail encounters. McKittrick (2006) emphasises that Black Atlantic identities are forged in material spaces through embodied practices, including consumption, highlighting the importance of grounding transnational theory in everyday consumer geographies.

Gilroy's critique of ethnic absolutism, the assumption of fixed racial identities, also informs the analysis of UK marketplace discrimination. While Black British identities are hybrid and fluid, retail systems often impose monolithic categories ("the Black consumer"), generating tangible consequences for Black women. Marketplace racism thus operates through a tension between consumers' lived multiplicity and retail systems' essentializing categories.

3.2.2. Racialising Surveillance

Browne's (2015) genealogy tracing surveillance from the hold of the slave ship to the contemporary retail floor advances a fundamentally Critical Race Theoretical claim: consumer surveillance is not the misapplication of otherwise neutral technologies, but the ongoing rearticulation of anti-Blackness

through evolving institutional forms. When Browne asserts that “surveillance is nothing new to Black folks. It is the fact of anti-Blackness” (p. 10), she rejects liberal narratives of racial progress that frame surveillance as a correctable excess. Instead, she insists that the core racial logic, that Black bodies require monitoring, regulation, and containment, remains structurally intact despite shifts in technological apparatuses. This position aligns with CRT’s insistence on the permanence of racism and its reproduction through systems that present themselves as race-neutral (Bell, 1980).

Read through this lens, retail surveillance cannot be meaningfully addressed through diversity training, bias audits, or algorithmic adjustments, because the issue is not malfunction but function. Security systems operate as intended when they disproportionately target Black shoppers, reproducing a historical mandate to police Black mobility to protect white property, comfort, and spatial dominance. Surveillance thus safeguards whiteness as an invisible norm, unmarked, presumed innocent, and entitled to unimpeded consumption, while rendering Black presence suspect and conditional. Browne’s concept of “racialising surveillance” collapses the distinction between legitimate security and racial discrimination: security is not separate from racism but one of its primary institutional expressions.

At the same time, Browne’s framing risks totalising anti-Blackness in ways that may obscure Black women’s lived and embodied experiences of navigating, resisting, and sometimes successfully contesting surveillance. If surveillance *is* anti-Blackness, limited analytical space remains to examine variation and contingency: why some retail spaces intensify monitoring more than others, how Black women strategically manage dress, comportment, and purchasing practices to minimise scrutiny, or when surveillance regimes fracture, fail, or are actively resisted. A robust analysis must therefore hold a productive tension between surveillance’s structural orientation toward anti-Black control and Black women’s agentic, creative, and often exhausting practices of negotiation documented in consumer resistance scholarship. Neither liberal optimism nor theoretical foreclosure is sufficient.

Embodiment is central to understanding how racialised surveillance operates within consumer spaces. Black women’s physical presence is interpreted through intersecting assumptions about race, gender, class, and respectability, producing both subtle and overt forms of exclusion. Store layouts, product assortments, staff interactions, and marketing imaginaries communicate who is presumed to belong and who is rendered out of place (Francis and Robertson, 2021), translating historical relations of enslavement and racial exploitation into contemporary consumer encounters. Within these spaces, whiteness functions as the unmarked and legitimate consumer norm, while Black women are compelled to justify their presence continually.

Kwan’s (2010) concept of body consciousness further explains these dynamics, describing body management as a form of self-surveillance that becomes especially pronounced for groups denied

bodily privilege and forced to navigate public spaces with heightened awareness. In this research, body consciousness emerges not merely as an abstract awareness of space but as a deliberate, ongoing practice evident across participants' accounts. Heightened attentiveness to bodily movement, appearance, and spatial positioning serves as a self-protection strategy, especially regarding personal safety. This embodied vigilance reflects the way navigating consumer spaces requires Black women to continuously monitor and manage their bodies in anticipation of surveillance and potential exclusion.

Consequently, Black women navigate consumer spaces with heightened racial consciousness, constantly calibrating visibility, respectability, and risk. The marketplace becomes a stage on which racialised bodies are monitored, evaluated, and disciplined, linking routine shopping experiences to broader systems of racial governance (Crockett, 2021). These encounters echo Coates' reflections on the vulnerability of the Black body in spaces that claim neutrality yet remain structured by white supremacy.

Anderson's (2015) concept of the "white gaze" helps identify a key mechanism of spatial policing, but its passive formulation risks obscuring agency and accountability. The gaze is not automatically "activated" by Black presence; it is actively enacted by white shoppers, staff, and security personnel who choose to surveil, question, and monitor. This distinction matters because it locates responsibility in social actors rather than abstract atmospheres. Moreover, the gaze metaphor alone fails to capture surveillance's multisensory dimensions adequately. Black women experience not only visual monitoring but also physical proximity violations, verbal interrogation, and spatial obstruction. Browne's concept of racialising surveillance more fully captures this embodied, multisensory monitoring that treats Black bodies as threats requiring containment.

Describing Black women as "perpetually out of place" risks naturalising exclusion as inevitable rather than politically produced. Consumer spaces are not inherently white; spatial whiteness is actively constructed through staffing decisions, design choices, product curation, and service protocols. Challenging racialised surveillance, therefore, requires denaturalising the assumption that white comfort should be prioritised at Black women's expense.

In practice, racialising surveillance manifests through security guards disproportionately following Black shoppers, CCTV systems tracking their movements, and algorithmic profiling that flags their behaviour as anomalous. These practices do not merely respond to threats; they actively produce Black consumers as threats, generating self-fulfilling prophecies in which heightened scrutiny elicits the very behaviours, receipt-checking, aisle avoidance, and exaggerated politeness, it claims to detect. Similarly, occupational misrecognition, where Black women are mistaken for service staff regardless of dress or

behaviour, reflects enduring racial scripts documented by Lee (2000) and Bennett et al. (2014), rooted in slavery's positioning of Black people as labour in service of white consumption.

Understanding how Black women navigate, resist, and negotiate their presence in ostensibly neutral consumer spaces, therefore, requires grappling with the intertwined dynamics of embodiment, whiteness, surveillance, and marketplace power. Only by holding structure and agency in tension can consumer research fully account for how racialised surveillance is both imposed upon Black women and actively negotiated in everyday consumption.

3.3. Conceptualising Stigma

Scholarly attention to stigma in consumer behaviour research, particularly regarding racialised experiences in marketplace settings, has significantly increased in recent years (Crockett et al., 2003; Pittman, 2017; Davis, 2018). The concept stems from Erving Goffman's foundational work, which framed stigma as a social process through which individuals or groups are devalued based on attributes considered undesirable within a specific cultural context. Goffman's framework has since been widely adopted across various disciplines, broadening the conceptual understanding of stigma and emphasising its significance in discerning discrimination in everyday interactions.

Despite its widespread acceptance, scholars have critiqued the concept for being overly diffuse and too focused on individual-level dynamics. Link and Phelan's (2001) reconceptualisation of stigma as necessarily operating "within systems of power" marks a crucial theoretical move, yet one whose implications remain incompletely developed for consumer research. By insisting that stigma requires not merely individual prejudice but *institutional capacity* to enforce labelling, separation, and status loss, they shift stigma from psychological to political-economic phenomenon. This matters for understanding marketplace discrimination: a Black shopper experiencing suspicion is stigmatised not simply because a security guard holds racist beliefs, but because retail institutions *authorise* that guard to act on those beliefs through surveillance systems, detention powers, and legal protections against discrimination claims.

However, Link and Phelan's framework arguably remains too structurally deterministic, potentially undertheorizing stigmatised subjects' agency. Their five-component model (labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, discrimination) positions stigmatised individuals primarily as victims of structural forces rather than as agents who resist, refuse, or strategically navigate stigma. For Black women consumers, this elision is consequential: it cannot account for how they challenge stereotypes through consumption choices, create alternative retail spaces, or deploy what Crockett (2017) terms "paths to respectability." A complete framework requires analysing both how institutions produce

stigma through power *and* how stigmatised subjects contest its terms, a dialectic between structure and agency that Link and Phelan gesture toward but do not fully develop.

RIM scholarship has productively applied stigma frameworks to consumer contexts. Saatcioglu and Osanne's (2013) synthesis of spatial theory for consumer research demonstrates how marketplace stigma operates through spatial arrangements that constrain marginalised consumers' access and mobility. Mirabito et al.'s (2016) "stigma turbine" extends this by theorising stigma as a multi-level phenomenon operating simultaneously at individual, social, and marketplace levels, a framework particularly valuable for analysing how Black women navigate stigmatisation across personal, communal, and institutional domains. Crockett's (2017) work on consumer stigma management reveals sophisticated strategies Black consumers deploy to counter stereotypes, though her framework arguably undertheorizes how structural racism limits the effectiveness of individual resistance.

Grier et al.'s (2024) review acknowledges that RIM needs more qualitative investigation of *how* consumers experience and make meaning from stigma, more intersectional analyses of race-gender dynamics, and more international research examining stigma's culturally specific operations. This dissertation addresses these gaps through a phenomenological investigation of Black women in the UK's stigma experiences, examining how UK-specific formations (class systems, imperial legacies) produce distinct stigmatisation patterns.

Goffman's (1963) own work remains central to understanding how stigmatised individuals navigate social spaces. He distinguishes between conditions in which a stigmatised attribute is immediately visible and known to others and situations where it is neither apparent nor assumed. As he notes: "Does the stigmatised individual assume his differentness is known about already or is evident on the spot, or does he assume it is neither known about by those present nor immediately perceived by them?" (p. 4). This distinction highlights the active interpretive labour required of stigmatised individuals, who must assess how their identities are perceived, anticipate potential judgment, and develop strategies to manage or mitigate stigma.

This dual perspective is particularly pertinent for understanding the experiences of Black women in consumer spaces. Their racialised identities are often both hypervisible and stereotyped, necessitating constant vigilance regarding how they may be read or misread. The need to evaluate whether their difference is immediately discernible or subtly inferred influences their movement through consumer spaces, shapes their interactions with service personnel, and requires forms of emotional labour that white consumers are seldom called upon to perform. This ongoing negotiation highlights stigma as not only an interpersonal experience but also a spatial and structural condition that profoundly influences consumer behaviour.

Link and Phelan (2001) attempted to conceptualise stigma and move beyond Goffman's description, noting that stigma is a complex phenomenon that can be applied to a range of circumstances and that offering different definitions is important. The multidisciplinary nature of research on stigma, with contributions from psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, social geographers, and, more recently, marketing, has also led to differences in emphasis and conceptualisation (Tyler and Slater, 2018). The conceptualisation of stigmatisation is experienced through "stigmatising looks, comments, slights, and remarks made in face-to-face or digitally mediated encounters" (Tyler, 2018, p. 17). As well as gaining a complete understanding of the current scenario, it is imperative to acknowledge its intrinsic connection to the broader frameworks of capitalism that perpetuate systems of oppression and control. These stigmatising behaviours, whether subtle or overt, can be understood as microaggressions, experienced by Black people in marketplace settings as forms of 'everyday racism.'

3.3.1. The Stigma Turbine in Consumer Contexts

Mirabito et al. (2016) conceptualise marketplace stigma through the *Stigma Turbine*. This unified framework situates it within a broader societal context and explains how different forces can either exacerbate or mitigate stigmatisation. The stigma turbine framework demonstrates how cultural ideas of what is 'normal' and 'deviant' are woven into marketplace practices, operating as a dynamic, multi-level force created and maintained across various areas of social life.

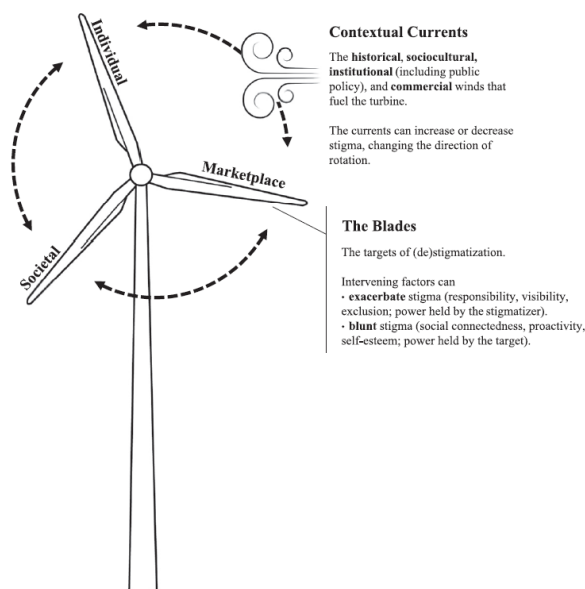


Figure 1: The Stigma Turbine (Mirabito et al., 2016)

The stigma turbine's three blades represent interconnected spaces in which stigma operates: the individual, social, and marketplace levels (Mirabito et al., 2016). These blades symbolise "possible targets for stigma" affected by various societal variables.

The individual blade shows how stigma intersects with personal and social identity. Identity is influenced by many factors, including consumption habits, as individuals often use goods, services, and brands to define themselves and express a sense of belonging (Saren et al., 2019). When stigma disrupts these identity efforts, such as when Black women's consumption choices are questioned or dismissed, it creates a conflict between self-perception and societal recognition.

The social blade emphasises the role of communities, organisations, and cultures in reinforcing or challenging stigma. Mirabito et al. (2016) note that "stigmas target subcultures whose values and ideologies run counter to what is considered normative in the broader culture" (p. 174). Institutions such as schools, workplaces, and peer groups help spread stereotypes and exclusions, thereby embedding stigma in daily interactions. At this level, stigma operates as a collective force, reinforced by cultural narratives and social norms that determine who is deemed legitimate.

The market blade illustrates how market actors, including brands, manufacturers, service providers, tech firms, media platforms, and consumers themselves, participate in stigma's reproduction. These actors are not only targets but also agents perpetuating stigmatisation. For example, brands that lack diversity in their campaigns, retail staff profiling Black shoppers, or algorithms that replicate biased pricing all contribute to marketplace stigma. These exclusions are not just symbolic; they define which identities are considered legitimate within consumer culture and directly impact marketplace access and experience.

Stigmatisation and destigmatisation are shaped by powerful "winds", *historical, institutional, sociocultural, and commercial forces* (Mirabito et al., 2016, p. 173), which exert pressure on the turbine. These metaphorical forces energise the marketplace stigma turbine, just as atmospheric winds power physical turbines. Conflicting winds can shift the turbine toward stigmatisation, destigmatisation, or stagnation.

Historical winds are stereotypes and attributions that may change or become more prevalent over time, as stigmas often emerge during specific historical periods (Mirabito et al., 2016, p. 173). For instance, racialised beauty standards reflect the historical roots of stigma rooted in colonialism and European expansion, continuing to influence contemporary retail practices and product development. These historical legacies shape which bodies and identities are valued in consumer markets.

Institutional winds include governments, public policies, and social institutions. Historical and institutional forces often intersect, as seen in narratives of business schools and the history of barriers that have hindered racial diversity in academic institutions. Arday (2018) exemplifies how, although times have changed, academics of colour still face, exist within, and navigate predominantly white

spaces. The institutional winds of the stigma turbine relate to critical race theory's emphasis on structural racism, demonstrating that stigma exists not just between individuals but is embedded within institutional structures and practices.

Sociocultural winds refer to cultural forces that maintain stigma through institutions and shared norms. They include cultural norms, beauty standards, and dominant narratives about who belongs in 'spaces,' sometimes creating and reinforcing symbols and ideas that define what is considered "normal," thereby legitimising accepted identities and behaviours while marginalising others. Because culture highlights certain identity markers over others, stigma is context-dependent: traits that are stigmatised in one cultural setting may be insignificant in another.

Commercial actors shape stigma through their products, pricing, branding, and marketing. Some campaigns reinforce stigma to attract attention and boost sales, while others challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion. As a result, commercial practices can either sustain or reduce stigma in the marketplace.

The turbine's value lies in its systemic framing: stigma is not produced at any single site but emerges from interactions *between* psychological internalisation (individual blade), community-level norms (social blade), and market actors' practices (marketplace blade), all energised by historical and institutional "winds."

Eichert and Luedicke (2022) point out that these "currents" do not flow evenly through society as the metaphor implies. Instead, consumers encounter a mix of repressive, enabling, and normalised societal images across various social settings where they live, work, and shop, often under fragmented stigma. The stigma turbine not only leads to disadvantages but also assigns lower validity to specific consumer identities.

However, the turbine metaphor also imposes limits. By spatialising stigma across discrete "blades," it risks obscuring the mutual constitution of these levels rather than merely their interaction. A Black woman experiencing surveillance in a store does not move sequentially through the individual, social, and market levels; she simultaneously experiences all three as a unified phenomenon. Her individual psychological response (hypervigilance) is *already* shaped by social knowledge (community warnings about "shopping while Black") and market structures (security protocols targeting Black shoppers). The metaphor's implied separability thus conflicts with intersectionality's insight that oppressions are inextricable (Crenshaw, 1989).

Furthermore, while Mirabito et al. (2016) acknowledge that "winds" can blow toward destigmatisation, their research undertheorises resistance. If stigma operates as a "turbine", a machine producing power, what are the mechanisms of disruption? How do stigmatised consumers jam the gears? The model's structural determinism leaves agency underspecified, a gap that consumer research can address by foregrounding how Black women do not merely experience stigma but actively contest marketplace meanings.

Tyler's (2020) insistence that stigma is "always enmeshed with wider capitalist structures" (p. 17) marks a crucial theoretical intervention, rejecting liberal frameworks that position stigma as an unfortunate prejudice separate from economic systems. By situating stigma within "structures of expropriation, domination, discipline and social control," Tyler demands we examine who profits from stigmatising Black consumers. This question transforms stigma from an interpersonal problem into a political-economic analysis.

Tyler's structural determinism risks under-theorising resistance. If stigma is enmeshed with capitalist structures, does challenging stigma require dismantling capitalism itself? This totalising analysis, while capturing systemic entrenchment, may leave little space for incremental transformation or for recognising how stigmatised subjects do not merely experience but actively contest stigma. Black women who organise boycotts, demand diverse product lines, create alternative retail spaces, or publicly challenge discrimination engage in anti-stigma politics *within* capitalism, even if not transcending it.

A complete analysis requires dialectical thinking: stigma is structural *and* contested, enmeshed with capitalism *and* subject to political challenge, systematically reproduced *and* potentially transformable. Tyler provides the structural analysis; consumer research must add the dimension of situated resistance. Within this framework, microaggressions, subtle, everyday slights reinforcing structural disadvantage, exemplify how stigma's "winds" manifest in daily consumer interactions. These ordinary interpersonal exchanges render structural racism acceptable and enduring, bridging the systemic logics of the stigma turbine with the embodied experience of racialised consumer subjectivities.

The relevance of the stigma turbine to this dissertation is that it can synthesise multiple dimensions of exclusion. It complements CRT's emphasis on the systemic normalisation of racism by demonstrating how stigma operates simultaneously on personal, social, and institutional levels. It also ties into CCT as it shows consumers undertaking identity work in such conflicted spaces, resisting stigma through the reclamation of cultural symbols, creating alternative consumption spaces, or selectively shopping at inclusive brands. Lastly, from a consumer behaviour perspective, the turbine accounts for observable trends such as marketplace avoidance, brand switching, and heightened loyalty to culturally affirming businesses.

Most significantly, the stigma turbine emphasises that stigma is neither stable nor static but rather dynamic and adaptive, evolving as cultural discourses, market strategies, and institutional practices evolve. It is this flexibility that makes stigma so resilient, and its study in consumer research so urgent. The turbine offers both an analytical and a metaphorical way to understand Black women's navigation of intersecting oppressions in the UK market. By positioning stigma as a pressure generated along the cutting edges of individual, social, and market blades, this framework makes visible the system pressures shaping consumer identity but also reveals the potential for resistance and change.

3.3.2. Stigma management

Stigma management for Black consumers in the marketplace includes strategies to address and overcome biases, discrimination, and negative stereotypes that can impact their consumer experiences (Crockett, 2017; Pittman, 2017; Wooten and Rank-Christman, 2021; Goffman, 1963). Other examples of stigma management strategies include educating others about the detrimental effects of stereotypes, advocating for equal treatment and representation, and actively challenging discriminatory practices or behaviours in the marketplace.

Recognising their position as stigmatised people involves identifying the social category imposed on them, understanding how others perceive it, and developing strategies to manage or mitigate its effects. In consumer spaces such as stores, gyms, or banks, this may include negotiating staff attentiveness, choosing where to stand or sit, adjusting tone and body language, or anticipating microaggressions. Goffman's framework underlines that stigma is not only socially constructed but also embodied, requiring Black women to navigate these spaces with heightened awareness of their visibility, vulnerability, and legitimacy as consumers.

Stigma management in marketing is grounded in Goffman's classic concept, which posits that people employ various strategies to manage their social identities and mitigate negative judgments from others (Bettany et al., 2022). For example, in consumer spaces, Black women and people who face stigmatisation may use stigma management tactics when seeking jobs. These tactics can include modifying resumes or job applications, selectively sharing information, or acquiring additional qualifications to counteract potential biases and improve their chances of getting hired. They might also need to overexplain themselves in white markets before anyone has a chance to single them out.

However, if stigma is only managed by the stigmatised individual, it suggests that the underlying system remains unchanged, as the focus is solely on alleviating symptoms rather than eliminating stigma. It is unreasonable to expect a solution if stigmatised people continue to adapt and cope within stigmatising spaces without addressing the fundamental issue. For example, if Black people in marketplaces consistently adapt to stigma, it may create the impression that they accept such mistreatment, saying, *"It is what it is, let us move on."* As a result, Black people may enter shops and airports, wary of being

viewed as thieves or smugglers. Consequently, they may see themselves as such because, when leaving a retail store, they might immediately check their pockets to ensure they have not 'stolen' anything, or at airports, when subjected to random and multiple searches, they might start to wonder if they are carrying something illegal, as they are already being treated as if they did wrong. When we fail to recognise and confront the inherent flaws and inequalities within specific systems, we risk perpetuating these injustices and widening the gaps of inequality, making it harder for Black people to manage the stigma linked to their race. Ignoring the flaws of systems rooted in weariness and caution allows them to continue operating unjustly and unfairly. This can erode trust in these systems and the institutions that sustain them, leading to deep disillusionment and frustration among those most affected.

In our diverse and complex society, people who are stigmatised because of their race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, or other aspects of their identity face unique and often challenging obstacles as they navigate the world. The idea of intersectionality recognises that social categories are interconnected and that people can face multiple forms of stigma simultaneously, adding extra layers of complexity. Considering this, stigmatised people must approach each situation with great care and thought, as they can be mistreated based on their stigmatised identities without even realising it. One difficulty that Black people encounter is recognising which part of their identity is being stigmatised in a specific situation. They may face discrimination due to their race, but also experience bias because of their gender, sexuality, religion, or other factors. This can make it hard for them to understand the root causes of their mistreatment and to respond effectively.

In response, consumers engage in identity work; some hide stigmatised traits in consumer spaces, while others practise resistance consumption, such as supporting Black-owned brands to affirm their identity and community. Meanwhile, oppressive and enabling representations continue to influence fields like agribusiness and manufacturing, potentially fostering new forms of homophobia and discrimination (Eichert and Luedicke, 2022). These diverse responses demonstrate that stigma management operates across a continuum, from individual coping strategies to collective resistance. However, the burden remains disproportionately placed on stigmatised consumers rather than on transforming the stigmatising marketplace structures themselves.

While stigma management strategies reveal how Black consumers actively respond to marketplace marginalisation, understanding the specific forms of harm they respond to requires examining microaggressions, the everyday slights and indignities that constitute contemporary marketplace racism. The following section turns to the definition and theorisation of these microaggressive encounters.

3.4. Conceptualising Microaggressions

Scholars have examined how stigma functions as a form of power, sustaining inequalities and contributing to the marginalisation of groups (Tyler, 2020; Tyler and Slater, 2018; Tyler, 2018; Link and Phelan, 2014; 2001). In this context, research emphasises the importance of stigma in marketplace spaces (Pittman, 2017; Mirabito et al., 2022), where people may face various forms of discrimination, bias, and mistreatment. Discrimination, as a central aspect of stigma, significantly influences people's experiences in the marketplace. It can manifest overtly through explicit acts of prejudice and bias, as well as subtly and covertly through microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007; Sue and Spanierman, 2019). Even when unintended, these actions contribute to a broader system of racism and can significantly affect the lives of Black people. Over time, repeated incidents can create a hostile and unwelcoming space for marginalised communities (Pérez Huber and Solorzano, 2015). Microaggressions mirror broader societal structures and beliefs that sustain racism, rather than being isolated occurrences.

Sue et al.'s (2007) foundational definition of microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and spatial indignities" (p. 273) performs important political work by naming harm previously dismissed as oversensitivity, yet the definition also reveals conceptual tensions. The qualifier "whether intentional or unintentional" attempts to capture racism's subtlety but creates an analytical problem: if intent is irrelevant, how do we distinguish microaggressions from accidents, misunderstandings, or structural effects no individual intends?

This ambiguity has methodological consequences. Critics like Lilienfeld (2017) exploit definitional vagueness to question microaggressions' validity, arguing that without intentionality criteria, any negative interaction could be classified as racist. While this criticism often serves to dismiss racism's reality, it identifies a genuine theoretical challenge: microaggression frameworks risk expanding racism so broadly that the concept loses analytical precision. If everything is potentially racist, how do researchers distinguish patterns of structural discrimination from isolated interpersonal friction?

However, this apparent weakness reveals Sue et al.'s (2007) deeper insight: the impossibility of determining intent is precisely the point. As Pérez (2019) later theorises, microaggressions function as "epistemic violence" through their deniability; perpetrators can always claim innocence while targets know they have been harmed. The ambiguity is not definitional sloppiness but rather describes racism's contemporary operation: plausibly deniable yet systematically patterned. For consumer research, this means analysing not whether individual acts were "really" racist but rather how accumulated ambiguous encounters produce material consequences (stress, avoidance, constrained choice) regardless of anyone's conscious intent. The question shifts from "was this racist?" to "what effects does this recurring pattern produce?"

Table 1 outlines 2 forms of marketplace discrimination. It shows how each form works, how shoppers encounter it, and which studies support the evidence. It provides a clear structure for distinguishing between explicit and subtle actions. It also shows where examples overlap because some stereotypes appear in both overt and covert practices.

Type of Discrimination	Description	Examples	Studies and References
Overt Racism	Openly discriminatory actions or policies that are explicit and observable.	- Use of racial slurs or offensive language. - Explicitly excluding certain racial or ethnic groups from marketing campaigns. - Promoting products based on racial stereotypes or caricatures.	• Harris, Henderson, and Williams (2005) • Schreer et. al. (2009), Gabbidon, and Higgins (2020) • Pittman (2017)
Covert Racism	Subtle, often unconscious forms of discrimination that are less obvious but still impactful.	- Packaging that may reinforce stereotypes. - Featuring predominantly white models or spokespersons in advertising campaigns. - Using coded language or imagery that perpetuates racial biases. - Targeting certain racial groups for exploitative marketing tactics.	• Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007. Garcia and Johnston-Guerrero, 2016; Essed, 1991).

Table 1: Types of discrimination

The distinction between overt and covert marketplace racism is not always absolute but rather operates along a continuum of *deniability*. What determines classification is not the racist content itself but rather whether perpetrators can plausibly deny racist intent. The same stereotype, for instance, positioning Black women as hypersexual, can manifest overtly (historical Jezebel imagery used defiantly) or

covertly (contemporary advertising using sexualized imagery while claiming to celebrate Black beauty). Both deploy identical stereotypes; what differs is the availability of plausible deniability.

This typology builds on extensive RIM documentation of marketplace microaggressions while extending analysis in three directions. First, where Pittman (2017), Harris et al. (2005), and Schreer et al. (2009) focus on US contexts, this research examines UK-specific manifestations shaped by British politeness norms and class systems. Second, while RIM scholarship productively documents *the occurrence and frequency of microaggressions*, this research examines *how* Black women interpret, make meaning from, and respond to these encounters. Third, whereas much RIM research analyses race as a primary category, this dissertation foregrounds intersectionality, examining how race and gender compound to produce microaggressions targeting Black women specifically rather than Black people generally or women generally.

Many believe that overt racism no longer exists, leading to the misconception that racism and inequality are relics of the past. Despite claims of equality and a post-racial era, subtle and systemic forms of racism, such as microaggressions, persist and influence the experiences of people of colour (Yosso et al., 2009; Sue et al., 2007). Arday (2018) highlights the irony of this situation: society claims to value egalitarianism, yet racial bias remains widespread. This racism often goes unrecognised or is denied by those who carry it out, and efforts by people of colour to share their experiences are frequently dismissed or invalidated.

Dumas (2013) notes that microaggressions have become so normalised that many people do not realise their actions are harmful. This normalisation reduces the perceived impact and discourages change (Friedlaender, 2018; Thurber and DiAngelo, 2017; Johnson et al., 2021). The resulting lack of accountability fosters feelings of isolation, exclusion, and marginalisation among people of colour (Settles et al., 2020; Saatcioglu and Osanne, 2013; Castilhos, 2019). These effects are heightened in predominantly white spaces, where people may face resistance, scrutiny, or hostility, including in marketplace spaces where they are often in the minority (Saren et al., 2019; Francis and Robertson, 2021; Grier et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, microaggressions are a pervasive part of daily life for many people, particularly those who belong to marginalised communities (Sue, 2010; Dumas, 2013). Among these microaggressions, racial ones are especially insidious, as they represent a shift from explicit forms of racism to more subtle and disguised expressions of racial bias (Beagan et al., 2020; Nadal et al., 2015). These covert remarks and actions are embedded in contemporary societal structures, creating the illusion that we have moved beyond racism (Arday, 2018). Discriminatory behaviours might remain under the pretence of neutrality or fairness because of this impression, which hides the nuanced and enduring ways in which racial

hierarchies function. Those in positions of authority frequently downplay or disregard these experiences, which feeds the myth that racism is no longer an issue. Society maintains injustices and makes disadvantaged people put in more emotional effort to navigate places that are designed against them by ignoring these racially biased dynamics.

Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015) rejection of the "micro/macro" binary exposes a consequential theoretical error: the prefix "micro" minimises what are macro-level structural violences experienced at intimate scales. When we say "microaggression," we linguistically code as "small" what targets experience as massive, the cumulative weight of daily exclusions. The terminology thus performs epistemic violence, invalidating Black women's experiential knowledge by suggesting they are upset over "minor" slights rather than recognising they are documenting systemic racism's everyday operation.

However, Pérez Huber and Solórzano's critique cuts deeper than semantics. By insisting racism cannot be neatly categorised as macro (structural) or micro (interpersonal), they challenge liberal frameworks that separate "big" racism (redlining) from "little" racism (a suspicious glance). This distinction allows white liberals to condemn historical racism while denying contemporary complicity: "Yes, slavery was terrible, but surely you are not comparing my innocent question to that?" The micro/macro binary thus serves ideological functions, positioning structural racism as past while rendering its present manifestations as isolated incidents attributable to individual bad actors rather than systemic patterns.

Critical race theory's concept of "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991) offers an alternative: racism is always simultaneously structural and interpersonal, macro and micro, systemic and intimate. A security guard following a Black shopper enacts individual bias (micro) and executes institutional policy (macro), and reproduces historical surveillance regimes (structural). Collapsing these analytical levels reveals how the personal is always already political. For consumer researchers, this means individual discriminatory encounters cannot be understood apart from the market systems, corporate policies, and racial capitalism that authorise and reward such practices.

The ambiguity that characterises microaggressions represents what Pérez (2019) theorises as "epistemic violence", a form of harm that operates by making discrimination difficult to name, challenge, or prove. Pérez argues that epistemic violence is "a structural phenomenon...a key factor, though unrecognised, in systems of privilege such as racism, sexism and cissexism, and as such it is strengthened by its imperceptibility" (p. 1).

In consumer contexts, microaggressions function as epistemic violence by creating situations where Black women know they have been harmed but cannot definitively prove discriminatory intent. When

a sales associate ignores them while serving white customers, when security follows them through a store, or when staff question their ability to afford merchandise, these encounters remain deniable; perpetrators can claim they were "just doing their job" or "did not mean anything by it." This deniability is precisely what makes microaggressions so insidious; they inflict harm while simultaneously undermining victims' capacity to name that harm as racism. The result is a double injury: the initial discriminatory act plus the epistemic invalidation that positions Black women's perceptions as questionable, oversensitive, or imagined. Pérez's research reveals that the "micro" in microaggressions does not refer to their impact but to their ambiguity, the way they operate below the threshold of provability while accumulating into significant psychological harm.

To illustrate the diverse manifestations of racial microaggressions within consumer spaces, Table 2 synthesises documented examples from existing literature, demonstrating how these subtle forms of discrimination operate across various marketplace interactions. These examples, drawn from empirical studies conducted by researchers such as Lee (2000), Schreer et al. (2009), Bennett et al. (2014), and Gabbidon and Higgins (2007), among others, provide a foundation for understanding the breadth and complexity of discriminatory encounters that Black consumers navigate in consumer spaces. While this typology provides a comprehensive overview of documented microaggression forms, it serves as a starting point rather than an exhaustive catalogue, as the manifestations of subtle racism continue to evolve in response to changing social contexts and marketplace dynamics.

Type of Microaggression	Example	Research
Assuming Criminality	A store security guard closely follows a Black customer, assuming they might shoplift.	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.
Exclusion	Sales staff pay more attention to white customers, neglecting or ignoring Black customers.	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.
Invasive Touching	Store employees touch a Black person's hair without permission, treating it as a curiosity.	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., and Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62(4), 271–286.

Underestimating Affluence	Assuming a Black customer cannot afford expensive items and directing them to lower-priced options.	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.
Backhanded Compliments	Praising a Black customer with comments like "You are so articulate for a Black person."	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., and Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62(4), 271–286
Microinvalidations	Downplaying or dismissing racial concerns raised by Black customers.	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., and Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62(4), 271–286.
Colour-blindness	Saying "I do not see colour; we are all the same," when discussing diverse products.	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., and Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62(4), 271–286.
Tokenism	It features only one person of colour in its promotional materials, creating a façade of diversity.	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.
Ignorant Comments	Asking a customer, "What are you?" or "Where are you really from?"	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.
Lack of Cultural Sensitivity	Creating products or advertisements that perpetuate racial stereotypes.	Pittman, C. (2017). "Shopping While Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 44(6), 1177–1197.

Table 2: Types of microaggressions

This typology reveals patterns in how marketplace microaggressions function: they question Black women's legitimacy as consumers (assuming criminality, underestimating affluence), erase their specific needs (colour-blindness, lack of cultural sensitivity), tokenise their presence (tokenism), and treat their bodies as spectacle (invasive touching). Together, these practices communicate that Black women are unexpected, unwelcome, and out of place in white-dominated consumer spaces.

Building on existing types of research, this research argues that our understanding of marketplace microaggressions is missing some key points. First, while many studies have looked at the types and frequency of microaggressions, they have not focused much on how Black women understand, deal with, and react to these experiences over time. Second, the research often ignores how various aspects of identity, like race, gender, class, and age, interact to create unique patterns of discrimination. Third, current frameworks view microaggressions as isolated incidents, overlooking how they accumulate and interconnect within larger systems that exclude people from the marketplace. This gap limits our understanding of how individual experiences contribute to the mundane yet extreme spatial stress that Pierce (1970) described as the experience of Black consumers. Finally, while research notes these incidents, it does not provide enough insight into their long-term psychological, behavioural, and economic effects, or how these effects influence consumer behaviour. This research aims to fill those gaps through detailed, qualitative analysis, highlighting not just how common microaggressions are but also how they shape marketplace experiences, reinforce exclusion, and maintain racial inequality.

Current microaggression research faces three main limitations. Firstly, studies often focus on how frequently and what types of microaggressions occur, but seldom explore how Black women interpret, find meaning in, or respond to these experiences over time. Secondly, intersectional analysis remains underdeveloped; most research looks at race or gender separately rather than their combined effects. Thirdly, frameworks tend to view microaggressions as isolated incidents instead of considering how they accumulate within larger systems of exclusion.

This research addresses these gaps by conducting in-depth qualitative analysis centred on Black women's meaning-making, using intersectional frameworks that consider how race and gender interact, and exploring how microaggressions build up over time. The next section discusses these cumulative psychological impacts.

3.5. Identity and Consumer Culture Theory

This section establishes how consumer spaces operate as white spaces structured through stigma that manifests in everyday microaggressions. This section examines consequences for consumer identity and well-being, showing how Black women engage in identity work under these constrained conditions. Rather than viewing consumption as free self-expression, we examine it as a form of negotiation within racially hierarchical systems.

Consumer identity reflects how individuals draw on brands, commodities, and market practices to construct, negotiate, and perform self-meaning (Black and Veloutsou, 2017). These identity projects are already shaped by systemic racism and inequality within marketplaces. As sites where microaggressions and stigma are prevalent, marketplaces compel consumers, particularly those from marginalised groups, to engage in continuous negotiation, adaptation, and resistance as they form their identities. Despite its significance, racial identity remains under-theorised in marketing and consumer research, even though it profoundly influences the experiences of a substantial portion of consumers.

Wooten and Rank-Christman (2021) highlight this gap, noting that existing frameworks often overlook race as a determinant of consumer behaviour. Similarly, Williams et al. (2008) emphasise the scarcity of research on race in leading consumer studies, reflecting the broader neglect of marketplace diversity. This limited attention constrains understanding of consumer behaviour and undermines the potential of consumer identity to inform discussions on societal inequities. Henderson and Rank-Christman (2016) caution that without a comprehensive inquiry into marketplace diversity, including racial dynamics, our knowledge of consumer experiences among diverse populations remains incomplete, with implications for both scholarly insight and consumer well-being.

CCT's foundational premise, that consumers are "active meaning-makers" who creatively appropriate marketplace resources for identity projects (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 868), offers a vision of consumer agency. However, developed primarily through studies of white, middle-class consumers, embeds problematic assumptions when applied to racially marginalised communities. The notion of creative appropriation presumes a marketplace organised to facilitate self-expression, where constraints are productive tensions rather than violent exclusions. For Black women facing surveillance, product scarcity, and microaggressions, consumption is less creative play than defensive negotiation.

The tone regarding consumer agency risks reproducing neoliberal ideologies that position market participation as freedom while obscuring how capitalism constrains which identities are marketable, profitable, or even survivable. When Arnould and Thompson (2018) later acknowledge that market "freedoms and opportunities are unevenly distributed" and can "entail significant costs" including

"microaggressions directed at stigmatised consumers" (p. 5), this caveat feels inadequate, a footnote to a theory whose core concepts (agency, creativity, appropriation) does not fully account for how racism does not merely "constrain" but fundamentally reconstitutes consumption as survival work. For Black women, consumption becomes identity work under duress rather than playful self-fashioning.

Rather than consumers "doing identity work," we might theorise consumers defending identities under assault. Rather than "appropriating marketplace resources," we might examine navigating marketplaces that appropriate Black culture while excluding Black bodies. Rather than "negotiating meanings," we might analyse contesting the meanings imposed on Black consumers (criminal, undeserving, out of place). This reframing reveals that the optimistic account of consumer agency obscures the defensive, exhausting labour Black women perform to access marketplaces that white consumers navigate effortlessly. The question becomes not how consumers express identity through consumption, but how racialised consumers maintain dignity despite consumer systems designed to deny it.

Crockett's (2017) concept of "paths to respectability" shows how Black consumers strategically deploy consumption to counter stereotypes, though this identity work occurs under constraint rather than as free self-expression. Their call for analysing how race shapes not just consumers but consumption systems themselves aligns with this dissertation's approach: examining both how Black women engage in constrained identity work *and* how marketplace structures limit which identities are viable, profitable, or survivable. This requires moving beyond celebrating consumer creativity to analysing why such creativity becomes a necessary survival strategy in hostile spaces, a both/and analysis balancing agency and structure.

Grier et al. (2024) highlight the importance of research examining how racial identity is constructed, negotiated, and expressed through consumption practices. This recognises consumers of colour as active agents who use marketplace resources to craft identities, build communities, and resist dominant cultural narratives. Studies in this area have explored topics such as ethnic product preferences, the role of consumption in maintaining cultural traditions, and how marginalised groups use consumer goods to assert dignity and belonging in contexts of exclusion. Grier et al. (2024) note that representation in marketing communications remains a critical concern, with ongoing debates about authentic versus tokenistic inclusion and the politics of who gets to represent racial communities in commercial messaging. This research stream challenges deficit-based narratives that position communities of colour solely as victims of marketplace oppression.

Although the broader concept of consumer vulnerability is often used to capture heightened risk of harm in marketplace contexts, this dissertation deliberately does not adopt this framework. Foundational formulations of consumer vulnerability (e.g., Baker et al., 2005; Hill and Sharma, 2020) define

vulnerability as arising from individual characteristics (e.g., age, disability, or literacy) or situational conditions (e.g., illness, bereavement, or financial shock). While presented as protective and sympathetic, this framing performs important ideological work. By locating vulnerability within consumers rather than markets, it subtly redefines structural harm as individual deficit, positioning the appropriate response as education, accommodation, or protection rather than systemic transformation. For Black women, this framework is analytically inadequate. Conceptualising their marketplace disadvantage as “vulnerability” implies a temporary or contingent condition, rather than recognising racism as a permanent, structural feature of market organisation. Crucially, consumer vulnerability frameworks cannot explain why financially secure, highly educated Black women continue to experience discrimination in retail, service, and digital marketplaces. By anchoring harm in consumer attributes rather than institutional arrangements, the framework obscures how race and gender operate independently of class position or individual competence.

Moreover, the language of the “vulnerable consumer” risks infantilising the very subjects it seeks to protect. It casts consumers as passive recipients of harm requiring paternalistic intervention, rather than as political actors navigating, resisting, and contesting exclusionary market systems. Such framings sit uneasily with the empirical realities documented in this dissertation, which reveal Black women engaging in sophisticated strategic reasoning, identity management, and resistance in response to racialised marketplace conditions.

The forms of harm examined here are better understood as structurally produced vulnerability: an enduring condition generated by racialised and gendered market logics rather than by individual weakness or situational fragility. For Black women, vulnerability emerges through the cumulative emotional toll of routine exclusion, the material consequences of discriminatory service encounters, and the embodied labour required to manage surveillance, stigma, and misrecognition. These experiences are not episodic disruptions, but patterned outcomes of persistent inequalities tied to race and gender.

Accordingly, this dissertation avoids the term *consumer vulnerability* as conceptualised by Baker et al. (2005) and Hill and Sharma (2020). Black women are not inherently vulnerable, nor do they enter marketplaces predisposed to harm. Rather, vulnerability is actively produced through racially structured marketplace systems that normalise surveillance, differential treatment, and exclusion while rendering these practices commercially rational and institutionally invisible.

Reframing vulnerability as structurally generated shifts the analytical focus away from individual coping, resilience, or adaptation, and toward the institutional, spatial, and commercial arrangements that make harm predictable in the first place. The appropriate scholarly and political response, therefore,

is not to help Black women better endure unjust market conditions but to interrogate and dismantle the marketplace structures that render them vulnerable at all.

Hall's (1996) formulation of identity as a matter of *becoming as well as being* performs important political work. It rejects both essentialist claims of a fixed, authentic Black identity and liberal assimilationist demands that racialised subjects "become British." Instead, Hall conceptualises identity as a process, continuously produced through historical conditions, cultural practices, and political struggle. For consumer research, this view requires recognising that marketplace interactions do not merely reflect pre-existing Black British identities but actively participate in producing them through product availability, representations of belonging, and everyday encounters with inclusion or exclusion.

Hall's emphasis on representation is particularly valuable for analysing consumer culture. Advertising, packaging, store design, and brand messaging shape what it means to be a "Black British consumer" by determining which Black bodies are visible, in what contexts, and under which assumptions. These representations are not neutral. For example, initiatives such as Fenty Beauty's expanded shade ranges do more than respond to demand; they validate Black identity as legitimate and economically valuable. Conversely, the persistent neglect of Black consumers' needs constructs Black British identity as marginal and commercially insignificant.

However, Hall's anti-essentialism poses challenges when applied to consumer spaces characterised by rigidity rather than fluidity. While identity may be *becoming* at the cultural level, Black women encounter marketplace systems that impose fixed racial meanings: surveillance that treats Black bodies as inherently suspicious, product scarcity that ignores internal diversity, and microaggressions that override individual self-presentation. These practices limit negotiation and foreclose the possibility of becoming.

This tension exposes the limits of Hall's optimism around "new ethnicities." In contemporary marketplaces, multicultural rhetoric often functions performatively, celebrating diversity while leaving exclusionary structures intact (Banet-Weiser and Glatt, 2023). The analytical task, therefore, is dialectical: to examine how identities are produced through marketplace interaction while also recognising how market structures actively work to freeze Black identity into manageable, profitable categories. Consumer research must attend to both identity as emergent and identity as constrained by commercial logics seeking stability, predictability, and control.

Liu and Kozinets's (2022) analysis of "courtesy stigma management" among China's "leftover women" offers a conceptual tool for understanding how stigmatised consumers engage in identity work under structural constraint. However, their framework requires extension to capture racial stigma's distinct

operations. Their concept of "courtesy stigma", stigma transferred from stigmatised individuals to those associated with them, highlights how consumer identity work involves not only managing one's own stigmatised status but also navigating relational networks where stigma circulates.

However, applying this framework to Black women's marketplace experiences reveals important distinctions: while "leftover women" face culturally specific gendered stigma they might potentially escape through marriage, Black women face racial stigma that is visible, permanent, and operates through different mechanisms than courtesy stigma's relational transmission. Liu and Kozinets's attention to how consumers deploy consumption practices to resist and rework stigmatising labels nevertheless provides analytical leverage for examining Black women's strategic consumption. Their finding that stigma management requires ongoing, exhausting identity work resonates with this dissertation's analysis of the emotional and cognitive labour that Black women perform as they navigate hostile consumer spaces. Where their framework focuses on individual-level identity strategies, this dissertation extends analysis to examine how intersectional stigma (operating through both race and gender simultaneously) requires collective rather than merely individual responses, and how structural racism makes some identity strategies available to other stigmatised groups unavailable to Black women.

It is within this tension between becoming and fixation that respectability politics emerges as a crucial analytical lens. The cumulative psychological and emotional costs of navigating racialised consumer spaces, characterised by surveillance, misrecognition, and anticipatory stress, help explain why Black women engage in complex identity management strategies. Rather than viewing these practices as individual coping mechanisms or voluntary performances, this dissertation conceptualises respectability politics as a structurally induced response to marketplaces that render Black presence conditional and precarious. Respectability thus becomes a negotiated practice through which Black women strive to secure safety, legitimacy, and access within spaces that continually question their belonging.

3.5.1. Respectability politics

In consumer contexts, respectability politics manifests through practices such as dressing formally for routine shopping trips, carefully curating visible brand markers, monitoring speech patterns, and carrying "proof" of legitimacy (e.g., receipts, credit cards, identification). These strategies align with Crockett's (2017) paths to respectability. While such practices can sometimes mitigate discriminatory encounters, they are not neutral adaptations. Instead, they require Black women to accept a fundamentally racist bargain, one in which dignity, safety, and fair treatment are conditional upon proximity to whiteness and the performance of "good" Blackness in contrast to pathologised racial imaginaries.

The respectability politics framework, therefore, exposes a cruel double bind. Refusing to perform respectability often invites heightened surveillance or exclusion, while performing it tacitly legitimises the very system that demands it. As Harris (2014) argues, respectability politics shifts responsibility for racism onto its victims, implying that discrimination results from improper presentation rather than structural racism.

At the same time, dismissing respectability politics as merely an accommodation risks oversimplifying Black women's strategic reasoning. The decision of when to employ respectability, when to resist it, and when to selectively disengage represents a form of agency exercised under conditions of constraint. Therefore, the analytical task is not to assess whether Black women *should* engage in respectability politics; they already do, often as a survival strategy, but to theorise how such practices are influenced by, and in turn respond to, spaces structured against their flourishing. Respectability politics are thus both adaptive and constraining, resistant and reproductive.

Crucially, however, these negotiations come with costs. The constant need to manage appearance, behaviour, and behaviour-based judgement requires sustained emotional, cognitive, and bodily labour. Over time, this labour accumulates, leading not only to behavioural adaptation but also to psychological strain.

It is at this point that respectability politics must be viewed as a pathway into race-based stress and trauma rather than merely a cultural or symbolic practice. The necessity to continually anticipate how one will be perceived, misperceived, or sanctioned in racialised consumer spaces instils a sense of vigilance into everyday consumption. This anticipatory mindset, monitoring one's body, speech, and emotions to pre-empt harm, links identity management to chronic stress exposure. Consequently, respectability politics function as a mechanism through which structural racism is internalised at the level of affect and embodiment, translating market exclusion into lived psychological consequences.

3.6. Resistance and Consumer Agency

3.6.1. Strategic Responses to Racialised Marketplaces

Rank-Christman and Wooten (2022) improve our understanding of Black consumer agency by documenting strategic responses to marketplace exclusion, rather than portraying Black consumers solely as passive recipients of discrimination. Their research shows that Black consumers actively interpret racialised marketplace cues and respond with calibrated strategies shaped by context, resources, and necessity. They identify three primary response patterns: approach, in which consumers actively seek out inclusive brands and retailers; avoidance, in which consumers withdraw patronage

from discriminatory establishments; and advocacy, through which consumers demand accountability, representation, and institutional change.

Importantly, these responses are not uniform or ideologically driven but are negotiated on a situational basis. Black consumers make calculated decisions based on product necessity, availability of alternatives, economic constraints, and emotional capacity for confrontation. For instance, a consumer may choose to avoid luxury retailers where exclusion is anticipated while continuing to shop in grocery stores despite experiencing microaggressions due to limited alternatives. Rank-Christman and Wooten (2022) also introduce the concept of brand vigilance, describing how Black consumers continuously monitor corporate behaviour for racial insensitivity and quickly mobilise collective responses, such as boycotts or social media campaigns, when boundaries are violated (Hawkins, 2010). This framework challenges deficit-oriented models of consumer vulnerability by highlighting Black consumers' strategic competence, interpretive labour, and their ability to shape marketplace dynamics through everyday consumption choices and collective action.

Roux and Isberk-Bilgin's (2018) theorisation of consumer resistance offers a broader conceptual framework for understanding how marginalised consumers engage with exclusionary market systems. They define resistance as practices that "oppose, thwart, escape, or circumvent marketing techniques and powers" (p. 296), involving both overt confrontation and subtler forms of strategic withdrawal. Notably, resistance is not confined to dramatic acts of refusal but includes mundane, often invisible practices that allow consumers to navigate hostile spaces while minimising exposure to harm.

For Black women consumers, resistance operates at multiple levels: individual (supporting Black-owned businesses), collective (participating in boycotts or online callouts) (Hawkins, 2010), and systemic (advocating for regulatory or policy change) (Friedman, 2017). Everyday decisions, such as shopping online to avoid in-store surveillance, prioritising retailers with diverse staff, or requesting receipts to pre-empt accusations of theft, constitute resistant practices, even if consumers do not explicitly label them as such. Roux and Isberk-Bilgin's framework is particularly insightful in showing that resistance and participation are not mutually exclusive; Black women often remain embedded in mainstream markets while simultaneously resisting their exclusionary logics through tactical adaptations. This perspective avoids romanticising resistance by acknowledging its emotional costs and structural limitations, while still recognising Black women's agency within constrained market conditions.

If stigma is only managed by the stigmatised individual, it suggests that the underlying system remains unchanged, as the focus is solely on alleviating symptoms rather than eliminating stigma. It is unreasonable to expect a solution if stigmatised people continue to adapt and cope within stigmatising

spaces without addressing the fundamental issue. For example, if Black people in marketplaces consistently adapt to stigma, it may create the impression that they accept such mistreatment, saying, "It is what it is, let us move on." As a result, Black people may enter shops and airports, wary of being viewed as thieves or smugglers.

Consequently, they may see themselves as such because, when leaving a retail store, they might immediately check their pockets to ensure they have not 'stolen' anything, or at airports, when subjected to random and multiple searches, they might start to wonder if they are carrying something illegal, as they are already being treated as if they did wrong. When we fail to recognise and confront the inherent flaws and inequalities within specific systems, we risk perpetuating these injustices and widening the gaps of inequality, making it harder for Black people to manage the stigma linked to their race. Ignoring the flaws of systems rooted in weariness and caution allows them to continue operating unjustly and unfairly. This can erode trust in these systems and the institutions that sustain them, leading to deep disillusionment and frustration among those most affected.

In our diverse and complex society, people who are stigmatised because of their race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, or other aspects of their identity face unique and often challenging obstacles as they navigate the world. The idea of intersectionality recognises that social categories are interconnected and that people can face multiple forms of stigma simultaneously, adding extra layers of complexity.

Considering this, stigmatised people must approach each situation with great care and thought, as they can be mistreated based on their stigmatised identities without even realising it. One difficulty that Black people encounter is recognising which part of their identity is being stigmatised in a specific situation. They may face discrimination due to their race, but also experience bias because of their gender, sexuality, religion, or other factors. This can make it hard for them to understand the root causes of their mistreatment and to respond effectively.

In response, consumers engage in identity work; some hide stigmatised traits in consumer spaces, while others practise resistance consumption, such as supporting Black-owned brands to affirm their identity and community. Meanwhile, oppressive and enabling representations continue to influence fields like agribusiness and manufacturing, potentially fostering new forms of homophobia and discrimination (Eichert and Luedicke, 2022). These diverse responses demonstrate that stigma management operates across a continuum, from individual coping strategies to collective resistance. However, the burden remains disproportionately placed on stigmatised consumers rather than on transforming the stigmatising marketplace structures themselves.

3.6.2. Beyond Respectability: Care and Markets

While much consumer research identifies resistance at the level of individual or collective action, the Care Collective's (2020) *Care Manifesto* offers a more radical intervention by reimagining markets as sites centred around care rather than extraction. Advocating for "universal care" throughout social institutions, including commercial spaces, the manifesto reframes economic activity to focus on meeting human needs and fostering collective flourishing. In consumer contexts, this vision necessitates fundamental restructuring: retail spaces designed for bodily diversity and comfort; product development grounded in sustained engagement with marginalised communities; service protocols prioritising dignity over suspicion; and labour practices that support workers rather than render care work invisible.

For Black women, care-centred markets would create spaces where attentive service is not accompanied by surveillance, products address their needs without being relegated to marginalised "ethnic" categories, and their presence is welcomed rather than policed. Importantly, the Care Collective emphasises that care cannot merely be added to existing market logics; it requires a transformation of economic organisation itself, shifting from profit maximisation towards relational accountability and collective wellbeing.

Hutton's (2019) analysis complements this argument by demonstrating how contemporary markets have become systematically "care-less." Arguing that market structures prioritising efficiency, shareholder value, and scale actively erode the conditions necessary for caring relationships to flourish. In consumer spaces, this manifests through self-service technologies that reduce interpersonal accountability, algorithmic systems that obscure bias, and corporate consolidation that limits consumer choice. For Black women, these developments exacerbate existing vulnerabilities: automation deflects responsibility, reduced staffing curtails opportunities for humane service encounters, and market concentration constrains exit options when discrimination occurs.

Together, these perspectives suggest that addressing marketplace racism requires more than inclusive branding or diversity training. It demands a structural reorientation of market logics themselves, one that recognises care, dignity, and justice not as peripheral ethical concerns but as foundational principles of equitable consumer spaces.

3.7. Race-Based Stress, Trauma, and Anticipation

Carter (2007) describes a psychological model of race-based traumatic stress, explaining that both major events and ongoing small slights can cause lasting harm over time. He points out that the most harmful types of racism may not be physical but psychological, showing that race-based trauma is often widespread and complex to detect. Similarly, Scurfield and Mackey (2001) note that exposure to race-

related trauma is a key factor in developing adjustment and stress disorders. Racial discrimination has been shown to affect mental health negatively, but its impact on people can vary depending on individual experiences and coping mechanisms (Polanco-Roman et al., 2016; Williams and Mohammed, 2009; Chou et al., 2012). In communities affected by racism, these effects are even more intense because racism interacts with social inequalities to heighten stress, trauma, and mental health issues (Hudson et al., 2015). Studies have demonstrated that the damage caused by racism is not limited to isolated incidents; it accumulates over time, impacting generations through discrimination, economic hardships, biased policing, high incarceration rates, and loss of life (Hudson et al., 2015).

Hope et al.'s (2021) concept of "anticipatory racial stress" makes a significant contribution to stress research, demonstrating that the harm of racism often occurs before racist acts take place. If bodies react to the *expectation* of discrimination with measurable stress responses, then racism operates over time, about past experiences that inform expectations, present anticipatory stress, and future predicted encounters, thereby blurring the traditional boundaries between event and aftermath, cause, and effect. However, framing this phenomenon as "anticipatory stress" risks pathologising what is, in fact, a rational assessment of danger. When Black women feel anxious before entering predominantly white consumer spaces, this is not a dysfunctional stress response; it is appropriate vigilance given the empirical reality that discrimination is likely to occur. By labelling this response as "stress," the focus shifts to Black women's bodies (their anxiety, cortisol levels, and hypervigilance) rather than highlighting the racist spaces that elicit these reactions.

Black women must invest significantly more time in consumption than their white counterparts to mitigate the effects of racism. Consumer research must investigate not only the psychological costs of anticipatory stress but also its economic implications. How much time and energy does navigating racist marketplaces extract from Black women's lives? What opportunities are lost due to this forced investment? Whose interests are served by consumer systems that require such labour?

Hochschild's (1983) foundational theorisation of emotional labour provides critical insight into the affective dimensions of racialised consumption. While originally developed to analyse service workers' management of emotion within paid employment, Hochschild's distinction between surface acting (displaying emotions one does not feel) and deep acting (actively shaping internal feelings to conform to display rules) extends powerfully to consumer contexts, particularly for marginalised shoppers.

Black women in consumer spaces engage in sustained emotional labour: suppressing anger in response to microaggressions, performing pleasantness to counter stereotypes of the "angry Black woman," and regulating anxiety triggered by surveillance or misrecognition. Unlike service workers, however, this

labour is uncompensated and unrecognised; it is required not as part of employment but as a condition of accessing goods and services.

The continual need to regulate emotion, maintain composure in hostile spaces, and project a non-threatening affect exemplifies what Hochschild terms transmutation (Hochschild, 2012), in which authentic feelings are transformed into socially acceptable displays. For Black women consumers, this transmutation is racially mandated: failure to perform appropriate emotional labour risks reinforcing racialised stereotypes or provoking further discriminatory treatment. Over time, this affective discipline becomes a key pathway through which marketplace racism is internalised as psychological strain and embodied fatigue.

While it is well known that racial discrimination negatively impacts mental health, the specific ways these experiences damage psychological well-being are still not well understood (Fani et al., 2021). Racism occurs not only through personal interactions but also at a structural level, creating systemic inequalities and shaping spaces that seem exclusively designed for white people. In these spaces, non-dominant groups are often marginalised, excluded, or targeted in ways that reinforce their outsider status (Pérez Huber and Solórzano, 2015). These dynamics produce more than material obstacles; they cultivate a widespread feeling of alienation and psychological insecurity, which can be especially intense in consumer settings. Markets frequently perpetuate these inequalities both openly and subtly.

While spatial analyses have largely dominated critical consumer research, the temporal aspects of consumption are still underexplored. Recent work by Goor et al. (2024) on post-consumption meaning making begins to address this gap. It demonstrates that consumer experiences extend beyond the moment of purchase into reflective phases, where meanings are solidified, and future behaviours are planned. Understanding meaning-making reveals how marketplace racism operates not only in spatial terms (where discrimination occurs) but also in temporal dimensions (how it accumulates over time, how anticipation can be harmful, and how the effort to recover extends the consumption experience beyond the point of sale).

The dissertation aims to deepen our understanding of how markets reflect and perpetuate the effects of racial inequality and injustice. By situating the analysis within consumer spaces, it highlights how marketing campaigns, product development, and everyday consumption practices both reflect and exacerbate structural inequalities. The focus on Black women's experiences highlights how intersectional discrimination produces what has been called Black Fatigue, the cumulative physical and emotional toll of navigating predominantly white spaces that continually fail to acknowledge or serve their needs (Winters, 2020).

3.7.1. Black Fatigue

Being a Black person in predominantly white spaces carries a significant burden and responsibility, as noted by Anderson (2015). It involves navigating spaces where one's race can make them stand out, encounter stereotypes, and face racial biases (Winters, 2020; Anderson, 2022: 2015; Crockett et al., 2003). Constant awareness of being different and the need to manage potential discrimination can have a profound emotional impact and weigh heavily on Black people (Pager, 2007; Pachankis et al., 2018). Being Black often requires a state of heightened vigilance and attentiveness, stemming from the understanding that one's Blackness can increase susceptibility to various forms of discrimination, prejudice, and bias (Crockett et al., 2003). To protect themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally, Black people may feel compelled to anticipate potential acts of racism and proceed cautiously in their surroundings (Winters, 2020; Anderson, 2015: 2022). This increased alertness reflects the challenges and barriers faced by Black people in society (Winters, 2020).

Mary-Frances Winters describes this as Black fatigue, “repeated variations of stress that result in extreme exhaustion and cause mental, physical, and spiritual maladies that are passed down from generation to generation. It is a deeply embedded fatigue that requires Herculean effort to sustain an optimistic outlook and enormous faith to continue believing “we shall overcome someday” (p. 63). As discussed by Anderson (2022) and explained by Winters, navigating white spaces, such as consumer spaces, contributes to Black fatigue. Black people often bear the burden of advocating for equity, inclusivity, and the eradication of structural racism to create spaces where everyone can thrive without the stress of stigma and discrimination (Winters, 2020; Acuff, 2018).

This implies that Black people often find themselves in the position of educating others about appropriate language and behaviour, constantly reminding people about what constitutes microaggressions. They must explain why certain phrases, such as "Are you sure this is where you need to be?" implying that Black people do not belong, are unacceptable. They bear the responsibility of addressing discrimination, even though they are not the perpetrators, and constantly articulating the profound impact of marginalisation and exclusion in the marketplace. The burden of advocacy can be emotionally taxing and demanding, as it requires constant vigilance and the readiness to confront these issues. It involves repeatedly sharing their experiences without taking the initiative to educate themselves. What can sometimes be overlooked is that Black people alone may not have the power to transform the marketplace system; it often requires white people to leverage their whiteness and privilege to drive systemic change.

The terms "tired," "exhausted," and "fatigued" have different meanings that are important for understanding experiences of ongoing discrimination. The Oxford Dictionary defines tiredness as needing sleep or rest, exhaustion as having depleted strength or energy, and fatigue as extreme tiredness

from mental or physical exertion that lasts a long time. This difference in language shows how words fail to fully express the toll of navigating racialised spaces.

The key difference lies in recovery: tiredness and exhaustion suggest that rest can fix them, making weariness seem temporary and manageable. Fatigue, however, continues even after rest, challenging the idea that self-care can solve deeper structural issues. This ongoing nature of fatigue is essential for understanding reactions to stigma and discrimination, although framing "fatigue" in a medical way risks making a rational response to irrational social conditions seem like a problem.

Modern covert racism works through this unending exhaustion. The shift from overt exclusion (like "no Blacks allowed" signs) to covert microaggressions (such as colourblind statements like "I do not see race" or condescending remarks like "You are so articulate") does not represent progress but rather a restructured form of racist power. While overt racism's clarity removed the need for interpretation, covert racism weaponises ambiguity. Black women must constantly engage in what Sue et al. (2008) refer to as "sanity checks": questioning whether an interaction was discriminatory, which aspect of their identity was targeted, and whether speaking out risks being dismissed as "oversensitive."

However, romanticising the "straightforwardness" of overt racism should be approached with caution, as it risks downplaying historical trauma by implying that explicit violence was less harmful because it was clear-cut. The important takeaway is that covert racism adds interpretive work to existing material harm, creating the exhaustion of constant translation, justification, and self-doubt faced by those experiencing discrimination while being denied the authority to name it. Thus, "fatigue" reflects not just intensity but also chronicity and irremediability, how systemic oppression becomes ingrained in the body, resistant to individual solutions because its source is structural, not personal.

Black people are constantly forced to be on high alert, anticipating and navigating numerous circumstances that may develop because of racial stereotypes and biases, causing the above-mentioned fatigue. As noted in Table 2, they are frequently falsely accused of theft, regarded as out of place in some neighbourhoods, or questioned about their capacity to purchase specific goods, such as a particular car. They are driven to speak up for themselves in these situations, opposing and addressing the prejudices and unfair assumptions that are placed on them. According to Acuff (2018: 175), "Black people accumulate emotional and psychological baggage after being required to perform, function, and thrive in a world that was created with the goal of Black people failing on multiple levels" According to Anderson (2022), a phenomenon known as The Deficit of Credibility exists. This happens when a Black individual enters a predominantly White space and is immediately marginalised, causing them to feel like an outsider. Stereotypes then come into play, further distancing the Black individual. Sadly, any anonymous Black person may face social exclusion in these situations, particularly young Black

males. The root cause of this scenario is not the individual's traits, but simply their skin colour (Anderson, 2022).

What is of particular concern is the extent to which this kind of surveillance becomes normalised. For Black people, discriminatory targeting is a familiar part of life, an experience of participating in white spaces. This normalisation exemplifies one of the key postulates of CRT: that racism is not an abnormality but a systemised and everyday problem. Although episodes might be minimised or refuted in the moment, their aggregate effect is substantial, causing not only psychological damage but a "deficit of credibility" (Anderson, 2015; Gallagher, 2022). Anderson's notion explains how Black people's very existence within white spaces is constantly challenged, their selves being strained through racial lenses that yield doubts about their validity and believability.

3.7.2. Racial battle fatigue

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) emphasises the cumulative effects of chronic exposure to racism, shifting the focus from whether discrimination occurs to the consequences of navigating hostile spaces. Smith et al. (2006) highlight that racism's harm goes beyond overt violence, manifesting in psychological and physiological responses among Black consumers.

However, the metaphor of "fatigue" may inadvertently place the blame on Black people rather than the racist systems at play. Instead of framing RBF as an individual issue ("How can we help Black consumers manage their fatigue?"), The focus should be on systemic changes: "How must consumer spaces transform to stop producing fatigue?" This perspective reveals the damaging impacts of spaces where one's humanity is questioned, and counters claims that racism is merely about "hurt feelings." RBF offers a framework for understanding the cumulative toll of racism, but researchers must avoid pathologising Black consumers while addressing the trauma inflicted by discriminatory marketplaces. The challenge lies in validating Black women's exhaustion without normalising the systems that create it.

Drawing from fields such as education (Smith et al., 2006), psychology, and sociology, RBF highlights the cumulative toll of racism on people from racially marginalised and stigmatised groups (Martin, 2015). It recognises that these experiences extend beyond emotional strain, involving physiological, psychological, and behavioural responses to racism (Francis and Robertson, 2021; Acuff, 2018). Notably, Martin (2015) argues that racial microaggressions are not only connected to but central in the development of RBF, as they represent persistent, everyday stressors that accumulate over time. In this way, microaggressions function as a catalyst for both RBF and the broader phenomenon of Black Fatigue, illustrating how subtle, routine acts of racism can have profound long-term consequences for health and well-being.

Less attention has been paid to *how* Black consumers interpret fatigue, *what meaning* they make from exhaustion, or *which strategies* they develop for collective survival rather than merely individual coping. Moreover, more research is needed to theorise temporal dimensions, how fatigue *accumulates* across shopping, how *anticipating* discrimination produces fatigue before encounters occur (Hope et al., 2021), and how past experiences shape future expectations in self-reinforcing cycles. This dissertation addresses these gaps through longitudinal analysis of how Black women experience, interpret, and respond to accumulating marketplace fatigue across time.

Henderson et al. (2016) provide crucial conceptual clarity around hypervigilance as a core component of racial battle fatigue in consumer contexts. They define hypervigilance as "a state of increased alertness and threat scanning" that Black consumers maintain in anticipation of discriminatory treatment (p. 149). Unlike clinical hypervigilance associated with trauma disorders, racial hypervigilance represents a rational, adaptive response to spaces with documented patterns of discrimination.

In marketplace settings, this manifests through constant monitoring of one's own behaviour (keeping hands visible, avoiding pockets, handling products minimally), scanning for threats (tracking security personnel, noting hostile looks from staff or customers), and preparing exit strategies if situations escalate. Henderson et al. (2016) emphasise that hypervigilance extracts significant cognitive resources; mental energy devoted to threat detection cannot simultaneously process product information, compare prices, or enjoy the shopping experience. This cognitive depletion accumulates across repeated shopping trips, contributing to the exhaustion characteristic of racial battle fatigue. The authors also note gender dimensions; Black women face hypervigilance demands shaped by intersecting stereotypes about race and gender, requiring simultaneous management of assumptions about criminality, hypersexuality, and economic status.

Table 3 compares Black Fatigue and RBF, highlighting how cumulative racial stress affects Black people. It outlines key features, including constant vigilance, stress responses, and health impacts, and shows how everyday microaggressions contribute to both phenomena. The table situates these concepts within broader discussions of racialised experiences, linking daily encounters with racism to mental, physical, and emotional consequences.

	Black Fatigue	RBF
Description	Black fatigue is the cumulative effect of experiencing several types of stress, resulting in extreme exhaustion and the emergence of mental, physical, and spiritual ailments (Winters, 2020)	RBF acknowledges experiences with and responses to racial microaggressions reported by faculty of colour in white institutions (Smith et al., 2006).
Key Elements	• Constant Vigilance • Racial Stressors • Societal Barriers	• Stress Responses • Energy Expenditure • Health Implications

Table 3: Introducing Racial Battle Fatigue. (Descriptions sourced through Winters (2020) and Smith et al. (2006)).

In consumer spaces, RBF provides a crucial framework for understanding how Black women negotiate markets shaped by whiteness. Everyday stressors include being followed or closely watched by security while shopping, having their returns or payments questioned more than white customers, or encountering shop assistants who ignore them but eagerly serve white shoppers. Being assumed to be staff rather than a customer, or having their natural hair, clothing, or accent scrutinised or mocked, also functions as a constant reminder that they are seen as “out of place.”

While RBF originated within educational institutions, it can be appropriated and adapted to interrogate consumer spaces, a move that warrants scrutiny regarding its theoretical transportability and epistemic validity. This extension raises fundamental questions: Do marketplace dynamics merely replicate educational patterns of racial harm, or do they operate through distinct logics requiring different analytical frameworks? Can a concept developed to explain institutional interactions between students and gatekeepers adequately capture the diffuse and depersonalised violence of consumer capitalism?

Bone et al.'s (2023) theorisation of "restricted choice" posits a causal relationship between systematically constrained marketplace options and the erosion of Black consumers' self-efficacy and psychological well-being. However, this formulation risks naturalising neoliberal assumptions about consumer agency while potentially obscuring how structural violence operates through the very premise of "choice" itself. The framework treats marketplace participation as a site where agency can be realised or denied, rather than interrogating whether consumer culture fundamentally circumscribes Black women's subjectivity within capitalist logics that already position them as commodified others.

More critically, restricted choice operates not only at the level of individual autonomy but as a mechanism of economic extraction. For Black women, constraints are not merely quantitative (fewer options) but qualitative: choices are organised to communicate devaluation. Being offered three

foundation shades instead of forty is not simply a reduced choice but a racialised message of marginality. Systematic neglect forces Black consumers to shop outside their communities, pay premiums for "ethnic" products, and subsidise retailers that exclude them, transferring capital from Black to white commercial spaces. Framed this way, restricted choice is less about preference and more about racialised market design, a technology of dispossession disguised as consumer freedom.

Ultimately, the language of "choice" itself may be insufficient. Black women's marketplace decisions often involve forced trade-offs between dignity, safety, and access rather than selections among equivalent alternatives. Consumer theory must therefore move beyond documenting constrained choice toward theorising what it means to be compelled to participate in markets organised around one's dehumanisation.

Bennett et al.'s (2016) distinction between marketplace trauma via commission (active exclusion) and omission (systemic neglect) offers analytical precision in mapping how marketplace racism operates through both overt exclusion and structural invisibility. However, framing these as parallel forms of harm risks obscuring their unequal mechanisms and political implications. Acts of commission, being followed by security guards, questioned about payment methods, or denied service, are visible, attributable, and potentially sanctionable. Omission, by contrast, is infrastructural: the absence of products for darker skin tones, limited representation in marketing, or inadequate haircare options cannot be traced to a single actor but emerges from accumulated market decisions embedded in segmentation, design, and distribution strategies.

This distinction matters because it shapes where accountability is placed. The Commission invites responses focused on individual prejudice, disciplinary action, bias training, and complaint procedures. At the same time, omission demands structural intervention, including resource redistribution, investment in Black consumers, and reconfiguration of market research and design priorities. The former seeks inclusion within existing systems; the latter calls for their transformation.

However, what remains undertheorised is how omission functions not merely as passive neglect but as an active strategy of racial capitalism. This deliberate structural arrangement produces Black absence as economically and socially profitable. The cumulative harm Bennett et al. identify demands deeper engagement with how trauma becomes normalised, routinised, and rendered invisible within everyday consumer practices, transforming systemic violence into mundane marketplace friction.

Moreover, Bennett et al.'s framework maintains an overly rigid separation between commission and omission. Empirically, the two are deeply intertwined. Structural omissions, limited product ranges, exclusionary store locations, or absent representation authorise interpersonal acts of commission by

rendering Black consumers peripheral and suspect. Surveillance and questioning do not occur in isolation; they are legitimised by market structures that signal who belongs and who does not. Marketplace racism, therefore, operates dialectically, with omission enabling commission and making everyday discrimination appear as rational business practice rather than racial harm.

Thomas and Blackmon's (2015) documentation of "retail redlining" usefully spatializes marketplace trauma, exposing how systematic disinvestment manufactures unequal geographies of consumption. However, their focus on resource expenditure (time, transportation, emotional labour) as consequences of spatial injustice may inadvertently centre neoliberal efficiency metrics rather than fundamentally questioning who benefits from these extractive arrangements.

A more radical analysis might interrogate retail redlining not simply as barriers to access, but as constitutive of anti-Black spatial regimes that delimit where Black bodies "belong" in consumer landscapes, rendering Black women's marketplace presence perpetually "out of place" even when physically present. Retail redlining operates as both material disinvestment and symbolic violence, producing spatial arrangements that naturalise Black exclusion while extracting resources (capital, labour, time) from Black communities. The question is not merely how Black consumers navigate inhospitable retail spaces, but how these spaces function to discipline, surveil, and constrain Black mobility and belonging within broader projects of racial-spatial ordering.

3.7.3. Racial Battle Fatigue and Black Fatigue in Consumer Contexts

The primary distinction between the two frameworks lies in their scope and temporality. RBF captures the embodied consequences of repeated racialised encounters within identifiable spaces, emphasising real-time coping and response. Black Fatigue, by contrast, foregrounds how past oppressions, present microaggressions, and anticipated future harms accumulate across the life course and across generations. This distinction is particularly instructive for understanding consumer experiences. While RBF helps explain the immediate stress of being followed, monitored, or questioned in a store, Black Fatigue captures how such encounters resonate with longer histories of racial surveillance, from plantation oversight to contemporary retail security, and how they shape anticipatory anxiety and future consumption practices.

First, consumer encounters are typically brief yet highly repetitive. Unlike workplaces or educational institutions, which involve prolonged engagement with a single space, consumer spaces require Black women to repeatedly enter, navigate, and exit multiple sites, often within a single day. Each encounter demands renewed anticipation, respectability politics, and post-encounter emotional processing. This repetition intensifies cumulative stress, as moments of vigilance are rarely offset by sustained periods of safety or familiarity.

Second, consumer spaces are uniquely structured around normalised surveillance. Retail spaces routinely deploy cameras, mirrors, security guards, and loss-prevention practices, all presented as neutral measures to prevent theft. When these systems disproportionately target Black shoppers, they enact what Browne (2015) describes as *racialising surveillance*: forms of monitoring that are specifically calibrated to Black bodies. Unlike surveillance in schools or workplaces, retail surveillance is often informal, ambiguous, and difficult to contest, reinforcing uncertainty about whether one is being monitored and why.

These features render marketplace fatigue distinct in both form and effect. RBF helps illuminate the immediate physiological and psychological strain produced by being followed, scrutinised, or subtly questioned during shopping encounters. Black Fatigue, however, captures how these repeated experiences accumulate across time, feeding into broader patterns of exhaustion, resignation, and emotional withdrawal from consumer participation. Together, these frameworks reveal that marketplace racism is not experienced as a series of isolated incidents but as an ongoing condition that shapes how Black women anticipate, endure, and recover from everyday consumption.

3.8. Conclusion

This literature review has highlighted five central insights. First, consumer spaces are structured as white-dominated spaces, both materially and symbolically, where Black presence is often rendered exceptional or suspect. Second, exclusion operates through multilevel stigma mechanisms spanning individual, social, and market domains, sustained by historical and institutional forces. Third, these structural dynamics manifest in everyday microaggressions that challenge Black women's legitimacy, erase their needs, and regulate their bodies. Fourth, prolonged exposure to such conditions generates high psychological costs, including anticipatory stress, Black Fatigue, and Racial Battle Fatigue, which profoundly affect well-being. Fifth, in response, Black women engage in strategic identity work, including respectability politics, to navigate hostile marketplaces, though these strategies themselves carry substantial emotional and cognitive burdens.

Existing scholarship has documented marketplace discrimination (Crockett, 2017; Pittman, 2020), examined white spaces (Anderson, 2022), and theorised racial stress (Smith et al., 2006). However, notable gaps remain. Research often focuses on discrete incidents rather than the cumulative, temporal unfolding of racialised consumption across anticipation, encounter, and aftermath. While spatial theory is well-developed in geography and sociology, its application to consumer research, particularly in understanding how Black women navigate hierarchically encoded spaces, remains limited.

Embodied dimensions of consumption, capturing how racism is experienced viscerally through the body, are still underexplored despite phenomenological traditions emphasising embodiment. Intersectional analyses that distinguish the specific experiences of Black women from those of Black men or white women are scarce. Finally, while scholarship frequently documents harm, less attention is given to Black women's agency, resistance strategies, and demands for systemic change. This dissertation addresses these gaps by providing a spatially and temporally grounded, intersectional, and phenomenologically informed analysis of how Black women navigate, resist, and survive racialised consumer spaces.

RBF is central to understanding these experiences. It includes a spectrum of psychosocial and behavioural responses to repeated exposure to racism, including frustration, anxiety, hypervigilance, emotional numbing, cognitive strain, and physical manifestations such as ulcers or disrupted sleep (Smith et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2016; Polanco-Roman et al., 2016; Franklin et al., 2014). These responses are cumulative, arising from constant microaggressions, structural exclusion, and the ongoing need to navigate discriminatory spaces. RBF reflects chronic hypervigilance and emotional exhaustion, with implications for well-being, productivity, social relationships, and professional growth. It also serves as a lens for understanding how Black consumers expend energy in resisting and coping with racism, revealing the systemic and relational forces that sustain inequality. Recognising RBF underscores the need for both individual and structural interventions to mitigate racial stress, providing critical insight into how Black women negotiate White-dominated market contexts.

Despite this, there remains a limited understanding of how these processes intersect in the lived experiences of Black women consumers, particularly regarding embodied fatigue and context-specific coping strategies. This dissertation seeks to illuminate these convergences, offering a nuanced account of resilience, resistance, and survival in the face of persistent racialised market exclusion.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach chosen to explore the lived experiences of Black women in consumer spaces. The research integrates Black feminist perspectives and critical theory to examine power dynamics, intersectionality, and broader social structures that sustain inequality. The Black feminist lens emphasises the significance of understanding how gender, race, and identity intersect within systems of oppression (Collins, 2000), while critical race theory provides a framework for analysing and exposing the systemic mechanisms that perpetuate discrimination (Poole et al., 2021). Together, these approaches aim to investigate the systemic inequalities present in consumer spaces and their role in maintaining microaggressions and marginalisation.

To achieve this, the research employs in-depth interviews, a qualitative method that values participants' lived experiences and reflexivity. This facilitates an exploration of the subtle dynamics of discrimination in consumer interactions and centres Black women's voices to reveal the complexities of their lived realities. Data collection is grounded in reflexivity, inclusivity, and awareness of power relations, ensuring that the research aligns with its goal of amplifying marginalised perspectives. The chapter also describes the data analysis process, which involves coding and categorising participants' lived experiences, followed by interpretation informed by relevant theoretical frameworks. Hermeneutic phenomenology and Black Feminist Thought (BFT) guide this process, providing tools to situate individual lived experiences within broader cultural, historical, and systemic contexts. Finally, the chapter discusses ethical considerations and methodological limitations, outlining the steps taken to ensure rigour, accountability, and participant well-being throughout the research process.

Research Aim

This research examines how Black women navigate racialised consumer spaces, exploring how spatial experiences shape their identity, emotional well-being, and safety, and the practices they develop in response.

1. **RQ1:** How do Black women negotiate and perform identity in consumer spaces of racialised consumer encounters?
2. **RQ2:** How do racialised consumer spaces shape the emotional and embodied experiences of Black women across marketplace navigation?
3. **RQ3:** What navigational and coping practices do Black women employ to preserve safety, dignity, and well-being within exclusionary consumer spaces?

Taken together, these questions highlight a series of related gaps in the literature. They go beyond simply documenting exclusion to explore how discriminatory consumer spaces influence identity, meaning-making, embodiment, emotional well-being, and coping. They also emphasise the cumulative impact of racialised consumer experiences by introducing the concept of *Black fatigue*. By focusing on the voices of Black women, the research contributes to CRT, CCT, and Black Fatigue by demonstrating how microaggressions and systemic exclusion affect consumer lives, while also shedding light on the resilience and strategies that Black women use to navigate these spaces.

4.2. Research Philosophy

This research is grounded in a research philosophy that draws on Black feminist thought, Black feminist epistemology, and hermeneutic phenomenology. Black feminist thought provides a critical lens to examine and understand the structural and systemic dimensions of oppression and the ways intersecting hierarchies of power shape Black women. This approach helps view Black women not merely as passive subjects of oppression but as active navigators of complex social realities, highlighting their agency in constructive ways. Black feminist epistemology extends this critical perspective by centring how knowledge is produced and validated from the standpoint of Black women's experiences. This challenges dominant Eurocentric epistemologies that have excluded Black women's perspectives. Hermeneutic phenomenology complements these frameworks by offering a methodological approach for interpreting lived experiences. Emphasising understanding phenomena through subjective and interpretive experiences, this enables a nuanced exploration of how Black women make sense of their navigation in consumer spaces. All these frameworks align with centring subjectivity, relationality, and the interpretive processes of meaning-making among Black women.

The selection of this philosophical combination was not neutral or arbitrary. It reflects a deliberate orientation toward research that is epistemologically honest, research that acknowledges the social position of the knower as constitutive of the knowledge produced, rather than as a contamination to be controlled. This researcher did not adopt Black feminist thought as a convenient theoretical tool. It was arrived at because it was the only framework that adequately described the conditions under which both the researcher and the women interviewed produce and navigate knowledge about their own lives. The methodological choices throughout this chapter should be read with that origin in mind.

4.2.1. Black Feminist Thought

Consumer space interactions offer vital insights into the dual realities faced by Black women: while confronting ongoing discrimination and marginalisation, they also demonstrate impressive creativity in navigating these barriers, creating economic opportunities, and advocating for systemic change (Sobande et al., 2019). Consistent with the research's core aims, intersectional research prioritises amplifying Black voices (Sobande, 2019). Building on the Race in the Marketplace network (Johnson

et al., 2019), this research views the marketplace as an inherently racialised space where power relations are expressed in everyday interactions (Poole et al., 2021). Within these spaces, Black feminist thought challenges the assumption of objectivity and neutral market dynamics, exposing how racial power structures are embedded in consumer experiences and institutional practices. This framework enables the examination of how consumer spaces intersect with race and power, while challenging dominant narratives that sustain exclusion and inequality. This aligns with Pittman's (2020) observation: "Blacks' consumption has been restricted, constricted, or taxed, or examined the degree that Black prosperity is punished in the market" (p. 5).

Rooted in Black feminist thought, this research offers both critique and creative potential. As Emejulu and Sobande (2019) highlight, "Black feminism does not merely operate against violence and exclusion but creates and fosters a unique way of seeing and being in this world. Black feminism is always a creative and dynamic production of thinking and living otherwise" (p. 3). Collins's (1989) work provides the theoretical basis for this research, arguing that Black feminist thought rearticulates existing consciousness by infusing elements of Black women's culture and traditions with new meaning. This rearticulated consciousness functions as a tool of resistance against subjugation. Ji et al. (2022) describe this process as how individuals "construe, understand, and make sense of life experiences" (p. 1016), emphasising that meaning-making occurs through re-articulation, shaped by existing knowledge and understanding (Collins, 1986; 1989). The concept of re-articulation is particularly relevant to this research, as it indicates that meaning-making is both an individual and collective endeavour (Goor et al., 2024). When Black women share stories of their marketplace encounters, they reinterpret familiar patterns of discrimination, imbuing them with new meanings that reinforce resistance as a routine practice.

Black feminism "radically dissents from and subverts the hegemonic constructions of Black women as either irrelevant and invisible objects or alien Others" (Emejulu and Sobande, 2019, p. 3). It recognises the intersectionality of various forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, and capitalism, and examines how they generate distinct forms of marketplace discrimination (Sobande, 2019). Johnson et al. (2019) position markets as essential social spaces that play "a critical role in the social life of any modern society and are meaningfully connected to ways of expressing love and care" (p 8-9). Within these spaces, Black feminist thought challenges the notion of objective knowledge by emphasising the link between power and knowledge (Collins, 2000). As Collins (1989) stresses, "Living life as a Black woman requires wisdom and knowledge since knowledge about the dynamics of race, gender, and class subordination has been essential to Black women's survival" (p. 758). This perspective demands that Black experiences and realities be positioned on their own terms, especially in consumer spaces where dominant lived experiences often exclude Black perspectives. It introduces Black consciousness by emphasising the importance of recognising and challenging systemic oppression and socialised

marginalisation (Collins, 2000). This highlights Black women as active agents. It informs the knowledge production needed by Black women to navigate consumer spaces and assert themselves more easily.

Black feminist theory emphasises the importance of situating oneself within knowledge production processes (Alinia, 2015). By defining reality on their own terms and reclaiming their lived experiences, Black women can challenge hegemonic power dynamics and assert their agency in shaping knowledge and discourse within the marketplace and beyond. Collins (1989) powerfully articulates: "Black women cannot afford to be fools of any type, for their devalued status denies them the protections that white skin, maleness, and wealth confer" (p. 759). By centring Black women's social theory, Collins effectively shifts the discussion toward highlighting the importance of Black women and Black feminist thought (Dotson, 2015). This charge was held throughout the research, not only on behalf of participants, but also as a reflexive imperative for a researcher who shares their social location and therefore their stakes in how this knowledge is produced and used.

This understanding aligns with Poole et al.'s (2021) assertion that "the key to abating marketplace racism no longer centres on advancing agentic options specific to consumers but rather focuses on exposing and radically transforming systems, policies, institutional norms, and dominant cultural expectations that are racially oppressive" (p. 135). Poole et al.'s (2021) assertion can be linked to CRT's racial realism and a shared recognition through which racism in consumer spaces is maintained and reproduced. By building on the CRT foundation, scholars have significantly advanced their understanding of racial dynamics in commercial contexts (Poole et al., 2021), particularly in consumer research. For example, Grier et al. (2019) examine Black consumers' strategic responses to marketplace discrimination, while Johnson et al. (2019) analyse how Black communities create alternative spaces that challenge dominant power structures. Additional insights emerge from researchers such as Thomas et al. (2020), Grier (2020), Grier et al. (2017), Pittman (2020), Crockett, Grier, and Williams (2003), and Rosa-Salas (2019). However, while valuable, these studies have not fully leveraged Black feminist thought as a methodological framework. This theoretical absence suggests an opportunity to deepen our understanding of marketplace dynamics through the distinctive lens of Black feminist thought.

Sobande's (2019) application of Black feminist thought to marketplace research reveals how consumption spaces can be both sites of oppression and resistance. Building on her work, this research explores how Black women navigate consumer spaces while bearing the weight of historical and contemporary racial dynamics, and how intersectionality shapes their experiences. Collins (2000) states that women are generally more likely than men to draw on their lived experiences or knowledge, asserting that knowledge stems from understanding. This approach illustrates, for example, how a Black woman's experience of discrimination in consumer spaces might differ from that of a Black man, or

how class position mediates experiences of racial profiling in stores. It is not to suggest that one suffers more than the other, but rather that different intersecting identities face distinct struggles.

Black feminist thought in this research enabled a reflexive and socially conscious approach to knowledge, yielding results that are both empirically grounded and theoretically transformative. Black feminist theory provides the theoretical foundation for understanding systemic power dynamics and intersectional experiences. Integrating Black feminist epistemology will then offer specific methodological tools for knowledge production and validation of experiences (Collins, 1989). As Collins (1989) emphasises, Black feminist epistemology goes beyond just theoretical critique to establish alternative ways of knowing, dialogue, and personal lived experiences as valid sources.

4.2.2. Black Feminist Epistemology

Epistemology seeks to understand the standards used to assess knowledge, or why we believe what we believe to be true (Collins, 2000, p. 252), helping us identify how power relations influence who is believed and why. To interpret these power relations and systemic patterns of racialised consumer experiences, this research turns to Black feminist epistemology, a theoretical lens that not only highlights the intersectional challenges faced by Black women but also centres their lived experiences as a fundamental source of knowledge and understanding (Haynes et al., 2020). Collins (1986) argues that knowledge production must acknowledge the unique standpoint of Black women and their experiences at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression.

This epistemological framework is not only academically relevant but also personally clarifying. Black feminist epistemology articulates what the researcher already knew but had been trained by dominant academic conventions to distrust: that experiences as a Black woman are not merely anecdotal data points but a form of knowledge in their own right. When feminist epistemology encourages the researcher to reflect on how their social position influences the evidence they gather and the conclusions they draw, it is asking precisely the kind of reflexive reckoning that produced this dissertation.

CRT incorporates standpoint epistemologies, a concept rooted in Black feminist thought, to explore how knowledge is shaped by hierarchically valued social experiences (Jones, 2009). Standpoint epistemologies argue that knowledge is not neutral or universal but is instead profoundly influenced by social positions and power relations (Hundleby, 2020). The perspectives and knowledge of dominant social groups are frequently normalised as universal “truths,” while those of marginalised or subaltern groups are often devalued or rendered invisible (Collins et al., 2021). Feminist epistemology further underscores how traditional methods of knowledge production have been shaped by patriarchal structures and biases, which have led to the exclusion or marginalisation of women's perspectives and

experiences. This framework highlights that individuals' social locations, interests, and biases influence the evidence they prioritise, the questions they ask, and the interpretations they make.

As Ashton and McKenna (2018) argue, feminist epistemology emphasises the importance of critically examining how power dynamics, lived experiences, and social identities shape what constitutes valid knowledge. Using CRT and feminist epistemology, the selected framework aims to challenge dominant lived experiences and centre marginalised voices, recognising their unique contributions to understanding systemic inequalities. When examining Black women who have experienced racial microaggressions in consumer spaces, a feminist epistemological approach encourages the researcher to reflect on how their social position and societal structures influence the evidence they gather and the conclusions they reach. In this context, feminist epistemology emphasises the importance of recognising and interrogating how power relations, social identities, and lived experiences shape what is considered valid knowledge (Wigginton and Lafrance, 2019; Luna et al., 2024).

Black feminist epistemology served as a guide in centring the ways of knowing, interpreting, and understanding consumer spaces for Black women. Instead of Eurocentric epistemologies that claim marginality for Black women's perspectives, it recognises that knowledge is socially situated and tied to experiences and the knower's positioning. Black feminist epistemology provides the framework for validating marginalised knowledge, and hermeneutic phenomenology offers tools for analysing how individuals make meaning of their lived experiences. Together, these frameworks enable both micro-level analyses of individual experiences and macro-level understanding of systemic patterns of discrimination, maintaining theoretical rigour while ensuring methodological coherence.

4.2.3. Phenomenology

Phenomenology, originating in the early 1900s through the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl, introduced a transformative approach to philosophy by emphasising the centrality of lived experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). It aims to describe the essence of a phenomenon through the eyes of those who have experienced it (Neubauer et al., 2019). In this case, phenomenology will be applied to describe various experiences. This involves not only documenting the specific experiences of microaggressions faced by Black women but also understanding how these experiences are perceived, interpreted, and felt. This approach highlights the broader social and cultural contexts that influence people's experiences. Langdrige (2007) defines phenomenology as a discipline that "aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience" (p.4). The objective is to delve into the complexities of these experiences, acknowledging that the meanings attached to them are inherently subjective and vary across individuals and contexts (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Phenomenologists reject the subject-object dualism in positivism and the scientific enterprise, which posits a rigid separation between the objective world and our subjective perceptions (Langdridge, 2007). In the realm of experiences related to racial bias in the marketplace, this dualism is particularly problematic. Phenomenologists recognise that human perception is deeply contextual (Neubauer et al., 2019). The subjective experiences of Black people are intertwined with cultural, historical, and societal factors. The strict separation between the objective world and subjective perceptions oversimplifies the complexity of these interactions. Phenomenology argues that experiences of discrimination and bias are highly contingent on cultural backgrounds, societal structures, and historical contexts. By rejecting the rigid separation of subject and object, phenomenology accommodates the emotional dimensions of lived experiences. The subject-object dualism also often fails to capture the power dynamics inherent in social interactions (Langdridge, 2007). While phenomenology provides a foundation for examining lived experiences, it does not fully account for how these experiences are interpreted, narrated, and situated within broader contexts. This is where hermeneutics extends by emphasising that experiences are always mediated through language, meaning, and interpretation.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a discipline that focuses on the theory and practice of interpretation. It involves examining how we make sense of various things, such as texts, cultural practices, and lived experiences (Alsaigh and Coyne, 2021). The main aim of hermeneutics is to create meaning and understanding by identifying subtle nuances and overlooked elements of an experience (Muganga, 2015). This process goes beyond simple translation, as it involves interpreting the underlying meanings, emotions, and cultural contexts that shape the experience (Alsaigh and Coyne, 2021). Gadamer (1975) held a distinctive view on understanding within hermeneutics. He believed that hermeneutics does not offer a method for understanding, but rather helps us recognise the conditions that make understanding possible. He emphasised that understanding is a state of 'being in the world' and that tradition plays a vital role in interpretation. Gadamer (1975) argued for respecting multiple worldviews while remaining true to our perspectives and experiences. He also believed we can utilise our 'pre-understanding' to explore deeper interpretations of events and experiences. Heidegger (1962) also highlighted the importance of pre-understanding and interpretation in our world and our knowledge of our existence.

For this research, the researcher's pre-understanding was substantial. The researcher entered every interview already familiar, at an embodied level, with many of the spatial dynamics participants described: the hypervigilance before store entry, the body management under surveillance, the strategic self-presentation. This pre-understanding was not bracketed in the phenomenological tradition but, following Gadamer, was brought into accountable relation with participants' own accounts. The challenge was to ensure that this pre-understanding enriched rather than foreclosed interpretation, that

it opened the text of participants' experiences rather than substituting the researcher's own meaning for theirs.

All human understanding is based on the historical pre-structures of reality, so hermeneutic phenomenology requires us to be aware of and continually analyse universal phenomena (Nigar, 2019). This indicates that understanding is often context-dependent, and to fully grasp something, we must consider the broader circumstances in which it exists. Just as phenomenology highlights the immediacy of lived experiences and hermeneutics stresses the process of interpretation, hermeneutic phenomenology recognises that lived experiences are never accessed in a purely raw and unmediated form but are interpreted by those who experience them as they reflect, as well as by researchers seeking to understand these accounts.

Hermeneutic phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology serves as a key methodological approach, providing a framework for exploring the tensions, contradictions, and symbolic meanings that emerge within individuals' lived experiences (Thompson, 1996; Wilson, 2012). Mandavilli (2023) explores the concept of a 'personalised sociocultural frame of reference', referring to an individual's cultural background, including their social categories, common-sense beliefs, knowledge, and interpretive frames. This provides a context for an individual to make sense of their experiences and construct their self-identity. By drawing on the personalised sociocultural frame of reference of Black people, they can construct personalised meanings from their experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). This means that the same experience can be interpreted differently by different individuals, depending on their cultural background and personal beliefs, but it can also form a collective identity (Hungara and Nobre, 2021).

This is where intersectionality can help with understanding. Hermeneutic phenomenology, as presented by Gadamer (1975), aligns with the aim of this research and provides a framework for exploring the experiences of Black people with a deeper understanding of the phenomena of minority vulnerability and gatekeeper discretion (Roscigno et al., 2009) in relation to discrimination and microaggressions in consumer spaces. It recognises that people construct their reality through interpretation and seeks to understand the intricate meanings embedded within their lived experiences, as stated in Black feminist epistemology.

As stated above, Black feminist thought and epistemology assert that knowledge is rooted in experiences and perspectives. Adopting Mandavilli's (2023) personalised sociocultural frame of reference allowed for a better understanding of how societal norms and personal identities intersect to shape experiences. This accounted not only for structural inequalities but also for the personalised and context-dependent ways Black women interpret consumer space interactions and contextual coping. For

example, Black women might encounter the same discriminatory behaviour but respond differently based on intersectional identities such as race, geography, prior experiences, age, class, and education. Black women are influenced not only by their cultural background but also by the political and economic discourses of their space (Bhar, 2019). They draw on these discourses and use their beliefs and constructs to inform their actions.

Simultaneously, consumers employ their agency to shape their actions in unique ways that reflect their individuality (Schau, 2018; Nunes et al., 2021), as “consumers are identity creators and seekers, and they engage in the constructs of lived experiences of identity in consumption practices” (Ndichu and Upadhyaya, 2018; p.44). It is vital to recognise that consumers are not passive recipients of sociocultural influences but active agents who utilise their agency to shape their identities and behaviours (Bhattacharjee et al., 2014). Understanding the consumer as an identity project-driven subject situated within a sociocultural context will enable marketers to develop more effective strategies that are responsive to the distinct needs and motivations of individual consumers (Bhar, 2019; Schau, 2018). This enhances our comprehension of individual consumer motivations and emphasises the complex dynamics of consumer identity projects and agency.

As Askegaard and Linnet (2011) articulate, consumers function as reflexive identity seekers who critically engage with market-mediated messages as they navigate marketplace opportunities. This agency allows them to construct personalised lived experiences of identity through their consumption practices, simultaneously embracing and resisting various sociocultural influences within the marketplace context. While much of the existing work in CCT has focused on issues of representation, there remains significant potential to examine how markets and consumption practices either exacerbate or alleviate systemic inequalities, such as gender inequality and global poverty (Thomas et al., 2018).

In the marketplace, racial bias extends beyond individual perceptions and is deeply embedded in systemic power structures (Davis, 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Crockett, 2021; Poole et al., 2021; Francis and Robertson, 2021). Encounters with racial bias evoke emotions that are deeply ingrained in the experience. As Johnson et al. (2019) emphasise, “race, in the context of RIM, cannot be separated from power” (p. 7). These research paradigms enable an exploration of how these power dynamics influence and shape experiences. BFT and hermeneutic phenomenology enable us to incorporate the interconnectedness of various aspects of identity, providing an understanding of how racial bias intersects with other dimensions of individuals' identities in the marketplace (Leboeuf, 2023). The perspective challenges the notion of a universally knowable reality, emphasising the dynamic and context-dependent nature of perception.

Black women consumers are viewed as critically engaging with and often consciously reflecting on the market-mediated messages that shape their experiences, actively embracing and resisting the influences around them. This dynamic interaction underscores the consumer's role in shaping their identity, demonstrating that marketplace interactions are not passive but are, instead, sites of negotiation, resistance, and self-construction (Weinberger and Crockett, 2018).

By focusing on consumers' life experiences, this phenomenological approach highlights how historical social hierarchies continue to influence today's marketplace. It becomes clear that discrimination based on race persists in retail, branding, advertising, and other consumer sectors, reflecting the enduring impacts of segregation, exclusion, and systemic bias. However, modern retail practices do not merely repeat these historical inequalities; they can also exacerbate them through social sorting, a concept Bauman (2000) used to describe how individuals are categorised, monitored, and controlled in today's surveillance-driven society. In consumer contexts, these practices often involve increased surveillance, varying levels of service, and subtle microaggressions, which disproportionately impact Black consumers. For instance, Pittman's (2020) research on "shopping while Black" demonstrates that historical patterns of racial segregation still manifest in today's retail spaces, through actions like watching Black shoppers more closely, questioning their buying choices, or providing different levels of service.

By situating these modern discriminatory practices within a historical framework, it becomes apparent that racial bias in the marketplace is not random or purely personal but structurally embedded and perpetuated through both overt and covert methods. This dual emphasis, recognising the historical roots of discrimination while examining contemporary retail and branding practices, underscores the need for an approach that captures both lived experiences and the systemic forces that shape them, offering a more nuanced understanding of how racialised consumer experiences endure and evolve.

By combining hermeneutical phenomenology and Black feminist epistemology, this research adopts a multi-dimensional approach to understanding marketplace discrimination. This theoretical foundation directly shapes our methodological choices. Hermeneutic phenomenology demands attention to individual lived experiences, while Black feminist thought requires us to situate these experiences within broader systems of power and oppression. These imperatives guide the sampling strategy, which aims to capture diverse voices while remaining sensitive to the intersectional experiences of marketplace discrimination. The frameworks emphasise capturing lived experiences, particularly in how participants are chosen, how interviews are conducted, and how the experiences are analysed.

4.3. Research design

This research employs a qualitative research design. Guided by Black feminist thought and epistemology, as well as hermeneutic phenomenology, the design prioritised capturing Black women's embodied, situational, and interpretive experiences of microaggression and identity negotiation. The qualitative approach provided in-depth insights into how the persistence of racism shapes consumer experiences, contextual coping mechanisms, and meaning-making practices. By integrating CRT and CCT, the research links micro-level experiences to macro-level structures, ensuring the research not only documents individual experiences but also critically examines the structured conditions that shaped them. Also included in this are sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The concluding part will focus on limitations, ethical considerations, and reflexivity.

To truly grasp, one must immerse oneself in the authentic experiences of Black people (Sojoyner, 2017; Bourke, 2010). By delving into the realities of Black lives, one can gain insight into the various situations in which being Black has held them back or subjected them to feelings of marginalisation and 'othered' (Jones et al., 2022; Udash, 2017; Osbourne et al., 2021). This immersion enables a more nuanced exploration of the challenges and barriers faced by Black people in the marketplace.

The choice of qualitative design was itself shaped by the researcher's positionality. Quantitative methods, however valuable for mapping patterns of discrimination at scale, cannot adequately capture the phenomenological texture of what it feels like to manage one's body in a store, to calibrate one's expression under a security guard's gaze, or to choose a bag size based on what assumptions it might invite. These are not experiences that can be reduced to variables without significant epistemic loss. As a Black woman who knows this loss intimately, a methodology capable of preserving what matters was a deliberate and necessary choice.

4.3.1 Sampling

Punch (1998) reminds us that "we cannot research everyone, everywhere, doing everything. Sampling decisions are required not only about which people to interview or which events to observe but also about settings and processes" (p. 193). A combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods was used. Hermeneutic phenomenology requires rich, detailed accounts of lived experience. At the same time, Black feminist thought demands attention to diverse voices and intersectional experiences (Collins, 2000), purposive sampling allowed for the deliberate selection of participants whose experiences could illuminate various aspects of marketplace discrimination. Snowball sampling, drawing on existing community networks, reflected Black feminist methodology's emphasis on trusted relationships and community knowledge (Collins, 2015).

The researcher's own position within these networks was methodologically significant. This was not a stranger approaching the community from outside, equipped with a research protocol and a participant information sheet. As a Black woman with existing relationships within Black communities in Scotland, the researcher carried a form of trust that is difficult, perhaps impossible, to generate solely through formal recruitment. Several participants agreed to be interviewed specifically because they knew, or knew of, the researcher as a Black woman working on a topic that directly concerned their lives. This trust was a methodological asset, but it also carried ethical weight: it deepened the obligation to represent participants' accounts with care and honesty, precisely because they had extended confidence based on shared social location.

The participant pool consisted of Black women residing in Scotland and/or having relocated to Scotland for specific reasons, such as employment, education, or family. A range of identities was included to facilitate a nuanced examination of how individuals from different historical, cultural, and social backgrounds assimilate and adapt to the complexities of the marketplace. By examining this diverse population, this research aims to provide insight into how location and racial identity intersect with marketplace experiences (Rocha et al., 2020). In Scotland, these dynamics are especially pronounced. According to the 2022 Census, there are 65,414 individuals of Black, African, Caribbean, or Black Scottish descent residing in Scotland, representing 1.2% of the overall population (Staddon Foster, 2024). This research methodology deliberately includes participants with varying migration histories to highlight how racial dynamics are perceived and navigated across different generations.

The participant pool was drawn from Black-centred community groups and events across Glasgow and Edinburgh. Organisations such as SharpenHer and the Govan Community Project were contacted to support recruitment. The Govan Community Project works with diverse local communities, including refugees and people seeking asylum throughout Glasgow. SharpenHer is a community organisation focused on supporting African women's integration by providing access to education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities. Online recruitment channels were used, including Facebook groups tailored to specific Black communities, such as those for South Africans in Glasgow/Edinburgh and for Zimbabwean, Caribbean, and Nigerian communities in the United Kingdom. To get a wider, more diverse pool of participants, Eventbrite was also used to find Black-centred events in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This allowed people from multiple backgrounds, as one of the events focused on the creative industry in Scotland and offered perspectives from Black women in the industry. Additionally, visits were made to stores owned by Black people catering to Black communities, as these owners may offer a unique perspective, being both consumers and providers.

4.3.2. Data collection

Black feminist thought offers a methodologically flexible approach that prioritises lived experiences as critical sources of knowledge (Grier and Poole, 2020). It challenges conventional knowledge-production systems by centring the voices and perspectives that have been traditionally marginalised in academic research. Collins (1989) demonstrates that personal stories represent valid and essential forms of understanding that traditional academic methodologies often overlook.

In line with Black feminist epistemology, the data collection process prioritised open-ended questions during in-depth interviews. Each interview began by asking participants for background information, such as how they identify regarding gender and race, followed by probing questions to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances in their descriptions. Questions were phrased as: *In what ways do you believe race and gender (class) intersect to affect your experiences (good and bad)? Have you ever felt that staff members made assumptions about you based on your appearance? Can you provide an example?* This approach allowed for an organic flow in the interaction between researcher and participant, facilitating rich, contextualised lived experiences.

The researcher's positionality shaped the interview encounter in both visible and invisible ways for participants. Visibly, shared cultural referents meant that certain things did not need explaining that a researcher outside the community would have needed translation for. Invisibly, the presence of a Black woman researcher altered the epistemological conditions of disclosure. Several participants noted that being interviewed by another Black woman freed them from what one described as the need to 'double-speak', to translate their experience into a form that would be legible and palatable to someone who had not lived it. The absence of that translation labour meant participants could speak with a precision and directness that, it is argued here, would not have been available in a different researcher-participant configuration. This was not a methodological accident. It was the result of a deliberate design decision to foreground researcher positionality as a resource rather than a confound.

The interview duration of 60 to 90 minutes was chosen to align with both hermeneutic-phenomenological principles and Black feminist methodology. This period enables the in-depth exploration of lived experiences that hermeneutic phenomenology requires, while also providing space for the kind of dialogue and meaning-making that Collins (1989) identifies as essential to Black feminist knowledge production. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, not merely for accuracy, but to preserve what Collins terms the "specialised knowledge" that emerges from Black women 's standpoint. As Sobande (2019) demonstrates in her marketplace research, such attention to participants' exact words is crucial for capturing the nuanced ways Black women articulate their experiences.

	Pseudonym	Profession	Background	Age	Time in the UK
1	Nneka	African Store Owner	Nigerian	30s	5+ years
2	Tendai	Care Worker (Braider)	Zimbabwean	26	2 years
3	Precious	PhD Student	Malawian	33	4 years
4	Naledi	Master's Student (Receptionist and works at a thrift store)	South African	21	3 years
5	Thando	Veterinary Surgeon	South African	28	3 years
6	Lebohang	Teaching Fellow	South African	30s	24 years
7	Tinashe	Business Management Consultant	Zimbabwean	29	4 years
8	Amogelang	Customer Service Agent	Botswanan	27	4 years
9	Grace	PhD Student	Nigerian	26	20 years
10	Bontle	PhD Student	South African	40s	28+ year
11	Jane	Finance Officer	Zimbabwean	25	4 years
12	Femi	NHS Doctor	Nigerian	25	15 years
13	Tayo	HR/ Legal space / Lawyer	Nigerian	20s	2 years
14	Josephine	CEO of the organisation	Nigerian	40s	20+ years
15	Natasha	Founder of the Organisation	Malawian	50	15 years
16	Yolanda	Freelancer - Writer, Storyteller, Poet and Content Creator	Nigerian	23	15+ years
17	Zahara	Author and Wellness Coach	Nigerian/British	32	20+ years
18	Zoe	Undergraduate student, marketing agency, and business owner	Nigerian	21	15+ years
19	Elizabeth	Race Equality Officer	Kenyan	56	25 years
20	Esther	Entrepreneur	Nigerian	40s	5 years

Table 4: Participants

The concept of intersectionality is central to this analysis. The goal is to highlight the difference between how Black women are perceived by others, often through a narrow racial lens, and how they view themselves, considering a combination of identities such as class, gender, religion, and language. This approach is rooted in Black Feminist Thought and hermeneutic phenomenology, both of which emphasise the significance of lived experiences and the importance of resisting simplistic categories. Additionally, it aligns to create conditions where participants can express themselves authentically, free from being labelled or reduced by external demographic tags.

4.3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis process was guided by hermeneutic phenomenology and Black feminist thought. The hermeneutical (Thompson, 1997) and Black feminist (Collins, 2000) approaches recognise the importance of cultural contexts, participants' lived experiences, and the subjective nature of those experiences. The frameworks facilitated an examination of Black women's lived experiences, allowing for close attention to the subtleties, emotions, and contextual intricacies that participants found meaningful in their interpretations.

The analytical process centred participants' interpretations as authoritative knowledge while employing theoretical frameworks that clarified rather than obscured their meaning-making. This methodological commitment refused the hierarchical separation between "raw experience" and "academic interpretation," instead creating conditions for co-constructing knowledge that honoured both the specificity of Black women's lived realities and the theoretical resources necessary to contextualise systemic patterns of marketplace violence. Such an approach operationalised Black feminist epistemology's insistence on dialogue, situated knowledge, and ethical accountability, ensuring analytical language remained accessible rather than extractive, explanatory rather than obscuring (Collins, 2015).

Throughout the analysis, the researcher actively managed the interpretive tension that insider research produces: the risk that recognition collapses into identification, and that what the researcher brings to the data substitutes for what the data actually contains. This was managed through a practice of deliberate analytical slowing, returning repeatedly to participants' exact phrasing, and using the second-level coding process as a check against premature thematic closure. The themes that emerged, hypervigilance, emotional burden, strategic self-presentation, and spatial exclusion, were generated inductively from participants' accounts, then theorised through relevant frameworks. Researcher positionality informed the sensitivity with which these themes were read; it did not determine what was found.

The analysis employed a hermeneutic interpretive framework, moving dialectically between theoretical concepts (the whole) and participants' narrated experiences (the parts) to generate understanding that neither reduced individual testimony to illustrative data nor treated personal accounts as isolated from structural conditions. This iterative movement, which Gadamer terms the hermeneutic circle (Figure 2), enables the recognition of how macro-level systems of racialised capitalism manifest in micro-level marketplace encounters, while simultaneously revealing how individual navigation strategies illuminate broader mechanisms of anti-Black consumer exclusion.

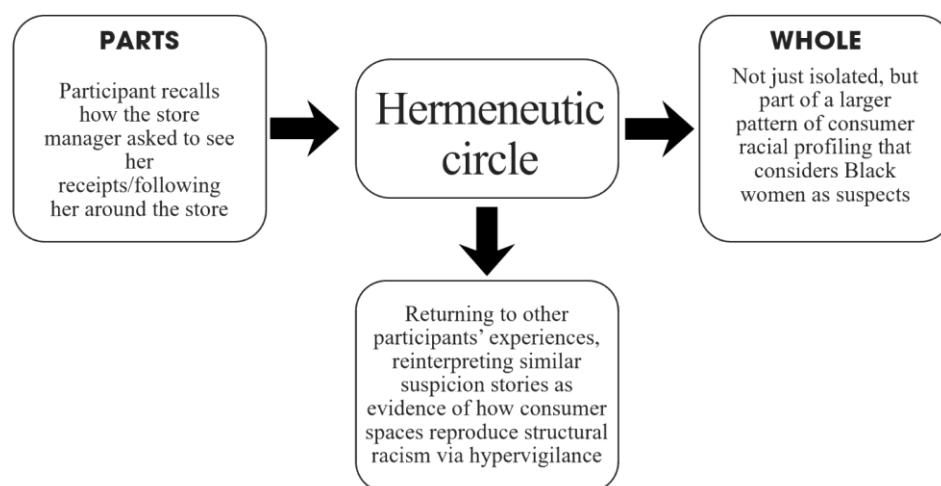


Figure 2: Hermeneutic Circle

Following Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic approach, initial analysis involved sustained immersion in each transcript through multiple close readings. This phase prioritised understanding each participant's lifeworld on its own terms, attending to linguistic choices, narrative structures, emotional registers, and meaning-making strategies before imposing analytical categories. Initial codes emerged inductively, preserving participants' own language and conceptual framings (Sobande, 2017) to maintain fidelity to Black women's epistemological standpoints rather than translating their experiences into predetermined theoretical vocabularies.

Transcripts were then organised in NVivo, selected for its capacity to support flexible, non-linear coding processes, enable investigation of relationships between emergent themes, and systematically manage the analytical complexity required by hermeneutic methodology (Moi et al., 2018). Open coding followed, segmenting data while maintaining attention to participants' specific linguistic formulations and affective expressions. Relevant transcript sections were highlighted and assigned codes reflecting critical emergent themes such as "anticipatory hypervigilance," "controlling image negotiation," and "cumulative emotional taxation", terminology that synthesised participants' descriptions with theoretical precision.

Guided by Collins' (2000) Black feminist thought, subsequent analytical phases shifted from examining individual narrative patterns to investigating how individual experiences reflected and revealed broader structural arrangements. This shift operationalised the Black feminist epistemological principle that individual Black women's testimonies constitute both particular truths and windows into systemic operations of power. The analysis thus traced how seemingly discrete marketplace encounters cohered into patterns of racialised exclusion, how individual coping mechanisms represented responses to shared structural conditions, and how participants' meaning-making practices constituted forms of resistance against anti-Black consumer violence.

The coding approach involved a dual focus. The first-level coding concentrated on phenomenological aspects, including individual experiences, emotions, and personal meanings, as well as patterns and relationships between the identified codes. The second-level coding examined systemic patterns: power dynamics, institutional barriers, and collective resistance strategies. The themes identified were further analysed through the lens of Black feminist thought, contextualising participants' lived experiences within structures of power, resistance, and systemic inequality (Sobande et al., 2019). The development of themes integrated both individual and structural insights. This analytical approach explained not only the constraints and discriminatory practices participants faced in the marketplace but also their strategic responses and resistance methods. By grounding the analysis in both participants' lived experiences and theoretical frameworks such as Critical Race Theory (Poole et al., 2021), Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000; Wade et al., 2021), Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), and Consumer Culture Theory (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011; Hungara and Nobre, 2021), this research offered an understanding of how marketplace interactions reflect and reproduce broader social dynamics while also highlighting possibilities for transformation.

It is important to note that the outcomes of this research do not aim to generalise knowledge but instead provide a deeper understanding of the consumer experience within the marketplace (Thomas, 2013). NVivo's query function was particularly useful for exploring connections between grouped categories, facilitating the identification of themes across transcripts. The last step involved finalising themes to ensure they were comprehensive, distinct, and directly addressed the research questions. Having established this methodological foundation, the following section discusses the ethical considerations that guided this research process, with a focus on power dynamics, confidentiality, and participants' emotional well-being during data collection and analysis. Reflexivity is vital in mitigating bias (Ide and Beddoe, 2023), a topic that will be explored further in the next section.

4.4. Reflexivity

Reflexivity, according to feminist research theory, is a cyclical process that requires understanding the principles of qualitative inquiry, including methodological coherence, inductive work, being a responsive researcher, selecting appropriate samples, and considering relational ethics. For me, reflexivity involved a continuous examination of how my own social background, assumptions, and values influenced the research process, from formulating interview questions to participant interactions. These principles guided the rigour, integrity, and ethical conduct of my research, emphasising the dynamic interaction between myself as the researcher and the research process. As Dowling (2006) states, reflexivity is both a concept and a process, meaning the researcher must maintain awareness of their presence in the world they are studying (Palaganas et al., 2017). This described my ongoing effort to examine and understand how my social background, location, and assumptions affected my research practice, as well as to reflect on my values (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

I did not approach this research as an observer from the outside. I am a Black woman. I have navigated consumer spaces in the UK, the same spaces this dissertation investigates. I have experienced the calibration that precedes entering certain stores: the decision about what to wear, the deliberate management of my body and expression, the hyperawareness that arrives before any interaction occurs. This is not background context. It is the foundational condition from which this entire inquiry was designed, conducted, and interpreted. To declare this openly is not to undermine the research's rigour; it is to be honest about where its analytical authority actually comes from.

Once I had established the importance of reflexivity in qualitative inquiry, I needed to consider how it applied specifically to the study of Black women's experiences in Scotland. Given the intersection of race, migration, and marketplace culture, a nuanced and sensitive approach was necessary to navigate these experiences. These experiences are shaped by how Black women are treated based on their multiple identities. To practice reflexivity, I recognised that all knowledge is influenced by the social context in which it is formed and by the social location and biography of both the observer and the observed (Hamilton, 2019).

This recognition had immediate methodological implications. Before I conducted a single interview, my positionality was doing analytical work: it shaped the questions I chose to ask, the silences I anticipated, and surveys or experimental methods could not fully capture the kinds of accounts I understood. When I asked Tinashe about her experiences with surveillance in consumer spaces, I already knew, not intellectually but corporeally, what it feels like to be watched before you have done anything. This knowledge did not allow me to assume I understood her experience; it required me to listen for what was specific to *hers*. The distinction between recognition and appropriation was one I

had to hold consciously throughout the research process, and it became one of the most important reflexive practices of the study.

As a Black woman, my identity, life experiences, and social background inevitably influenced how I interacted with participants and shaped the entire research process. One of the biggest challenges I faced was figuring out how to engage with this dissertation in a way that did not make it solely about me, while also resisting the erasure of my presence. Since I share similar social positions with my participants, I am not an outsider to the community I was researching, but, in many ways, an insider. This dual position created an ongoing tension: I needed to acknowledge how my own experiences in consumer spaces resonated with those of the participants, while also ensuring that their voices and stories remained at the centre of the research. This tension reflects what Collins (1986) and later Sobande et al. (2019) describe as the insider/outsider dynamic, in which shared identity and cultural familiarity can foster closeness and understanding, yet also require careful attention to boundaries.

This "insider/outsider" dynamic, as described by Collins (1986), creates a unique level of intimacy and rapport, encouraging participants to use inclusive language such as "we" and "us" and to gesture toward the researcher to signify a shared understanding or solidarity. Several participants explicitly named this dynamic as meaningful to them. Bontle reflected that being interviewed by another Black woman meant she did not need to "double-speak or over-explain" herself. Her use of the phrase "double-speak" remained with me throughout analysis: it names a specific and exhausting labour, the negotiation between what you know and what the context will permit you to say, that Black women perform not only in consumer spaces but in research encounters too. That Bontle experienced our interview as a space free of this negotiation was not incidental to what data was generated. It *was* the data generation. My positionality did not simply facilitate access to participants; it altered the epistemological conditions of the interview itself.

This is not a claim without methodological stakes. It means that the accounts gathered in this study reflect a quality and depth of disclosure that is inseparable from the shared identity between researcher and participant. It also means I carry a particular responsibility: to ensure that the trust participants extended was honoured in the analysis, that what they said in the absence of "double-speak" was treated with the interpretive seriousness it deserves, and that their accounts were not filtered through theoretical frameworks in ways that distorted or diminished their meaning. This relational approach highlights the importance of reflexivity and connection in feminist research and allowed me to approach participants with empathy and recognition, while also remaining reflective to ensure that my own background, assumptions, and feelings did not overshadow or merge with theirs. In this way, my insider/outsider status became part of the research's shared, co-created nature, aligning with Black feminist commitments to situated knowledge, relational ethics, and accountability.

My feelings, background, and beliefs all influenced how I generated knowledge, and it was important to recognise the biases these beliefs could introduce when interpreting data. There were moments during interviews and analysis when a participant's account mirrored my own experiences in consumer spaces closely enough that I had to pause consciously, not to suppress my recognition, but to ensure I was *receiving* their story rather than unconsciously completing it with my own. This is a particular risk for insider researchers working within Black feminist frameworks: the very intimacy that enables authentic disclosure can also create moments where the researcher's embodied knowledge becomes an invisible interpretive filter. I navigated this by deliberately redirecting my analytical attention back to the participant's own framing whenever I noticed my own experience beginning to do the interpretive work. I did this during interviews by asking a small number of questions and allowing participants to guide the conversation, intervening only to probe where their meaning was unclear, not where it diverged from my own experience. Although I shared some insights to help participants feel comfortable, I kept these contributions to a minimum, treating my own disclosures as relational gestures rather than analytical contributions.

For me, reflexivity also served as a tool to navigate power dynamics (Hamilton, 2019) and to highlight the significant impact of my positionality on all aspects of the research (Finlay, 2002). Critically, my position was not one of straightforward power-over-participants; the insider dynamic created a more complex power configuration in which participants sometimes possessed knowledge I lacked, about specific migratory contexts, regional marketplace cultures, and life histories quite different from my own. At the same time, I held institutional authority as the researcher framing and analysing their accounts. Attending to this asymmetry required ongoing vigilance. Going through BFT enabled me to make a conscious effort to promote accountability within myself as the researcher.

This sense of accountability deepened my responsibility towards participants and strengthened my commitment to fostering a collaborative process of knowledge generation. Clifford (1983) argues that researchers must critically examine their own positionality and the power dynamics embedded in the knowledge-production process. I endeavoured to do this by clearly explaining the research terms and methodology, ensuring participants understood any unfamiliar terminology. This was also evident during the interviews when I asked questions such as: "What changes would you like to see in the marketplace?" and "Why do you think research like this is important?" These questions empowered participants beyond merely sharing their experiences, as they also allowed them to reflect on the impact and contributions they sought to make. In asking these questions, I was also acknowledging something that Black feminist epistemology demands of its practitioners: that the communities we research are not only sources of data but generators of knowledge, and that a researcher who shares their social location has a particular obligation to make this recognition structural rather than merely rhetorical.

This approach demonstrated transparency and confirmed that the viewpoints and opinions expressed were acknowledged and carefully considered throughout the research's analysis and discussion stages (Nowell et al., 2017). Essentially, the transparency I maintained facilitated a shift in power dynamics, as participants gained some insight into the literature review and theoretical frameworks central to the research. By prioritising openness, I recognised the complexities of power relations and how they can gradually shape interactions, potentially masking participants' authentic voices and experiences (Nowell et al., 2017; Sobande et al., 2019).

The positionality I have described here is not a confession appended to a methodology that could otherwise stand on its own. It is the methodology. The epistemological argument at the heart of this dissertation, that Black women's experiential knowledge carries distinct analytic authority, that the conditions of knowledge production shape the knowledge produced, that research conducted *with* rather than *about* marginalised communities generates qualitatively different insights, is not a claim I make from outside that argument. I make it from within, as a Black woman researcher whose own experience of consumer spaces is both the origin of this inquiry and an ongoing analytical resource.

4.5. Ethical considerations

The complexity of human behaviour means that there are no certainties in practice: no ethical theory covers all scenarios (Seale, 2017). This variability demands a flexible and context-aware approach to ethical decision-making, especially in qualitative research. It is the researcher's duty to ensure that research is conducted with honesty, openness, and sensitivity to participants' rights and well-being (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Before data collection began, an ethics form was submitted and approved by the university, which included the participant information sheet (PIS) that participants signed to provide consent.

For this research, ethical care was not merely procedural. As a Black woman researching a community of which the researcher is part, participants were understood to be extending a particular form of trust, the trust of someone who shares your social location and therefore your stakes in how that location is represented. This understanding deepened ethical commitments beyond what institutional protocols require. When participants described experiences that resonated with the researcher's own, there was a reminder that the accounts being shared were not data points but testimonies, and that the responsibility to them extended through the analysis and writing process, long after the interviews ended.

Assurance was provided in multiple ways. Participants received research information and signed an informed consent form before the interview. They were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom. After explaining the research background, participants were informed that recording was necessary for transcription, and

were asked to avoid mentioning personal details or specific company names. If a company name were mentioned, it would be omitted during transcription.

In the literature review, several keywords were analysed to help explain how Black women experience and navigate consumer spaces. These include consumer racial profiling (Harris et al., 2005; Pittman, 2020), practices of marketplace exclusion (Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013; Saren et al., 2019), and the physical and emotional toll of Black Fatigue (Winters, 2020). A key ethical consideration was to ensure that these keywords and ideas were not imposed on participants, but instead introduced in a way that fostered dialogue. When discussing themes related to emotional labour, performance, or repeated exposure in consumer spaces, brief explanations were offered from the literature. Participants were not required to use academic language; they were instead encouraged to offer their own perspective, engage with it, critique it, or replace it with terms specific to their experiences. This approach reflected Black feminist epistemology's emphasis on dialogue, situated knowledge, and ethical responsibility to minimise harm by providing clear language (Collins, 2015).

To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned during transcription, and no identifying details were recorded. A debriefing session followed each interview, during which several participants described the relief of being able to speak about their experiences without feeling gaslighted. That relief was itself analytically significant, evidence that the research encounter had provided something rare: a space where participants' knowledge was taken seriously on its own terms. This research prioritised conducting interviews with respect and dignity, grounded in feminist ethics of care (Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1993).

4.6. Limitations

The limitations encountered during the data collection process did not diminish the value of the findings; instead, they framed the scope, transferability, and interpretive reach of the results. Some Black women had doubts about the research's goals and its effects because of the historical undervaluation of Black communities in research and the lack of tangible results for participants. Sometimes this cynicism led to caution or reluctance to participate in the interview process. These answers highlight the larger problem of research fatigue and minority vulnerability, as Black people are frequently asked to disclose extremely personal stories without any guarantee that their stories will result in structural or material change.

Another limitation lies in the shifting dynamics between informal storytelling and formal research contexts. In informal settings, Black women can easily discuss their experiences. However, this may change during the research, as participants may feel inclined to provide socially desirable responses, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as discrimination. This was overcome by the

researcher, who also included their own anecdotes and, especially, the reason for the research topic. This was overcome by building trust before data collection began, thereby fostering dialogue aligned with Black feminist epistemology. As stated in the ethics considerations, personal motivations behind the research topics were shared for ease. While this approach could not eliminate the possibility of self-censorship, it did create opportunities for participants to connect their own narratives to the broader aims of the research and to feel affirmed in the significance of their contributions. Participants who did not respond were not contacted again, which meant that additional participants had to be found, thereby delaying data collection.

Lastly, the results are inevitably influenced by the particularity of the sample and the contextual nature of knowledge, even though this research aimed to shed light on systemic patterns of consumer exclusion and marketplace navigation. Instead of claiming universal generalisability, this research provided a contextualised explanation of how Black women perceive and understand racialised interactions in particular consumer contexts. However, this restriction aligns with the tenets of Black feminist philosophy and interpretive inquiry, which prioritise depth, reflexivity, and the elevation of marginalised voices over assertions of neutrality or universality.

Although relationships may form casually, the dynamics between researcher and participant can shift. In line with Black feminist theory, it was essential for the researcher to stay self-aware throughout the interview and analysis stages to distance themselves from the data and prevent bias (Collins, 2000). Bias is inherent in research because of the researchers' own lived experiences and perspectives. Their backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs inevitably influence the framing of research questions, methodology, and interpretation of findings (Baker and Gentry, 2007). Since hermeneutic phenomenology is used, the researcher's position inevitably influences the interpretation. Although flexibility and a humanistic approach were employed to reduce bias, complete neutrality is neither achievable nor philosophically desirable. Consequently, the findings reflect a co-constructed meaning between participants rather than an objective truth. This highlights that knowledge is situated, aligning with Black feminist and humanist traditions. Participants' recollections of past experiences may be shaped by their current perceptions and emotions, leading to inaccuracies or distortions. Developing ethical practice is an essential part of good social research, requiring ongoing reflexivity.

4.7. Conclusion

To demonstrate the effectiveness of a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach in analysing lived experiences and gaining an understanding of them, this research focuses on the accounts of consumers who have experienced racial discrimination in the marketplace. By incorporating Black feminist theory into the research methodology, it recognises the complex nature of the issues being studied. It aims to develop a nuanced understanding that values the perspectives and agency of Black people. The research

employs qualitative methods that prioritise exploring experiences, fostering dialogue, and fostering empathy and accountability. This not only aligns with the epistemological principles of Black feminist theory (Collins, 1989; 2000) but also enhances the depth and relevance of the findings. Allowing participants to articulate their lived experiences in their own words, this research reveals important insights into how racial bias manifests behaviourally within marginalised consumer groups.

The researcher reflects on their empirical process, focusing on their positionality, ethical considerations, and the challenges of accurately representing subjective phenomenological accounts. Overall, this research illustrates how hermeneutic phenomenology can uncover nuanced understandings of the lived experiences of marginalised populations, shedding light on the complex impacts of discrimination on identity and consumer behaviours. These methodological approaches not only add depth and integrity to this research but also pay homage to the tradition of Black feminist epistemology, which underpins this work. This research demonstrates the potential of combining hermeneutic phenomenology with Black feminist perspectives in analysing the lived experiences of marketplace discrimination. Through in-depth interviews that emphasised exploration, dialogue, and accountability, it reveals significant insights into how racial bias influences identity formation and consumer behaviours within marginalised groups. While acknowledging certain limitations, this approach offers a robust framework that honours both theoretical rigour and Black feminist epistemology in understanding lived experiences of discrimination.

Chapter 5: Findings - Navigating Consumer Spaces Through Temporal-Spatial Consciousness

5.1. Introduction

Following the analysis of the interview transcripts, a clear thematic pattern emerged, centred on the lived experience of space as fundamental to Black women's identities, rather than on abstract or fixed notions of "Black identity" or on discrete consumer behaviours taken in isolation. Participants did not describe their marketplace experiences primarily in terms of individual choices or static identity categories, but through spatial encounters that shaped how Black identity was felt, negotiated, and managed in practice.

Across interviews, participants consistently articulated their experiences through spatial dynamics: consumer spaces that were racialised, gendered, emotionally charged, and surveilled. These spaces mediated participants' understanding of how Black women anticipated treatment and how they assessed risk, belonging, and safety in everyday consumption. Identity, emotion, and behaviour were therefore not separate analytic domains but intertwined through spatial experience.

Rather than treating consumer experiences as neutral or purely economic, this chapter focuses on the racialised, gendered, and embodied dimensions of spatial navigation. Through a Black feminist lens, it examines how Black women actively engage with, resist, and reconfigure consumer spaces to preserve dignity, safety, and recognition. Here, "space" is understood not merely as a physical location but as a *social and racialised construct* that shapes, constrains, and reproduces power (Lefebvre, 1991). Within these spaces, Blackness, and particularly Black womanhood, is performed, perceived, and policed, revealing how consumer spaces function as both a site of transaction and of negotiation, exclusion, and resistance.

A note on the interpretive lens: the analysis that follows was not conducted from an external position. As a Black woman who has navigated consumer spaces in the UK, the researcher brought to these interviews an embodied knowledge of the dynamics participants describe—the mental calculation before entering a store, the adjustment of posture under surveillance, and the particular exhaustion of shopping while Black. This knowledge did not contaminate the analysis; rather, it constituted the conditions under which participants could speak without self-censorship or the labour of explanation. Where the researcher's own experiences resonated with participants' accounts, this has been made visible rather than concealed behind a veneer of analytical distance. The interpretive practice here is not one of detachment but of accountable proximity, of knowing, as Collins (2000) argues, from a situated standpoint rather than a falsely universal one. The researcher's voice appears periodically throughout this chapter not to centre her experience above participants', but to make transparent the analytical lens through which their accounts were read and theorised.

This analysis is framed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and spatial dynamics, examining how consumer spaces actively produce racial hierarchies. CRT reveals systemic racism as embedded within marketplace structures rather than exceptional individual prejudice (Poole et al., 2021; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), while spatial theory demonstrates that consumer spaces are not neutral backdrops but rather socially produced spaces encoding power relations (Lefebvre, 1991; Anderson, 2022; McKittrick, 2006). As established in Chapter 3's literature review, space functions as a medium through which racism is reproduced, retail geographies concentrate resources in white areas while disinvesting from Black neighbourhoods (Lipsitz, 2007); store designs facilitate white navigation while creating barriers for Black shoppers; and surveillance systems position Black bodies as threats requiring monitoring (Browne, 2015). For Black women specifically, these spatial dynamics compound with gendered assumptions: they navigate not only racial exclusion (Blackness marked as out of place) but also gendered surveillance (assumptions about sexuality, domesticity, or economic status).

The findings that follow examine how these theoretically established spatial dynamics manifest in Black British women's lived experiences: which consumer spaces they identify as hostile versus welcoming; how they strategically navigate exclusionary spaces; the toll this navigation exacts; and how they resist or refuse spaces that deny their dignity. Their accounts provide empirical substance to spatial theory's abstract claims, revealing the everyday labour required to move through marketplaces organised around white normativity.

The chapter is organised around three temporal stages of marketplace navigation, **Pre-Space, In-Space, and Post-Space**, which capture not only physical movement but also the psychological and emotional transitions that occur before, during, and after consumer encounters. This cyclical framework illustrates how anticipation, experience, and reflection continuously inform one another, underscoring the recursive and embodied nature of navigating exclusionary spaces.

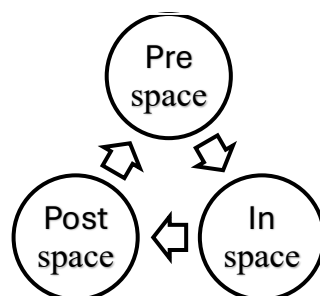


Figure 3: Recursive process of navigating consumer spaces

Each stage is explored through three interrelated subthemes: *navigating identity*, *navigating emotions*, and *navigating safety*, each of which is inherently spatial. Together, they show how spatial awareness is embedded in every dimension of participants' experiences:

- **Navigating Identity:** Examines the performative negotiation of identity within racialised consumer spaces. Participants describe managing respectability politics, code-switching, and perceptions of Black femininity to maintain safety and social legibility while striving for authenticity and dignity.
- **Navigating Emotions:** Focuses on the affective dimensions of spatial experience, including fear, frustration, anger, and exhaustion. These emotions are not incidental but central to understanding how Black women *feel* and *endure* racialised consumer spaces. Emotional regulation emerges as both a survival strategy and a mode of resistance.
- **Navigating Safety:** Explores proactive and anticipatory strategies to protect physical and psychological well-being. Safety here is understood as an ongoing praxis, an anticipatory mode of being shaped by hypervigilance and prior experience rather than merely a reactive coping mechanism.

This cyclical perspective highlights how resilience, vigilance, and emotional labour function as ongoing, iterative processes rather than discrete reactions. The discussion begins with **Pre-Space**, the anticipatory phase that precedes entry, then moves to **In-Space**, where racialised dynamics become most immediate and visible, and concludes with **post-space**, where reflection and recovery inform future navigation strategies.

5.2. Pre-Space - Anticipatory Navigation Before Entry

5.2.1. Introduction to Pre-Space

Consumer spaces are never entered unintentionally. For Black women, the moments leading up to crossing a store's threshold are filled with careful consideration: decisions about what to wear, how to carry oneself, what emotional posture to adopt, and how to anticipate and mitigate potential harm. This section examines the *Pre-Space* stage of marketplace navigation: the anticipatory and preparatory phase that precedes entry yet profoundly shapes how consumer interactions unfold.

While much scholarship focuses on what happens within or after marketplace encounters, emphasising the visible moments of discrimination and negotiation (*In-Space* and *Post-Space*), this discussion shifts attention to what occurs *before* entry. This shift is crucial because it reveals that exclusion is not confined to the marketplace; it begins in anticipation. The unease, vigilance, and mental rehearsals that take place before entry reflect not mere anxiety, but an *embodied knowledge* formed through cumulative experiences of racialisation (Ahmed, 2007; hooks, 1992).

The findings show that *Pre-Space consciousness* actively shapes consumer behaviour and decision-making before any direct engagement with staff, products, or other consumers occurs. These anticipatory practices, ranging from self-presentation to strategic emotional regulation, demonstrate how racialisation extends beyond the moment of encounter to influence the *entire trajectory* of consumption. Understanding *Pre-Space* dynamics thus reframes racialisation not as an episodic event that happens to Black women in consumer spaces, but as a persistent, structuring force that informs how they approach, navigate, and even envision participation in the marketplace.

Existing consumer behaviour scholarship has long recognised that consumption experiences begin before the point of purchase (Bell et al., 2011). However, this pre-consumption stage has traditionally been conceptualised in cognitive terms, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and decision-making processes, with limited attention to how social identity markers, particularly race and gender, shape the emotional and psychological labour required before marketplace entry purchase (Bell et al., 2011). Recent work in critical consumer research has begun examining how marginalised consumers navigate marketplace exclusion (Crockett, 2017; Rank-Christman and Wooten, 2022), yet the anticipatory dimension, the work that occurs before bodies enter commercial spaces, remains undertheorised. This gap is particularly significant for understanding Black women's consumer experiences, where the pre-entry phase is not characterised by rational decision-making but by affective preparation, identity management, and safety assessment.

5.2.2. Navigating Identity: Strategic Self-Presentation

Findings reveal that Black consumers enter consumer spaces already anticipating exclusion (Chaney et al., 2019) and position themselves in a structurally disempowered relationship in which their needs, safety, and comfort are contingent upon others' willingness to recognise and respond to their presence. This anticipatory consciousness manifests most visibly through constant adjustments to identity presentation before entering consumer spaces, a form of protective labour undertaken to prepare for potential microaggressions and exclusionary treatment.

This section introduces the concept of 'anticipatory labour' (which will be theorised in Chapter 6 as a key contribution) to describe the cognitive, emotional, and performative work that Black women undertake before entering consumer spaces. Unlike the aesthetic labour (Elias et al., 2017) or emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) that occurs during service interactions, anticipatory labour operates in the temporal space before encounter, in the private moments of choosing clothing, rehearsing interactions, scanning social media for racial composition, and mentally preparing for potential discrimination. This labour is simultaneously protective (designed to minimise harm) and productive (generating the racialised consumer subject who must prove worthiness to participate in marketplace exchange). Drawing on Black feminist conceptualisations of invisible labour (Collins, 2000) and critical race theory's attention to the exhaustive nature of navigating white spaces (Sue et al., 2007), the findings show that anticipatory labour represents a distinct form of racialised consumer work that has been overlooked in marketplace scholarship.

Black women in this research describe a continuous, anticipatory labour that begins long before they enter consumer spaces. This labour involves managing their appearance, regulating their emotions, and mentally preparing for racialised scrutiny. Across participants, this phenomenon emerges as an intertwined process of **strategic self-presentation** and **protective labour**, where identity work becomes a necessary survival strategy rather than a matter of personal preference.

Zoe, a 20-year-old sociology student, expresses how repeated exposure to racialised surveillance produces a form of “*uncomfortable comfortability*”, a learned familiarity with discrimination that does not lessen its emotional weight:

There is a difference between what I would call “nice comfortability” and “uncomfortable comfortability.” Also, because you experience it so much, it becomes a norm. You already know and recognise it before you even go into stores; you are mentally preparing yourself for what is going to happen. You are expecting to be followed. When you are walking around, keep your hands close to your body so it does not look like you are grabbing anything. If I am going into a store, I make sure to take a small bag so it is obvious I cannot fit anything inside it. All these things build up over time. Eventually, you develop the ability to immediately recognise when things are about to happen because

they have happened repeatedly. By the time I walk into a store, and someone notices me, I already know what is coming next. I know the process.

Zoe's account shows how racialised interactions cultivate embodied knowledge that shapes future behaviour. Her distinction between "*pleasant comfort*" and "*uncomfortable comfort*" shows how Black women internalise discriminatory norms, developing anticipatory strategies to mitigate harm. This interpretive vigilance, observing, decoding, and preparing in real time, reflects what Ngo (2019) describes as embodied racialised awareness: ordinary acts such as entering a shop become cognitively and emotionally taxing forms of labour.

Within this state, Zoe inhabits what might be described as a condition of *uncomfortable comfort*, a paradoxical familiarity with discomfort. Over time, the recurrence of microaggressions, surveillance, and subtle exclusions becomes expected, even routine (Browne, 2015). While these experiences remain painful, they also become part of the architecture of everyday life, producing a learned adaptability. This is not resignation but a form of survivalist awareness: Zoe knows the contours of discrimination so well that she can anticipate its presence, yet this very anticipation denies her the ease and spontaneity that consumer spaces promise to others.

The "anomalies" of discrimination, those moments that should be exceptional or shocking, thus become part of the ordinary rhythm of experience. The anomaly becomes the norm. This paradox, as Ahmed (2007) and Pittman (2020) suggest, is central to the affective economy of racialised spaces: the repetition of harm creates a sense of predictability that simultaneously stabilises and exhausts. Zoe's ability to interpret and anticipate these moments represents both agency and constraint; she is never unknowing, but that knowing itself is a burden.

Zoe's description of "*already knowing the process*" before crossing the threshold resonated with the researcher, prompting careful reflexive attention. The researcher recognised the specific bodily calibration she names, the deliberate positioning of the hands, and the choice of a small bag from their own consumer experience. This recognition enabled the researcher to follow Zoe's account in depth. However, it also required resisting the temptation to interpret her words through the researcher's own experiential register rather than Zoe's.

The distinction is significant: while shared experience creates the conditions for authentic disclosure, it does not mean that the researcher's understanding can stand in for the participant's. What Zoe describes as "*uncomfortable comfort*" remains her own negotiation, shaped by her particular history and social location, even as it resonates across Black women's shared spatial knowledge. This tension between

recognition and differentiation forms part of the analytical work that Black feminist epistemology demands of its practitioners.

Her analytical stance highlights the cognitive double bind that Black women face in navigating public and consumer spaces: to survive, they must constantly interpret others' intentions, monitor their own responses, and manage the affective residue of these encounters. Zoe's hypervigilance is both protective and corrosive, a necessary shield that nevertheless restricts emotional freedom and reinforces the psychic toll of being perpetually "on guard."

Naledi, who is a student and works part-time as a receptionist and at a thrift store, emphasises the strategic nature of this pre-entry preparation:

What you wear when you walk into the store is important, and how you present yourself matters a lot; you almost have to dress up for the luxury store. In contrast, at stores like H&M, Zara, or Primark, I can just go as I am. But as a Black woman, you must put in extra effort to dress up. I have seen white tourists enter these stores in shorts or tank tops and still receive the same level of service as I.

Naledi's observation highlights a critical racialised asymmetry in consumer spaces: while whiteness affords a taken-for-granted legitimacy that enables white consumers to move through retail spaces without performance, her own racialised body requires strategic sartorial preparation to avoid hypervisibility and suspicion. This pre-entry identity work aligns not only with the notion of aesthetic labour, typically understood as employer-mandated requirements to "look good" or "sound right" (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007), but also extends Crockett's (2017) theorisation of respectability politics or "paths of respectability." Whereas aesthetic labour describes workplace expectations imposed on employees, Naledi performs this labour as a *consumer*, mobilising middle-class aesthetic cues to pre-empt racial judgement in spaces structured by white normativity. Her strategic dressing is therefore less about personal style and more about signalling respectability to mitigate anticipated discrimination. In this way, she enacts a form of anticipatory respectability politics: aesthetic self-presentation becomes a defensive, survival-oriented performance that attempts to neutralise racialised stereotypes before entering the marketplace.

Tinashe similarly describes how racialised scrutiny shapes her behaviour before she enters a store:

As a consumer, it can be off-putting to even enter certain spaces because you feel the impact of your skin colour immediately, like with a security guard following you around. Now, when I go into certain spaces, even just to get basics like food, I feel the need to dress a certain way to avoid scrutiny. If I go out in joggers, I will be watched, but if I dress up and look 'presentable,' everyone is nice.

Tinashe's reflections reinforce Zoe's concept of *uncomfortable comfortability* by showing how repeated microaggressions create patterned expectations. Clothes become communicative tools: joggers make her hypervisible, while dressing up grants temporary access to courtesy. This dynamic reveals the additional work Black women must perform to be treated as legitimate customers.

This finding resonates with Saatcioglu and Ozanne's (2013) argument that space is not merely a passive backdrop but an active medium that organises social relations in ways that can liberate or constrain. However, the data in this research reveal a more pointed dynamic: consumer space functions as a racialised constraint *before* entry even occurs. While Pittman (2020) observes that "Black consumption has been restricted, constricted, or taxed" (p. 5), the present findings extend this critique by showing that such restriction is enacted through *anticipatory mechanisms* that shape behaviour before spatial engagement.

Participants internalise the knowledge that their bodies may be scrutinised, their presence may be interpreted as suspicious, and their purchasing power may be doubted. As a result, space is navigated not only through in-situ reactions but also through pre-emptive calculations and decisions about dress, timing, accompaniment, route, and store selection, which unfold in response to spatialised racial hierarchies long before the consumer physically arrives.

This contributes to critical consumer space scholarship by reframing racialised restriction as temporalised and anticipatory rather than solely reactive. It shifts the analytic focus from discriminatory events occurring *within* market settings to the structuring force of racialised space that shapes behaviour *before* any interaction takes place. In doing so, the findings demonstrate how spatial power operates through cognitive and emotional labour that consumers must perform to access everyday marketplaces.

This anticipatory labour also intersects with respectability politics. Bontle, a PhD student, explains:

I want to make my day easier. When someone imposes their assumptions on me, I actively reject them. That is why I say I am racialised as Black. People make assumptions about me, but what I hope for myself may not align with those assumptions. So, I prefer to say I am racialised as Black rather than simply identifying as Black.

Bontle's emphasis on being "racialised" rather than "identifying" as Black marks an important distinction: racialization is something done *to* her, a process through which others impose meanings onto her body. Her deliberate self-presentation, dressing presentably, avoiding certain garments, represents an attempt to manage this racialization, even as she intellectually resists the legitimacy of others' assumptions. Her identity construction becomes a survival strategy, a way of negotiating spaces where her Black body arrives already burdened with negative associations.

Grace, a PhD student, frames this as overcompensation:

We tend to overcompensate by being active consumers, getting our hair done, nails done, and eyelashes done. Respectability politics often arise from our appearance, which I do not see in other races as prominently.

Grace's explicit naming of 'overcompensation' and 'respectability politics' contributes to RIM scholarship by demonstrating how these concepts operate specifically in pre-consumption moments. This aligns with Dazey (2021), who notes that respectability politics reflect how "Black women often navigate their identity while considering the influences of the dominant society, to counter negative representations of themselves and seek social acceptance" (p. 581).

While existing work on respectability politics in marketplace contexts has focused on in-store performance (Crockett, 2017; Dazey, 2021), Grace reveals that respectability work begins at home, in front of mirrors, through consumption practices (hair, nails, eyelashes) designed to signal worthiness before any shopkeeper evaluates her presence. This extends our understanding of consumption's identity work from self-expression toward what might be termed 'anticipatory self-legitimation': the use of consumption to preemptively counter stereotypes one has not yet encountered but expects based on prior experience.

Furthermore, Grace's observation that she does "*not see this in other races as prominently*" highlights the 'invisibility of whiteness'; white consumers appearance is rarely subjected to the same scrutinising gaze that requires Black women to overcompensate (Frankenberg, 2020) This asymmetry reveals how consumer agency is racially stratified not at the point of transaction but at the point of preparation. White consumers enjoy the freedom to shop casually, spontaneously, while Black women must strategise, prepare, and invest additional resources (time, money, emotional energy) to access the same commercial spaces.

Precious, a PhD student, remarks on the ever-shifting standards Black women must navigate: "*being presentable in their eyes, however that is defined.*" These undefined expectations generate persistent anxiety and hypervigilance.

Overall, these accounts reveal that self-presentation is a form of embodied negotiation, a way to mitigate surveillance, pre-empt prejudice, and protect emotional well-being. Strategic self-presentation and protective labour thus operate not as separate processes but as intertwined strategies of survival. For Black women, the labour of navigating racialised consumer spaces begins long before they step inside. Bontle provides perhaps the most explicit articulation of how whiteness operates as an unmarked standard against which Black identity becomes hypervisible:

When I go into the marketplace, for example, if I am trying to get a job, if I am in a professional space, or even when I enter shops, the idea of me with my headscarf and my refusal to change anything is significant. We do not even ask this of white women. You know, they can wake up as themselves without thinking about it. When you enter spaces, people may view you as problematic, thinking you are making a stand. Nobody says that about a white woman with straight blonde hair. They are just themselves, moving through the world with dignity and pride. For me, though, it is labelled as troublesome or strong-headed. If you do not conform to whiteness, you are labelled as such. These labels are a part of racialization, where you are called strong-headed or political simply for being yourself. It is frustrating because I am just me.

Bontle's repeated contrast between her experience and white women's naturalness reveals the asymmetrical burden of identity work. White women can "wake up as themselves"; their identity is assumed to be authentic and natural. Black women's refusal to conform to whiteness-aligned aesthetics is immediately coded as political resistance, as troublemaking. However, Bontle is not resisting; she is simply trying to exist. The racialisation of her identity as inherently political, inherently defiant, represents a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2003) embedded in consumer spaces before she even enters them.

The double standard she identifies illustrates how whiteness functions as the unmarked norm of belonging, while racialised identities are positioned as "other," requiring explanation, modification, or self-surveillance. This dynamic aligns with Ahmed's (2007) phenomenology of whiteness, in which spaces are materially and affectively organised around the bodies they are built to accommodate. As Ahmed (2007) notes, "The politics of mobility, of who gets to move with ease across the lines that divide spaces, can be re-described as the politics of who gets to be at home, who gets to inhabit spaces, as spaces that are inhabitable for some bodies and not others, insofar as they extend the surfaces of some bodies and not others." (p. 162), meaning that those who do not embody whiteness experience space as misaligned with their bodies, generating a continual sense of dislocation.

However, the data in this research extend Ahmed's analysis by demonstrating that this orientation work does not only occur *within* the space itself. Rather, the labour begins *before* entry, through anticipatory adjustments in dress, behaviour, route planning, and emotional preparation. Participants describe engaging in this pre-emptive labour because they expect the space to be inhospitable, signalling that racialised spatial norms operate temporally as well as physically. In other words, whiteness structures not only how bodies move within a space but how racialised consumers must prepare themselves *before* they cross the threshold, revealing an expanded temporal dimension of being "out of place" that has been largely overlooked in existing applications of Ahmed's framework.

These anticipatory identity adjustments reveal that Black women's consumer participation is a spatially and psychically charged practice, one of rehearsing and preparing for potential harm beforehand. Pre-emptive negotiation transforms everyday acts of consumption into bodily resilience practices, exploring how the everyday is politicised when one's very body in space can become subject to questioning. This protective identity labour, performed before entry, demonstrates how consumer agency is circumscribed by racial hierarchies that make certain bodies perpetually "out of place" (Puwar, 2004).

The identity negotiations explored above, the strategic self-presentation, the overcompensation through consumption, and the constant awareness of being "*racialised as Black*" produce a profound emotional toll. Performing respectability is not merely a cognitive task but a deeply affective experiences that require ongoing emotional regulation. This section shifts analytical focus from the performative dimensions of anticipatory labour to its affective dimensions, examining how Black women describe the emotional states that precede marketplace entry: fear, anxiety, vigilance, dread, and exhaustion. These emotions are not incidental to the consumption experience but are central to how Black women approach, plan for, and ultimately decide whether to enter consumer spaces. Understanding these pre-entry emotional dynamics reveals how racialised marketplace participation involves not only economic exchange but also affective extraction, the exhaustion of psychic and emotional resources to access goods and services that others obtain without such a burden.

5.2.3. Navigating Emotions: Fear, Vigilance

The findings showed a pattern of fear-driven emotional responses among participants before entering shopping spaces, rooted not solely in personal experience but in observed or heard accounts of discriminatory incidents and broader social narratives about racialised danger in consumer spaces. This pre-entry anxiety represents what might be termed **emotional vigilance**: a heightened state of psychological preparation where imaginative scenarios of potential negative interactions are actively rehearsed.

Black women in this research describe a persistent, pre-emptive emotional labour that begins well before they enter consumer spaces. Anticipatory fear, accumulated trauma, and embodied vigilance shape how they evaluate spaces, assess risk, and prepare themselves emotionally and physically, even before crossing a threshold. These strategies are not abstract reflections but deeply felt responses grounded in lived experience.

Amogelang describes the cognitive and emotional scanning that occurs even before she leaves home:

I am aware that I could enter a space where I am not wanted, especially if I am going to nicer restaurants in the evening, where there are mostly older white people. Sometimes you get the sense, like, okay, I wish there were more people of colour in these spaces to make it more comfortable. In

Scotland, especially, you will find it is often 99% white people, and it is like, where are the other people of colour? Where are the Asians? Where are the people with more melanin? We need more diversity in these spaces.

The question "*where are the other people of colour?*" is not merely observational; it functions as a diagnostic tool for measuring potential threat levels. This echoes Puwar's (2004) concept of "space invaders," where minoritised bodies entering white-dominated institutions become hypervisible and marked as out of place. However, Amogelang's narrative extends this concept temporally backwards: the "invasion" begins before physical entry, in the imaginative mapping of which spaces might tolerate or reject her presence. Her invocation of "*people with more melanin*" as a desired buffer against isolation speaks to the strategic importance of co-ethnic presence in mediating experiences of marketplace discrimination.

The boundary between pre-space and in-space experiences is marked by physical threshold crossing, the moment of actual entry into the marketplace. However, this boundary is fluid and recursive rather than fixed. Amogelang's pre-entry calculations are informed by prior in-space experiences, "*especially if I am going to nicer restaurants*", creating a feedback loop wherein past embodied encounters generate anticipatory knowledge that governs future spatial navigation. Her awareness that she "*could enter a space where I am not wanted*" is not paranoia but learned competence, what Collins (2000) terms "oppositional knowledge," an epistemological stance developed through repeated exposure to racialised exclusion.

Moreover, the phrase "*99% white people*" quantifies a racial reality that marketplace diversity discourses often obscure. While retailers increasingly deploy multicultural marketing imagery (Crockett, 2017), Amogelang's empirical observation contradicts these inclusive representations, exposing the gap between commercial rhetoric and lived spatial realities. Her desire for co-racial presence is not about self-segregation but about the basic human need for spaces where one's body is not automatically suspect, where one's consumption is not perpetually questioned.

The emotional weight of this pre-spatial work must not be underestimated. Ahmed (2007) argues that bodies become "orientated" toward or away from spaces based on anticipated comfort or discomfort, a process that shapes not only where we go but who we become. For Amogelang, the repeated need to calculate racial safety before entering leisure spaces transforms consumption from pleasure to labour, from spontaneity to surveillance. This aligns with Crockett's (2017) finding that marketplace exclusion produces lasting psychological impacts, including hypervigilance and anxiety.

Jane, who works in finance, describes how past experiences of exclusion reshape her entire approach to consumption:

You grow to expect a certain level of vigilance as a Black person. If something happens, it would be shocking but expected. For example, I avoid pubs partly because I do not drink alcohol, but also because I feel like I am not supposed to be there. I feel out of place, so I choose to avoid it. When it comes to grocery shopping, I shop online to avoid potential interactions with people. This way, I can sidestep uncomfortable situations. If I do encounter an issue, I can simply call customer service, where my call is recorded for reference.

Jane's strategy reveals the temporal extension of emotional vigilance. Rather than attempting to manage her anxiety within spaces, she restructures her entire consumer practice to avoid triggering situations altogether. Shopping online is not merely a convenience; it is an emotional survival strategy, a way of protecting herself from the need to navigate spaces where she anticipates not belonging and fears her voice may be dismissed. The detailed planning (recording calls as evidence, maintaining a paper trail) reflects an internalised understanding that, as a Black woman, her word alone may be insufficient in the event of conflict.

Beyond avoidance, participants describe how past traumatic experiences reshape their emotional approach to future marketplace interactions. Precious, a PhD with experience in workplace and consumer discrimination, articulates how discrimination becomes generalised across similar contexts. After experiencing dismissive treatment from a car mechanic who spoke over her and questioned her competence, Precious explains how this single incident reverberates across future encounters in male-dominated service spaces:

My choice to change my tyres is affected now, and even walking in the direction of that choice is now dreadful. Because of prior experiences, I am just like, I hope the next one will be better.

A routine task becomes emotionally taxing. Her use of “*dreadful*” signals an anticipatory anxiety that precedes the interaction itself. This demonstrates how discriminatory encounters create long-lasting emotional imprints that travel across time and space.

Others develop strategies not of avoidance but of emotional armour. Tinashe describes this psychological recalibration:

I think I have developed this hyper-alertness, expecting something to happen as a defence mechanism. If I am expecting it, then I cannot be hurt by it.

Her comment demonstrates a strategy of pre-emptive emotional buffering: if harm is anticipated, its impact may be softened. This hyper-alertness reflects both resilience and psychological burden, evidence of how deeply racialised experiences become internalised.

Tinashe's articulation of pre-emptive emotional numbing as a defence mechanism emerges as one of the most precise descriptions of racialised emotional labour across the interviews. As her account was transcribed and analysed, it prompted reflexive engagement, revealing how anticipating harm can itself become a form of harm. This chronic, low-level vigilance becomes so habitual that it is difficult to distinguish from one's baseline emotional state.

This observation is not intended to redirect attention toward the researcher, but rather to acknowledge how such reflexive recognition shaped the interpretation of participants' descriptions of "adjustment" or "getting used to it." These are understood not as forms of indifference, but as processes through which the self adapts to conditions it should never have had to accommodate. Tinashe's insight, that preparation cannot fully absorb the blow, is theoretically significant, as it challenges a key assumption within resilience literature: that anticipatory coping mitigates harm, rather than redistributing it across time.

These accounts reveal that emotional preparation becomes a compulsory component of Black women's participation in everyday consumer life, whether entering a store, restaurant, or bar, or engaging in a service encounter. This aligns with Winters' (2020) theorisation of Black fatigue, the cumulative exhaustion produced by repeated exposure to racialised stressors. However, the findings here extend Winters by showing that such fatigue is not only the outcome of repeated incidents but also the result of anticipatory emotional labour, the psychological effort invested *before* any incident occurs. Emotional depletion, therefore, accumulates not merely through direct encounters with discrimination but through the chronic expectation of harm embedded in racialised consumer spaces.

This analysis contributes to critical studies of consumer space by demonstrating that racialised spatial harm functions not only through visible interactions within the marketplace but through temporal and affective mechanisms that structure how racialised consumers move, feel, and prepare themselves in advance. Existing scholarship has documented discriminatory treatment in commercial spaces, but this research shows that the emotional labour required to enter them begins well before the threshold is crossed. Therefore, racialised space exercises power anticipatorily: it determines emotional preparedness, creates expectations of animosity or belonging, and controls preventative tactics of self-presentation, alertness, and withdrawal. By doing so, consumer spaces function as conditions that structure racialised individuals' orientations to the market across time, extending the reach of exclusion

beyond the moment of interaction and integrating it into daily life, rather than just being places of encounter.

Bontle describes the embodied nature of this cycle and how it becomes difficult to disengage:

Whenever I enter a space like that, I become vigilant and anxious. It stays with you. You become hypervigilant and anxious, constantly questioning what might happen, and it does not just leave once you have left the space. The feelings linger; this anxiety, this sense of being on guard. It affects how you feel the next time you approach that same space.

Bontle's observation that anxiety "*stays with you*" reveals how pre-entry emotional states are not episodic or contained within the moment of shopping. The anxiety from one visit shapes the emotional preparation required for the next visit, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where past experiences directly determine future emotional states. This observation is crucial for understanding the recursive nature of pre-space consciousness, how post-space reflection feeds directly into pre-space preparation, creating an ongoing loop of anticipatory labour.

Jane encapsulates this exhaustion directly:

Cognitive gymnastics, right? These things are constantly on our minds.

The phrase "*cognitive gymnastics*" captures the intricate mental acrobatics required for Black women to navigate consumer spaces *before* any marketplace interaction even begins. This is not ordinary decision-making but a form of anticipatory hypervigilance, where every potential encounter is mentally rehearsed to mitigate racialised harm. Participants spoke of this labour as draining, describing emotional states, "*I already know what to expect.*" The emotional toll of these practices aligns with the growing literature on anticipatory stress (Carter and Pieterse, 2020; Hope et al., 2021), which argues that the expectation of racial discrimination can be as psychologically damaging as the discrimination itself. It also intersects with scholarship on racial trauma (Polanco-Roman et al., 2016; Comas-Díaz et al., 2019), which shows how past racist encounters create embodied memories that shape future responses, often producing anxiety, vigilance, and avoidance even in mundane everyday activities.

The findings here extend this work by demonstrating that anticipatory stress is not an abstract psychological process but a form of racialised consumer labour embedded within the temporal dynamics of marketplace navigation. Participants' "*cognitive gymnastics*" reflect a strategic adaptation to historically racialised commercial spaces. This research, therefore, highlights how emotional and cognitive burdens accumulate *before* any spatial encounter, showing that the marketplace itself functions as a trigger for anticipatory racial stress and that this stress is structurally, not individually, produced.

Lebohang conveys the embodied dimension of this vigilance:

It is difficult to walk into a space peacefully, and one must be on high alert. Moreover, that does affect your emotions, so it is an emotive experience.

For Lebohang, the inability to enter a space "peacefully" is the core issue. The requirement to maintain "high alert" transforms consumption into an emotionally exhausting performance. This pre-entry emotional state, the need to be "on", becomes constitutive of the marketplace experience itself. This pre-emptive anxiety contributes to marketplace trauma, as it appears to follow a cyclical pattern where one experience feeds into another.

Bennett et al. (2016) conceptualise marketplace trauma as emerging from the interaction of social structures, institutional practices, and classificatory logics that organise consumers into hierarchies of legitimacy and protection. Rather than arising from isolated incidents, trauma develops through a repeating cycle in which anticipatory anxiety and discriminatory encounters reinforce one another. This insight is directly reflected in the experiences documented in this research. Participants did not describe harm as confined to single moments of mistreatment, but as an ongoing psychological condition shaped by repeated exposure to spaces where their presence was anticipated as suspect, and their legitimacy as consumers was routinely questioned.

Consistent with Bennett et al.'s (2016) argument, this research shows that marketplace trauma is produced through structural mechanisms that categorise consumers along racialised and gendered lines, generating consumer spaces that protect some bodies while rendering others vulnerable. However, this research extends their framework by demonstrating how these classificatory processes operate spatially and temporally. Participants' accounts reveal how pre-emptive emotional labour, heightened vigilance, and avoidance strategies emerge *before* marketplace entry. In this way, marketplace trauma functions not merely as a psychological response to discrimination but as a spatially mediated condition embedded in everyday consumption. This contribution focuses on how trauma is sustained not only through interactional harm but through the anticipatory and cumulative effects of navigating racialised consumer spaces over time.

This cumulative emotional preparation reveals how pre-space consciousness operates as a racialised survival mechanism, transforming mundane consumer activities into sites of significant affective labour (Hochschild, 1983; Williams et al., 2019). The constant emotional scanning, anticipation, and defensive positioning represent rational responses to spaces organised around racialised hierarchies, yet they exact a profound psychological toll that accumulates over time. The constant emotional anticipation requires taking safety measures before entering any space.

5.2.4. Navigating Safety: Temporal, Spatial, and Social Planning

For Black women navigating consumer spaces, safety cannot be assumed; it must be actively constructed and continually negotiated. Safety here encompasses multiple dimensions: physical safety from potential harm, psychological safety (the ability to maintain dignity and sense of self), and social safety (the ability to move through spaces without being subjected to humiliation or exclusionary practices).

Before entering consumer spaces, Black consumers engage in pre-emptive mental and emotional labour, evaluating whether a given space poses a threat to their identity, dignity, or sense of belonging. This includes assessing whether they will be stereotyped, surveilled, targeted for "random" searches, charged higher prices, or treated with contempt. Such planning reflects a broader protective orientation, one that seeks not only to avoid direct harm but also to preserve psychological well-being amid routine microaggressions and structural inequities. Rank-Christman and Wooten (2022) argue that Black consumers react in predictable ways to market signals such as unfair service, high prices, and racially insensitive branding. Their responses are not irrational or overly cautious; rather, they are sensible, informed by experience, and emotionally aware.

One consistent pre-entry safety strategy involved manipulating the temporal dimension of shopping. Yolanda, a freelance writer, journalist, and content creator who maintains flexible work hours, describes how she structures her entire schedule around marketplace safety:

I enjoy the fact that, as a freelancer working remotely, I can structure my day to be out during off-peak hours. For example, when most people are at work or school, I prefer shopping in the mornings, especially on Sunday mornings when it is quiet. I hate shopping when it is busy because there are more people. So, yes, this affects my behaviour; I avoid peak times when there are lots of people. I much prefer shopping when the stores are empty or semi-empty. So, that is one of the main experiences that comes to mind.

Yolanda's rationale reveals her safety calculation: fewer people mean fewer potential sources of discrimination, fewer eyes monitoring her behaviour, fewer opportunities for her presence to be questioned. She has translated her pre-entry safety concerns into a structured temporal practice that now shapes her entire consumer and work life. Her ability to shop at quieter times is itself a form of privilege, one that depends on flexible employment. However, she notes the costs of this strategy:

But my schedule itself is inconvenient, more than I just hate the fact that these factors heavily into my decision-making of whether I am going to go shopping.

Yolanda's statement reveals the paradox of safety-seeking behaviour: the strategies that protect her from racialised harm simultaneously constrain her freedom and complicate her consumer agency. She cannot

shop spontaneously; she cannot, as other consumers might, "pop into" a store when convenient. Her safety requires sacrifice.

Thando describes a similar but more restrictive approach:

Avoid larger consumer experiences or crowds. I usually only go to the shops when I need something.

For Thando, the strategy has become so integrated into her practice that she shops only when necessary, minimising her exposure to crowded spaces where she feels her presence is scrutinised. This represents an even more significant constraint on consumer agency, the reduction of consumption to bare necessity rather than pleasure or choice.

While pre-space consciousness shapes Black women's perception and emotional readiness to enter spaces, economic and spatial convenience often override the desire to avoid sites of racialisation. Several participants described convenience as a significant, and at times constraining, factor in shaping their decisions about where to shop. Tinashe's experience at her local Lidl illustrates this paradox. During her regular weekly shopping, she was followed by a security guard who demanded to see her receipt because he "*did not see her pay for her items.*" After handing over the receipt, she left the store, but the experience was deeply unsettling. However, she noted that she could not simply stop going there, as it was the cheapest and closest option for her groceries. As Tinashe reflects:

However, these are the things that become ingrained when you are Black; you learn to always keep your receipts because they can influence how you are treated.

This observation reveals how a single experience of racialised surveillance transforms pre-space consciousness for future visits. The receipt must now be kept and ready, a small material practice that carries the weight of anticipated suspicion. Convenience is not neutral; it becomes a structural constraint that binds consumers to spaces where their dignity and personhood may be compromised. In this context, pre-space consciousness becomes not merely anticipatory anxiety but practical preparation. The market theory that customers are "free to choose" obscures how Black women's decisions are constrained by social, economic, and spatial factors, further influenced by the need to lessen racial harm. Where to purchase may seem straightforward, but it represents a constant balancing act between survival and safety.

This finding extends Saatcioglu and Corus's (2015) theory of spatial vulnerability, which highlights how inequalities are materially and symbolically embedded in both physical and social spaces. Unlike traditional definitions of vulnerability that locate disadvantage within the individual, their framework highlights how spatial contexts, objective, subjective, and lived, *produce* or *amplify* vulnerability. The data here demonstrate that this vulnerability begins before entry, as Black women must weigh economic

constraints against psychological safety, often choosing to return to spaces where they have experienced harm simply because alternatives are geographically or economically inaccessible.

Another pre-space safety strategy involved bringing companions to spaces where participants anticipated difficulty. Precious, navigating both consumer and professional spaces, describes seeking support when facing unfamiliar contexts: when she needed to fix her car, she felt uncertain about the service she would receive; therefore, she decided to bring a friend along to help her navigate the automotive jargon she might encounter at the mechanic's.

The decision to bring a friend demonstrates how safety work begins before entering a space. This pre-entry planning reflects Precious's anticipation of potential challenges, both the practical barrier of technical language and the relational dynamics she might face at the mechanics. By arranging for a companion beforehand, she creates a buffer against anticipated vulnerability. Anderson (2022) describes the concept of the 'Black Nod', a moment of recognition between Black people in predominantly white spaces: "This is not regarded as a defence; rather, it is symbolic in that it shows support from someone else, someone who understands what you are going through," (p. 26) conveying a look of "I see you" (p. 26). While the support itself manifests during the interaction, the strategic decision to ensure that support would be present represents preparatory safety work, the conscious choice not to enter the space alone.

The significance of this cannot be overstated. For Black women navigating spaces where they anticipate hostility, the presence of another person, particularly another Black person, who can witness and validate their experience, provides crucial psychological protection. The friend serves not only as a practical assistant but as a buffer against internalised gaslighting, as someone who can confirm that discriminatory treatment occurred and was not imagined or misinterpreted.

Josephine, the CEO of a women's refugee and asylum seeker organisation in Scotland, instructs the women she works with to understand their rights, extending this anticipatory safety work into a pedagogical practice:

Someone once told me, when you meet a police officer, remember that every police officer is assigned a unique number on their badge. And it is hard because you must look at them directly to get it. But now, I make a point to try and spot that number. Because if they walk away and I need to call back to file a complaint, I have something concrete to refer to, that number. It was something I never knew before, but someone explained it to me: that number is specific to just that one officer. No one else can use it, and even if they have left the job, that number is still associated with them. So, they said, take a good look. Scan it with your eyes. If you do not have anything to write it down on, keep it in your head. If you are treated badly or if you feel discriminated against by a police officer, get that number.

Then, call the station or file a complaint through someone in the community who can escalate it. But you always need that number.

Josephine's account reveals the depth of anticipatory safety planning required, extending beyond consumer spaces to interactions with authority figures. The responsibility of taking down numbers and names is not a neutral act; it is a calculated strategy that relies on the perceived power of the staff member and the power and rights Black women feel they have in the situation. This knowledge, how to document, how to prepare evidence, how to protect oneself, represents a form of community-generated safety literacy passed between Black women as survival knowledge.

Beyond the practical constraints of convenience and safety planning, findings reveal that pre-space consciousness is shaped by deeply internalised messages about who belongs in spaces. Naledi's statement encapsulates internalised spatial exclusion:

This shop is not meant for me.

This condensed observation shows the deeply internalised sense of spatial misalignment that arises from cumulative encounters with exclusionary cues. Her statement, delivered before or in the early moments of entering a space, summarises a pre-space consciousness shaped by the racialised history embedded within the space itself. Access to consumer spaces involves not only physical entry but also symbolic permission, the felt sense that one's presence does not need to be justified, defended, or negotiated. For Naledi, this symbolic permission is absent.

Similarly, Bontle reflects on the shared nature of this exclusionary feeling:

It is the kind of feeling that shows you are not alone in thinking, "Oh, I do not belong." Others feel it too. It is as if they are saying, "You do not belong here; you stand out." The way you feel inside, like you stand out and do not belong, indicates something important.

This feeling is not merely a personal response but a shared, socially structured experience, which Bontle identifies as a collective phenomenology of marketplace exclusion. Her recognition that "*others feel it too*" transforms what might be dismissed as individual paranoia or sensitivity into a pattern of racialised spatial governance, lending credence to Collins's (2000) description of the epistemological authority of subjective experience within Black feminist thought. The phrase "*as if they are saying you do not belong here*" encapsulates the unspoken yet unmistakable communication that occurs through bodily arrangement, visual surveillance, and affective atmosphere. Bontle identifies this as a message conveyed not through explicit verbal rejection but through ambient hostility.

This indicates that spaces themselves communicate exclusion through what Ahmed (2007) terms "orientations," subtle directional forces that signal for whom spaces are designed and who remains perpetually "out of place." Ahmed's concept of orientation is crucial here, as it moves beyond individualised notions of discrimination to theorise how bodies become aligned with or against certain spatial possibilities. For Ahmed, orientation fundamentally concerns how bodies "tend toward" or "turn away from" objects, spaces, and futures, depending on what is made available to them and what is foreclosed. In *Queer Phenomenology*, she argues that spaces are not neutral backdrops but actively shape bodily possibilities through lines of inheritance, habit, and repetition, which she refers to as "straightening devices" that normalise certain bodies while marking others as deviant or disoriented.

When applied to marketplace contexts, Ahmed's framework reveals how consumer spaces operate as "orientation devices" that direct white bodies toward comfort, belonging, and assumed legitimacy, while simultaneously directing Black women's bodies toward suspicion, surveillance, and spatial anxiety. The "orientation" of upscale retail spaces, characterised by their aesthetic codes (minimalist design, hushed atmospheres, sparse merchandise displays), demographic composition (predominantly white staff and clientele), and gatekeeping practices (security monitoring, selective service attention), sends implicit messages about who belongs and who is merely tolerated. These orientations sediment over time, leaving spaces that retain the impressions of past exclusions, rendering them unwelcoming even in the absence of overtly discriminatory acts.

Moreover, Ahmed's concept of orientation helps explain the temporal dimensions of Bontle's experience, specifically how exclusion is felt "*before or upon* entry." Orientation is not only about the present spatial arrangement but also about the anticipatory knowledge accumulated through repeated encounters with hostile spaces. Black women become oriented *away from* certain marketplace spaces not through isolated traumatic incidents but through the gradual accumulation of micro-rejections, hostile gazes, and atmospheric discomfort that condition the body to recognise danger before it fully materialises.

Natasha reveals the core processes of navigating space in pre-entry contexts as she recalls specific encounters and interprets their emotional impact:

As much as I resist being defined by how others perceive me, there are moments when I genuinely feel that I do not belong in certain spaces. That sense of not belonging influences my decisions in subtle but significant ways. For instance, I may desire something, but then second-guess myself, or decide not to pursue it at all. I might avoid particular shops because I perceive them as spaces designated for 'those people,' not for someone like me. I should not even be thinking like that, but the reality is, there are places I did not step into until quite recently, simply because I had internalised the idea that they were not meant for me.

Natasha describes how she internalises feelings of exclusion over time. She explains that a sense of not belonging leads her to avoid specific spaces altogether, which opposes decision-making about those spaces based on personal experience. The ability to make thoughtful choices about those areas, based on her individual experiences and the genuine connections they could offer, stands in sharp contrast to this instinctive exclusion. Instead, her sense of alienation weighs heavily, preventing her from exploring and interacting with others in a meaningful way. This sentiment echoes work on how class and gender intersect with race, contributing to feelings of not belonging that may be linked to assumptions about who is considered a legitimate consumer in specific spaces (Pittman, 2020) before entry.

The revolving nature of entering and leaving consumer spaces, which accumulate over time, shapes her perception of space, reinforcing the notion that specific spaces are not meant for someone like her. This sentiment becomes even more pressing if individuals have had negative experiences, shaping future pre-entry consciousness. As a result, Black women like Natasha feel the need to modify their spatial behaviour by choosing strategic avoidance. This is a powerful example of self-definition, a central tenet of Black feminist thought. Through the lens of Collins' (2000) concept of self-definition, Natasha's decision to avoid certain shops is not an act of surrender, but rather a boundary, a way of protecting herself from spaces that communicate her unwelcomeness.

This is useful to Natasha in planning her pre-entries, as she begins to strategise with specific spaces already excluded and seeks to navigate new territories with care. Her mind reveals a pragmatic but also politicised process of spatial selection: she is constantly making decisions about which spaces are safe, which are viable, and which must be circumnavigated altogether. This pre-emptive screening demonstrates the way in which Black women internalise the geographies of exclusion, taking on a form of spatial literacy that enables survival within racialised consumer space.

Significantly, Natasha notes that she has only "quite recently" begun entering previously avoided spaces, suggesting that anticipatory exclusion can be contested through deliberate acts of spatial occupation. However, this contestation itself requires labour, overcoming internalised boundaries, managing heightened anxiety during initial visits, and developing confidence through repeated non-hostile encounters. That such labour is necessary reveals the depth of racialised spatial ordering: even when formal barriers to entry do not exist, psychological and affective barriers function as effective exclusionary mechanisms.

The cumulative effect of these pre-entry safety strategies is a state often clinically termed "hypervigilance" (Henderson, Hakstian, and Williams, 2016). However, this language risks pathologising what is more accurately understood as a rational, embodied response to repeated exposure to racialisation. Jane and Tinashe both describe this state directly:

Jane: *"You grow to expect a certain level of vigilance as a Black person. If something happens, it would be shocking but expected."*

Tinashe: *"I think I have developed this hyper-alertness, expecting something to happen as a defence mechanism. If I am expecting it, then I cannot be hurt by it."*

Rather than interpreting hypervigilance as a psychological disorder or personal failing, it is more accurate to understand it as a rational adaptation to structurally racialised spaces. Fanon (1952) describes how the Black subject is forced to see themselves through the white gaze, to internalise the contempt directed toward them. He describes how "the Black presence ruins the representative narrative of Western personhood: its past tethered to treacherous stereotypes of primitivism and degeneracy will not produce a history of civil progress, a space for the Socius; its present, dismembered and dislocated, will not contain the image of identity that is questioned in the dialectic of mind/body and resolved in the epistemology of appearance and reality." (1952, p. xii) In consumer contexts, this manifests as perpetual awareness of how one's presence is being interpreted, what assumptions are being made, and what harm might result. Hypervigilance is not pathology; it is the lucid recognition of actual danger embedded within spaces organised around racialised hierarchies.

5.2.5. Pre-Space Conclusion

A methodological note on accessing pre-space consciousness: These accounts of anticipatory emotions, safety strategies, and internalised exclusion were not easily articulated in interviews. Many participants initially described marketplace experiences by recounting specific discriminatory incidents (which will be analysed in the In-Space section). The pre-space dimension only became apparent after asking follow-up questions such as, *"How did you prepare?"* or *"What factors influence your decision to go somewhere?"* This methodological observation itself reveals something significant: pre-space consciousness operates largely outside explicit awareness because it has become habituated, routine. As Zoe noted, *'it becomes a norm.'* Black women's anticipatory labour is so deeply integrated into everyday life that it becomes invisible even to those performing it until specifically prompted to reflect on the 'before' moment. This invisibility has methodological and theoretical implications. Methodologically, it suggests that studying racialised consumer experiences requires intentional attention to anticipatory stages that may not emerge in typical marketplace research. Theoretically, it reveals how racial capitalism operates partly through the normalisation of extra labour: Black women come to accept anticipatory preparation as 'just how things are' rather than recognising it as an unjust extraction of cognitive, emotional, and temporal resources.

These findings contribute to understanding space as both a social product and a social producer, as Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) put it. However, the data reveal an addition: space operates as a *racialised* product before Black women ever enter it. The pre-space consciousness documented here,

the anticipation, the self-presentation strategies, the emotional preparation, and the scanning for racial composition, represent the internalisation of spatial hierarchies that have been historically and socially constructed. These histories persist in retail spaces' architecture, geography, and affective tone, producing what Lukate (2022) calls the embedding of "local and global racial history and power dynamics" in space, delineating "who belongs, who does not belong, and who is out of place" (p. 108).

These findings demonstrate what Anderson (2015) theorises as "white space consciousness": the anticipatory awareness that consumer spaces are structured around white normativity, in which Black presence requires justification. As McKittrick (2006) argues, where we are located indicates who we can become; participants' pre-space labour reveals how spatial organisation literally determines which identities Black women can safely perform.

This notion of being "out of place" is central to understanding how marketplace exclusion operates through spatial arrangement rather than explicit prohibition. Ahmed (2007) theorises "out of place" as a phenomenological condition in which certain bodies disrupt the normative flow of space, generating friction, discomfort, and corrective responses designed to restore spatial order. To be "out of place," then, is not simply to be unwelcome but to threaten the very coherence of how space organises social relations.

This data extends these theoretical insights by revealing how the designation of being "out of place" is *anticipated* by Black women before spatial entry, transforming it from an in-the-moment experience into a pre-emptive orientation that governs consumption decisions. Amogelang's contemplation of whether "*nicer restaurants*" will tolerate her presence, and her active scanning for "*people with more melanin*" as a buffer against isolation, demonstrates that she has internalised the knowledge that certain marketplace spaces are not designed for her. Her body has learned, through accumulated encounters with spatial hostility, that upscale consumption sites operate as spaces for others who do not like her.

In sum, the concept of being "out of place" as applied to Black women in marketplace contexts reveals the dense layering of visual, economic, historical, and affective exclusions that structure consumer citizenship along racial lines. It demonstrates that marketplace discrimination is not reducible to individual acts of prejudice but operates through the ambient organisation of space itself, through who is expected, who is extended, and who is marked as perpetually provisional, their right to be present always subject to revocation.

What distinguishes these findings is their explanation of how racialised spatial logic operates before any interpersonal interaction occurs. This anticipatory, protective, and preparatory work demonstrates that defences begin well before one crosses a threshold. As Saren et al. (2019) argue, "the marketplace

is not a level playing field" (p. 476); this research extends that observation by showing that inequality is not merely experienced within the marketplace but also anticipated and internalised beforehand.

Thus, pre-space labour reveals how consumer agency is circumscribed by the structural modalities of racial capitalism that make certain bodies perennially "out of place" (Puwar, 2004). The precarity Black women experience in consumer spaces is not an accident; it is structurally produced, historically maintained, and socially ratified through everyday spatial design and discourse. To address this kind of inequality is not only to include or represent, but also to change the spatial and social logics that make pre-space anticipation a racialised survival process.

Having established how anticipatory labour structures Black women's approach to consumer spaces, the analysis now turns to **In-Space** experiences, the moment of encounter where these preparations meet lived reality, where identity must be actively performed, emotions regulated in real-time, and safety continuously negotiated within the racialised consumer space itself.

5.3. In-Space - Active Navigation Within Consumer Spaces

5.3.1. Introduction to In-Space

In-space experiences represent the actualisation of pre-space preparations: the careful outfit selection is put to the test, the emotional fortification is deployed, and the safety strategies are enacted. However, in-space is not merely the execution of a pre-determined script. It is a dynamic site where Black women must respond in real time to unexpected microaggressions, adjust their performances to shifting social cues, and make split-second decisions about when to speak, when to remain silent, and when to withdraw. The immediacy of in-space experiences means that identity work, emotional labour, and safety navigation occur simultaneously, often in rapid succession, requiring what participants describe as constant "cognitive gymnastics."

The spatial dimensions of these experiences cannot be overstated. The physical arrangement of stores, the placement of security personnel, the positioning of surveillance cameras, and the organisation of products into "ethnic" aisles actively shape how Black women move through and experience these spaces. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is never neutral; it is produced through social relations and, in turn, produces social relations. In racialised consumer spaces, this production creates spaces where Black women's bodies are simultaneously hypervisible (as potential threats) and invisible (as legitimate consumers deserving of service).

This section explores three interconnected dimensions of in-space navigation: identity performance under surveillance, real-time emotional regulation, and safety management through tactical responses. These dimensions are not separate but deeply entangled: performing a "non-threatening" identity requires emotional suppression, which itself is a safety strategy; managing safety through minimisation affects identity expression; processing emotions influences how one navigates ongoing encounters. Together, they reveal the complex, multi-layered work required to exist as a Black woman in consumer spaces.

5.3.2. Navigating Identity: Performance, Surveillance, and Market Exclusion

When it comes to identity, Black women's consumer identities are shaped not just by themselves but also by how others see and treat them in consumer spaces, particularly through interactions with external actors such as store employees, security staff, and other consumers. These secondary participants influence experiences in both obvious and subtle ways, through close surveillance, microaggressions, differential treatment, or complete dismissal. In this stage, the shopping experience becomes profoundly relational, in which the actions, assumptions, and power of others shape a Black woman's sense of belonging, safety, and recognition in the consumer space.

The findings in this section extend Roscigno et al.'s (2009) concepts of 'gatekeeper discretion' and 'minority vulnerability' in employment contexts to consumer spaces. Where Roscigno et al. analysed how the workplace authority figures exercise discretionary power, this research demonstrates how frontline service workers and security personnel wield similar discretionary power through informal surveillance and selective service.

Unfortunately, Black women often face negative stereotypes and are seen as "deviant," "angry," or "untrustworthy" (Collins, 2000, p. 69). These labels come from societal views and historical prejudices, limiting how others perceive and treat Black women in shopping contexts (Jones and Norwood, 2016). For example, Femi tries to present herself positively to avoid being labelled as "the angry Black girl." This shows how Black women must continually negotiate these imposed identities. This coping strategy reflects broader discussions about how Black women manage stereotypes and societal expectations.

Femi describes pleasantness as her way of consciously resisting the stereotype of 'the angry Black girl':

Personality in the way of pretending to be extra nice, because I do not want you to come at me or have thoughts about me.

Similarly, Precious reflects on her behaviour as an effort to avoid causing any trouble:

I think it is something that I do, which now I am thinking is a lot, but I am always trying not to be a problem. I go in not trying to be a problem, and I am not doing anything problematic.

This imposed identity pressures them to perform according to what is deemed socially acceptable. In response to how their racialised bodies are perceived, they regulate their self-presentation, including movement and verbal interactions, to pre-empt and mitigate negative assumptions. For example, Bontle acknowledges the strategic alterations she makes to her appearance and behaviour to ease social interactions and reduce conflict:

I recognise that presenting myself in a certain way makes my life and my experiences in the world easier. I want to minimise the struggle... the way I dress is a factor. As a woman, I also must consider how my appearance affects how people perceive me. I will not wear figure-hugging clothes because I want to be respected and listened to. I make sure nothing is low-cut because I do not want to be sexualized; I want people to take me seriously.

These narratives reflect the complex labour required to exist within racialised and gendered social spaces. The phrasing, "it is something I do" or "I am doing", signals active agency: a tactical, embodied response to structural inequality rather than internalised blame. Participants' behaviours reflect calculated performances of respectability and restraint designed to counteract stereotypes that frame Black women as angry, disruptive, or hypersexual.

Crockett's (2017) concept of "paths to respectability" provides crucial interpretive clarity here. His framework positions such performances not as capitulation but as stigma management strategies that allow marginalised individuals to claim dignity and legitimacy within hostile spaces. Viewed through this lens, Femi's pleasantness and Bontle's clothing choices represent calculated investments in social safety, attempts to minimise friction and "struggle" in everyday interactions. These are survival strategies born of necessity, reflecting the exhausting double consciousness required to navigate spaces where one's very presence may be viewed with suspicion.

The findings thus reveal a troubling reality: Black women must continuously perform emotional and presentational labour to access the basic respect afforded to others as default. This labour is neither freely chosen nor distributed; it represents an unjust tax on Black women's time, energy, and autonomy in consumer spaces.

Bontle's following observation reveals, respectability performances offer no guarantee of fair treatment:

You could come wearing a suit or whatever, and they will not be convinced.

Her comment demonstrates the inescapability of racialised suspicion, showing the constraints of respectability politics as a strategy of protection (Crockett, 2017). This suspicion indicates that Black consumers are always under suspicion regardless of their efforts to integrate into aspirational norms, an argument supported by existing literature on consumer racial profiling and marketplace discrimination (Gabbidon, 2003; Henderson and Williams, 2013).

Bontle's observation weighed heavily during analysis, as it named the limits of the very strategies participants described throughout the Pre-Space stage. The self-presentation labour, aesthetic preparation, and careful management of appearance could all be rendered irrelevant by a gaze that had already reached its conclusion. This reflects a position in which, despite meticulous calculation and effort, one is still read as a suspect.

What Bontle identifies is not simply the failure of respectability politics as a strategy, but the violence of being made to understand, repeatedly, that efforts at legibility are inconsequential to those who have already determined one's illegitimacy. This recognition deepened interpretive attention to participants' accounts, which were framed not merely as frustration, but as a more specific form of grief: the grief of realising that such labour would never be enough.

This research documents that Black women engage in respectability politics, strategic self-presentation designed to counter racist stereotypes through dress, speech, and comportment (Crockett, 2017; Harris, 2014). However, documenting these practices does not imply endorsement of them. Following Black

feminist critiques (Collins, 2000; Harris, 2014), there is recognition that respectability politics places the burden of racism on those experiencing it, implicitly suggesting that discrimination results from improper presentation rather than structural racism.

The analytical stance here is dialectical: respectability performances represent both agency and constraint. They demonstrate Black women's sophisticated understanding of how racism operates and their strategic deployment of cultural capital to minimise harm. However, they also reveal the exhausting accommodations required to access spaces that white consumers enter without performance. As Bontle noted, "*You could come wearing a suit or whatever, and they will not be convinced.*" Respectability offers no guarantee of safety, exposing its limitations as a resistance strategy.

By foregrounding "racialised suspicion" analytically, this research contributes to understanding the persistent boundaries Black women face in consumer spaces by illustrating that respectability and self-presentation, although essential survival strategies, are insufficient armour against racialised social control and stereotyping. In this sense, self-presentation becomes a form of *embodied negotiation*: a means of managing surveillance, mitigating risk, and asserting humanity. Within racialised consumer spaces, identity performance is not a trivial or individual concern; it is a deeply social, emotional, and political act of self-preservation.

This inescapability becomes particularly evident in participants' descriptions of how they experience hypervisibility, being simultaneously highly visible as potential threats yet invisible as legitimate consumers deserving of service. Thando captures this paradox:

However, once or twice in a retail setting, I have encountered staff members walking around, tidying up, but not necessarily willing to assist. I remember asking for help with something, and the person was very rushed and seemed bothered. They did not want to give me the time of day or provide the information I needed. In that store, I have noticed they are always courteous and kind to older white women, which made me think, "Okay, this is not great." I needed someone to check the storeroom for me, but they did not help.

Thando's account exemplifies Collins' (2000) intersectional condition of Black womanhood: visibility becomes both burden and risk. Her body attracts surveillance as a potential shoplifter yet fails to register as a customer entitled to service, a paradox wherein Black women are simultaneously over-seen (as threats) and overlooked (as consumers).

Tinashe described the paradox of not possessing the "*right*" or "*privileged*" body, the kind that is assumed to belong, to be assisted, or to move freely without scrutiny. She explained that before visiting a store, she often conducts extensive research to avoid asking questions and reserves direct interaction

with staff as a last resort. This pre-emptive strategy illustrates the anticipatory labour that racialised and gendered bodies undertake to mitigate potential discomfort or surveillance in consumer spaces.

Most participants talked about regulating their bodies by controlling how they moved, what they touched in the store, and where they stood. They also talked about calculated performative gestures such as slowly putting down products, avoiding certain aisles where they might see workers and not want eyes on them, not putting their hands in their pockets, especially after touching something, and positioning their bodies to appear 'non-threatening.'

The performance of identity in consumer spaces also extends to linguistic and behavioural code-switching. Precious articulates this clearly:

In certain spaces, I often feel the need to go above and beyond, almost to perform a version of myself that is more palatable or legible to others. For instance, when it comes to language, there is a kind of pressure to overcompensate. We have spoken before about how individuals who speak English as a second language frequently feel the need to exert additional effort, not necessarily because they want to, but because there is an underlying fear of being misunderstood or, worse, dismissed entirely because of how they speak. That resonates with me deeply. So yes, I do find myself performing this 'extra' version of myself, modifying my speech to be clearer or more polished than how I would speak with close friends or over the phone. It is a kind of code-switching that is not just about language, but about acceptability.

Code-switching is a well-established concept in academic literature, widely understood as the practice of alternating one's language, tone, or behaviour in different social contexts to conform to dominant norms or expectations (Weston and Gardner-Chloros, 2015). For Black women, the findings showed that code-switching extends beyond linguistic adjustments to include modulation of affect, body language, and self-presentation as strategies to mitigate racial stereotypes and achieve social belonging.

This dual identity performance reflects Du Bois's (1903) double consciousness: "this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (p. 3). The idea of performing a 'false self' highlights how external performance becomes an active embodiment. These performances are not just conscious choices, but compulsory adaptations shaped by how Black bodies are read within consumer spaces. Linking to Crenshaw's (1998) term 'double jeopardy', the heightened disadvantage of Black women results from the consequences of their intersecting Black and female identities (Brownlow, 2023).

The experiences are then burdened with the need to assert their agency to counteract the categorisation of surveillance and control. Precious adds that this double consciousness affects want; she almost feels

like she needs to present herself in a way that's acceptable "*in their eyes, whatever that means*". She understands that appearance triggers specific reactions she would like to avoid, namely hypervisibility.

Black women's self-performance is a calculated response to socio-racial circumstances that both encourage their involvement and police their presence, rather than a matter of personal desire. Understanding this relationship is crucial to understanding both the strategic agency Black women use to negotiate spaces that are built against their belonging and the embodied toll that seemingly insignificant consumption habits inflict. Thus, what seems to be routine consumption turns out to be ongoing identity construction done under risk, surveillance, and conditional inclusion. Because of these processes, consumer spaces must be examined from a spatial politics perspective. According to Lefebvre (1991), social ties, power imbalances, and past conflicts over legitimacy and access actively create space, which is never neutral. When viewed in this way, consumer surroundings become political terrains that organise who can move freely, who needs to be alert, and whose presence is made provisional rather than assumed, rather than passive backdrops for market trade.

Massey (1994) theorises space as constituted through "power-geometries": unequal networks that determine who moves with ease and who encounters friction, whose presence is naturalised and whose is marked as exceptional. For Black women, these manifest as differential comfort, service quality, and spatial access based on racialised assumptions about belonging (Crockett, 2017). Black women's consumption experiences thus represent not merely individual prejudice but participation in broader struggles over the racial ordering of commercial landscapes and marketplace citizenship itself.

For some participants, navigating identity was closely tied to their experiences of femininity. They described feeling that their femininity "suffered" during everyday activities such as shopping and self-presentation, particularly in relation to hair, makeup, and clothing.

Grace, who grew up in a small Scottish town where her family was the only Black family in the community, reflected on how this shaped her understanding of womanhood. She explained that she often felt excluded when shopping with her white friends, who could easily find products suited to their hair and skin tones, while she struggled to find foundation, blush, or concealer that matched her complexion. Grace adds:

It affected my identity in a sense of shame and a lack of belonging. I felt this in society regarding the feminine ideal, as well as the feeling of not being seen. I never saw myself represented, so I had no compass. Seeing other people fit in so well led me to develop a deficit model of myself, where I did not feel good enough, pretty enough, or like I could truly grasp who I was. This affected me by preventing me from buying certain things or from participating in the shared experience of going shopping with friends or trying on clothes. It would stop me from doing things.

Grace's reflection illustrates how systemic invisibility and a lack of representation generate profound shame and alienation among Black women consumers. Shame here operates as both an emotional response to exclusion and a mechanism of social regulation that signals misalignment with dominant cultural ideals of femininity. These ideals remain narrowly defined by whiteness (Johnson et al., 2025). The feeling of not belonging is intensified when identity is constructed through a deficit lens reinforced by marketplace failures to serve or reflect Black consumers adequately. This internalised shame can erode self-esteem and restrict participation in communal or cultural rituals, such as shopping or socialising, thereby perpetuating everyday marginalisation.

These experiences echo broader scholarship that situates shame as a sociocultural and political emotion for Black women, who are compelled to navigate the contradictory demands of being visible yet unseen, strong yet devalued (Johnson et al., 2025). The intersection of race and gender within consumer contexts thus produces a complex emotional and identity labour that Black women must perform daily, with significant consequences for their sense of belonging and well-being.

As Andrews et al. (2024) argue, building on De Beauvoir's notion of "becoming" a woman, femininity is not a universal process but a racialised one. While De Beauvoir conceptualised femininity as a state of *being* or *becoming* a woman, Andrews and colleagues contend that, in practice, this ideal has historically centred on whiteness. In this sense, femininity within dominant Western frameworks effectively means *being* or *becoming* a White woman. The ostensibly race-neutral language of mainstream feminist discourse conceals this bias, rendering femininity itself an inherently racialised construct. Grace's experiences exemplify this tension: her inability to participate fully in beauty-related consumption practices underscores how racialised exclusions in product availability and representation reproduce the notion that normative femininity is white, leaving Black women to negotiate belonging within these constrained ideals.

This experience exemplifies what Ulver and Osanami Törngren (2020) theorise as the 'empty body', Black women become symbolically loaded (carrying meanings of diversity, threat, or otherness) yet are simultaneously denied full personhood and recognition as legitimate consumers. Grace is visually present but structurally absent; invited to consume yet excluded from genuine belonging.

These findings align with broader evidence indicating that racialised consumers commonly experience exclusionary retail practices that produce spatial and symbolic forms of exclusion (Francis and Robertson, 2021; Pittman, 2017). The consequences go beyond monetary exchange, shaping the sense of belonging and performativity of identity among consumers in marketplace spaces and, therefore, pointing to the spatial vulnerability intrinsic to racially organised consumer spaces.

Both Grace and Zoe's struggles stemmed from product availability, the items they knew they could buy, and the colours that would suit them. This connects to what participants described as **systematic restricted choice** (Pittman, 2020), a pattern wherein racialised, economic, and geographic constraints shape access and agency within consumer spaces.

Tendai explained that her shopping choices often depend on the type of products she seeks. For everyday items such as food and clothing, she can shop in most places, with her choices primarily determined by quality and price. However, when purchasing cosmetics or hair products suited to her needs, she specifically seeks out African or Black-owned stores. This presents logistical challenges, as there is only one such store located in the city centre, requiring her to plan her visits carefully. She noted that this limited access affects not only her as a consumer but also her work as a hair braider, where product availability directly influences her livelihood.

The spatial marginalisation of products specifically designed for Black consumers operates through what might be termed the politics of "ethnic" aisles. When retailers refer to 'ethnic' or 'speciality' products in limited, segregated aisles, they implicitly designate who constitutes 'primary' versus 'secondary' consumers. This spatial marginalisation functions as retail redlining (D'Rosario and Williams, 2005), in which the physical layout itself becomes a mechanism of social control and market restriction.

Vega-Centeno's (2019) observation about the segregation of hair care products highlights how consumer space design can reinforce racial inequities and social boundaries. Could it be a way of telling Black consumers, "*Know your place*," as they only have certain sections in stores, the same aisles that are not that big, with a limited range of products? The way these spaces are designed communicates to Black consumers that their choices and options are restricted and secondary.

Tinashe articulates this frustration vividly:

*People often say, 'Oh, you have to go to London for those things,' or 'You have to go elsewhere.'
However, why should I have to travel far or pay high shipping fees to have the same access as
someone who might look different from me, or someone who is not Black or white, or whatever it
might be?*

This resonates with Saren et al.'s (2019, p. 476) observation that "not every marketplace participant can compete on equal terms", as multiple structural and interpersonal mechanisms marginalise and exclude certain groups. Patterns of selective access, or limited access, to goods and services reveal who is implicitly granted the "*right to consume*" and highlight the significant role of gatekeeper discretion in shaping Black women's consumer experiences. Francis and Robertson (2021) pose a critical question:

"How have marketing actors built these racialised spaces?" (p. 85). This aligns with Roscigno et al.'s (2009, p. 49) concept of minority vulnerability and gatekeeper discretion, which theorises how individuals operating within market systems exercise discretionary power that sustains inequality under the veneer of professionalism, neutrality, or cultural ignorance. Here, vulnerability lies in the hands of those with symbolic authority, the "gatekeepers", who determine who is welcomed, assisted, or excluded from participation in the marketplace.

The frustration with limited services also expanded to haircare, where Jane expressed that since moving from Zimbabwe to the UK, she has had to learn how to do her hair, as it is not catered for. She only has the option when she travels outside the country, and will have to do it elsewhere. She states:

In the six years I have lived here, I have never gotten my hair done locally because I have dreadlocks. I cannot just walk into a salon; most salons here are owned, operated, and managed by white people with little or no experience working with Black hair, let alone dreadlocks. They will often outright refuse service or say, "We do not offer that," which makes it clear that I am not the target clientele. So, I have had to handle most of these things myself.

For Black women, choosing a hairstyle is not merely a matter of personal preference or appearance. These choices are profoundly affected by historical, political, social, sexual, and cultural factors that greatly influence their lives and experiences (Ndichu and Upadhyaya, 2018). Many Black women like Jane feel as though they cannot fully express themselves because much of who they are is limited by what they can access.

These findings reveal how in-space identity navigation extends beyond interpersonal microaggressions to encompass structural exclusions embedded in product availability, spatial design, and market segmentation. The participants described their consumer identity and conduct as conditionally regulated and constructed within whiteness so that they are 'invited' to consume solely on whiteness's terms that obscure their specific requirements and visibility. This demonstrates the racialisation of identities and marketplace sites where Black women are constantly compelled to disavow illegitimacy and stereotypical deviance to occupy existence. Therefore, consumer agency is not only an individual affair but also a negotiated and deferred process based on performative acts in such spaces.

The negotiation of visibility under constant racialised surveillance positions Black women not only as passive recipients but also as resistant navigators who improvise bodily strategies for survival and dignity (hooks, 1992). Such adaptive strategies are symptomatic of deep-seated architectures of marketplace disbarment and racialised policing of Black bodies (Henderson and Williams, 2013; Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013; Cross and Ekpo, 2024).

5.3.3. Navigating Emotions: The Affective Dimensions of Racialised Consumption

The findings reveal that navigating consumer spaces is not just about transactions, interactions, or service quality, but also involves profound emotional labour associated with 'racialised spaces'. This primarily affects Black women, who continuously monitor their reactions, suppress negative emotions, and adjust their expectations in these spaces to preserve their identities and manage how others perceive them. This process represents an invisible form of emotional regulation, as Black women constantly manage their outward appearance while navigating spaces in real-time.

The emotional regulation participants describe here extends Hochschild's (1983) emotional labour framework to racialised consumer contexts. Unlike workers performing emotions for customers, Black women must regulate their feelings to access service, which this research terms 'racialised emotional labour'.

The emotional dimension of in-space navigation is inseparable from the spatial contexts that give rise to it. As participants move through aisles, interact with staff, and encounter other consumers, they simultaneously navigate ambient atmospheres of suspicion, exclusion, and hypervisibility. These spatial-affective dynamics generate complex emotional responses, fear, anger, exhaustion, and resignation, which must be actively managed to maintain composure and safety.

Findings show that interpersonal relationship context is key to the perception of microaggressions and their meaning. Participants reported that intentionality is crucial to deciding what constitutes a microaggression. Elizabeth explained that she measures microaggressions by "*the intentions of somebody*." At the same time, Femi noted the relational aspect, indicating that "*it is also about who is saying it and who is receiving it*." Thus, participants emphasised that it is not just the speaker's intent that should be considered when interpreting microaggressions, but also how the receiver anticipates and understands the utterance in the social context.

Tinashe elaborated on this interpretive complexity, foregrounding the affective register through which microaggressions are identified:

I think it is all about how it makes you feel. If something makes you think twice, if it does not feel straightforward, and you find yourself pausing, that is when I feel it is a microaggression. There is overt aggression, like racial slurs or telling someone to leave the country, but microaggression is when you must reflect on it. You might ask yourself, "Was that a microaggression, or was it something else?" However, you know something does not feel right; it just is not sitting well with you at that moment. You start questioning where it is coming from. What is the stereotype behind it? Is it coming from a place of interest or intrigue, or is it from a place that sees you as lesser?

Her description points to the ambiguity characteristic of microaggressions: unlike overt racial slurs, they operate within zones of ambiguity that demand interpretive labour from recipients while allowing perpetrators plausible deniability (Sue and Spanierman, 2020).

This interpretive burden intensifies in the absence of communal validation. Grace articulated the isolating dimensions of this navigational work:

I often try to find moments to determine if it was racism or something else. For instance, I have felt followed in a shop while wearing my school uniform. I wonder if I am being followed because I am a student or because I am Black. It is hard to navigate that in your head, and there is no one around me that I feel safe enough to ask, "Was this a Black thing?"

Grace's uncertainty, "*Was this a Black thing?*", exposes how microaggressions exploit ambiguity, generating self-doubt that obscures structural patterns of discrimination. The phrase "*there is no one around me that I feel safe enough to ask*" points to the relational isolation accompanying such experiences; without affirmatory community support, the participant confronts uncertainty alone, potentially normalising the incident over time or internalising the emotional toll. This observation aligns with Du Bois's (1903) theorisation of double consciousness, the psychological burden of perceiving oneself simultaneously through one's own perspective and through the presumed prejudicial gaze of the dominant society.

Henderson and Rank-Christman (2016) observe that "when a stereotype or behaviour is viewed by the consumer as unwanted, being associated with the group or activity will spoil the consumption experience" (p. 149). This comes across in participants' narratives about performing *Blackness* in consumption spaces, in which the work of being seen and read wrongly simultaneously shapes the embodied and felt experience of consumption. Jane's narrative sums up this process:

This is so terrible to say, but I was scared. I mean, in my mind, I was so scared because it was that kind of thing where you have already made up your mind that I am going to steal. And I remember, even when I left the store, knowing that I had paid for my things, I was so scared of the machine ringing. Come on! It was just fear, and I do believe that fear is so important to me because it is such a clear signal that, like, okay, this is a microaggression. I shouldn't be frightened in this moment. However, it is just yes. I cannot even say that I was angry. I was just frightened.

Jane's account of standing alone in a changing room queue, feeling frightened despite having done nothing wrong, captures something difficult to theorise from outside the experience. The researcher, as a Black woman, understood immediately and viscerally what was meant by the fear of the alarm ringing, even when one knows payment has been made: the way racialised guilt, though socially constructed, can be internalised to the point that it produces genuine bodily anxiety. This understanding enabled the

researcher to hear in the account not merely an anecdote of discrimination, but evidence of a deeper structural violence, the insertion of guilt into the body of the innocent. The researcher's positionality was not incidental to this interpretive recognition; rather, it enabled naming this experience as violence rather than mere discomfort and its subsequent theorisation as such.

Jane's experience exemplifies minority vulnerability and gatekeeper discretion (Roscigno et al., 2009). This is a quintessential in-space encounter. Her vulnerability is not one of personal insecurity but one of social condition induced by racialised suspicion and structural discrimination inherent to consumer space. What makes Jane's account particularly striking is her reflexive recognition that fear itself functions as epistemological evidence, a "clear signal" that what she is experiencing constitutes a microaggression, even as the perpetrators would likely deny any discriminatory intent. This reveals Du Bois's (1903) double consciousness required of racialised subjects: Jane must simultaneously endure the violation while also analysing it, naming it, and validating her own perception against potential gaslighting that would dismiss her fear as paranoia (Sue et al., 2007).

Beyond fear, participants described profound frustration and anger that they often had to suppress or carefully manage to avoid triggering the "angry Black woman" stereotype. Zoe articulates this visceral emotional response:

Yes, I get angry. I get hot, and I get hives when I am stressed out. I start scratching. After finishing an interaction with someone, I walk away and scratch my arm like this. I think also, another thing is that as Black women, we have a tendency, when we get mad, to raise our voices, which ties into the stereotype of anger. It is just a reaction because you are not being heard or listened to. After the interaction, my voice is dry, and my throat is dry.

Zoe's physical manifestations of stress, hives, scratching, and vocal strain, reveal how emotional labour is not merely psychological but embodied. Her awareness that raising her voice will be read through the lens of the "angry Black woman" stereotype constrains her emotional expression even in moments of legitimate frustration. The emotional regulation required, maintaining composure while internally processing anger, represents what Hochschild (1983) terms emotional labour, extended here to racialised consumer contexts.

The emotional labour experienced internally and externally by Black women revealed a pattern that extends emotional labour theory, as outlined by Hochschild (1983), beyond its original conceptualisation of service workers' management of emotions in paid employment to include racialised consumer navigation. According to Pitcan et al. (2018), respectability politics are "a continuum of behaviours and attitudes that reproduce dominant norms, and strategies for producing a counter-narrative to negative stereotypes placed upon subordinated groups" (p. 164). Within marketplace

contexts, Black women's emotional labour becomes a site of conformity and surveillance, as they are expected to complete their everyday tasks under constant scrutiny.

As Henderson and Rank-Christman (2016) note, when Black women are stereotyped and their marketplace choices restricted, their implicit consumer wellbeing, involving psychological and emotional health, is threatened. The fatigue and sense of helplessness are manifestations of this sustained emotional burden, compounded by societal expectations that she should "handle" her experiences without complaint.

Participants indicated fear, nervousness, embarrassment, and humiliation as common emotional responses. The most common struggle was not being accorded the same dignity as others. As Collins (2000) argues, dignity is central to Black women's resistance against intersecting systems of oppression. Zoe articulates this clearly:

I do not understand why it is so difficult to treat Black women, or Black people, for that matter, with the same respect and dignity as everybody else. And I'm not suggesting we are not different; we are different. We reign in our differences; there is power in that. But differences need not be approached as a threat.

Zoe's narrative puts dignity at the centre as a relational and salient imperative. Pittman (2020) posits that dignity in consumer spaces is the sensation of recognition, respect, and affirmation, essential to positive consumption experiences and well-being. Without dignity, sensations of humiliation and embarrassment arise, illustrating how racial stigma reshapes not only what consumers feel emotionally but also their general relationship with the marketplace.

Collins (2000) theorises dignity as the anchor of Black women's empowerment and resistance in intersecting systems of oppression. In *Black Feminist Thought*, dignity transcends individual self-respect to encompass a political and collective declaration of Black women's humanity, worth, and right to respect. The findings here demonstrate that this denial of dignity operates not only through explicit discrimination but also through ambient spatial atmospheres, the way staff move through spaces to avoid Black customers, the arrangement of surveillance technologies, and the organisation of products that signal who belongs.

Moreover, Collins (2000) centres the ethic of care in Black feminist epistemology as one that enforces respect and recognition as vital in maintaining dignity. Deprivation of this ethic in consumer interactions is among the factors that contribute to affective burdens, humiliation, embarrassment, and fear, as participants describe in their marketplace experiences. These emotional consequences emerge

as direct outcomes of system practices stripping Black women of their dignity and humanity in these spaces.

The interactions Black women face, such as microaggressions and stereotyping, necessitate internal responses that enable them to exist in these spaces. These emotional negotiations are not just personal but may also have political nuances, highlighting how systemic inequalities or choices are embedded in consumer spaces (Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013; Miller and Stovall, 2019). This happened to Bontle when she was sitting in a coffee shop where she is a regular. She went in as usual, ordered a tea to sit down, and then asked the staff to bring another tea 20 minutes later, for which she paid. About 5-10 minutes later, a man she had never seen before entered, picked up her belongings, threw them out, and then threw her out. He starts shouting at her to leave, and she is left stunned because she does not know what she did, and he does not explain. She is in disbelief and anger because she is a regular there, so what is the problem? She tries to calm him down, but her anger grows, and she asks for a refund for the other tea she has already paid for. Her reaction was one of anger and sadness. She adds:

Negatively. It stays with you. I have to say that I know for myself now that my window of tolerance is so low because of the trauma of apartheid. When I was telling you about that incident in the café, it was only when I was screaming, 'This is not apartheid South Africa,' that I realised, oh my God, he triggered me. He took me back to a trauma that is sitting there, and I am vulnerable. You are not just experiencing these things in isolation; they are compounding and accumulating awfully, and they do not go away. They stay with you all the time. Yes, it is. After incidents like that, which are egregious, I struggle. I will tell you the truth: I struggle. I am prone to depression and anxiety, and I struggle.

This vividly captures the idea of marketplace trauma as described by Bennett et al. (2016): "When a marketing system excludes or discriminates against people in certain groups, it fails to deliver a desirable standard of living to such groups, resulting in restricted consumption. These experiences of exclusion function as marketplace traumas, where consumers are 'othered' and subjected to repeated emotional and psychological harm that accumulates over time" (p. 287).

The participant's reference to apartheid signals how contemporary consumer incidents reopen deep-seated wounds rooted in systemic racial oppression. Her reflection that such reactions were once "expected" but are "*not now and not in the UK*" illustrates the painful contradiction between lived experience and dominant narratives of a post-racial present. Despite professed commitments to equality, microaggressions persist yet remain frequently denied by those who perpetuate them (Sue et al., 2007; Arday, 2018). Within predominantly white marketplace spaces, this denial intensifies feelings of exclusion and marginalisation (Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013; Francis and Robertson, 2021), reflecting the accumulated impact of systemic racial inequalities.

The participant's spatial disorientation resonates with W.E.B. Du Bois's (1903) foundational concept of *double consciousness*. However, as UK cultural studies scholars have shown, double consciousness extends beyond a psychological condition; it is also a spatially and historically situated mode of being. Writing from a British context, Stuart Hall (1996) argues that Black identity is constituted through the "continuous play" of history, culture, and power. As he explains, cultural identity is as much about *becoming* as *being*; it is historically produced, continually transformed, and shaped by the ways individuals are positioned by, and position themselves within, dominant narratives of the past (p. 225). This framing highlights how colonial histories continue to structure spatial exclusions across contemporary European consumer spaces.

Similarly, Paul Gilroy's (1993) work on *The Black Atlantic* highlights how Black diasporic life in the UK involves ongoing negotiation with spaces that were "never meant to include" Black bodies. These insights are crucial for understanding Black women's experiences in UK marketplace contexts, where colonial legacies of exclusion endure in subtle yet pervasive forms: the presumption that luxury goods are "not for you," the routine surveillance that casts Black bodies as suspicious, and the pressure to perform respectability merely to obtain standard service.

Multiple participants described the profound exhaustion that accompanies constant emotional vigilance. Lebohang articulated this clearly:

Emotionally, they are disruptive. I think we cannot deny that. It is difficult to walk into a space peacefully, and one must be on high alert. Moreover, that does affect your emotions. So, it is an emotive experience.

This constant heightened state aligns with what Winters (2020) terms Black Fatigue: "repeated variations of stress that result in extreme exhaustion and cause mental, physical, and spiritual maladies that are passed down from generation to generation" (p. 63).

Natasha describes similar anxieties while waiting for her daughter in a fitting room:

And do you know what? Just sitting there for a while, because she was taking so long, I started thinking, what are people thinking? There weren't many people going in and out of the fitting room, but just the fact that I was sitting there so long made me worry. I thought, "I hope this is okay. Is someone going to say something? What are they thinking of me?" And then I began to wonder, "Maybe I'm out of place here." It was not even a fancy shop; it was just River Island, but still, I started second-guessing myself. You begin to feel unsure of yourself, wondering, "Do I look like a thief?" Even if you know you did not steal anything, you still feel like a suspect. That's how it felt. And it stays with you.

These experiences stem from continuous vigilance and the emotional labour required to navigate predominantly white spaces. Smith (2004) defined Race-Based Fatigue (RBF) as "a response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing racism daily (e.g., racial slights, recurrent indignities and irritations, unfair treatments, including contentious classrooms, and potential threats or dangers under tough to violent and even life-threatening conditions)" (p. 180). This heightened sensitivity was also evident even in the absence of visible microaggressions or stereotyping, as the participants discussed observing inconsistencies among staff and searching for subtle patterns of differential treatment.

Tendai shares her experiences living in Zimbabwe before relocating to the UK. She mentioned that she used to reside in a small town between Cardiff and London. However, since moving to the UK, her perception of spaces, particularly those where she shops, has influenced her shopping habits:

All of those experiences have affected the way I do things now. I feel like I'm no longer comfortable spending too much time on the same aisle. I find myself thinking, 'If I stay here for more than five minutes, what will people start assuming?' Back home, I could spend an entire evening browsing. But here, I start wondering, 'What are they thinking I am doing?'

Tendai's narrative reveals how racialised surveillance transforms the temporal dimension of consumption. Her five-minute threshold before anxiety intensifies, her need to manufacture justifications for extended browsing (calling her husband as an alibi), and her contrast with Zimbabwean shopping experiences, where she "could easily spend an entire evening just browsing," demonstrate that UK consumer spaces impose racialised time constraints. The space itself disciplines how long Black bodies are permitted to linger.

For Black immigrant women like Tendai, such consumption is not merely about fulfilling a need or desire, but about managing visibility, legitimacy, and safety in a space that is not neutral. Her reflexive awareness, "*What are they thinking I am doing?*", reveals the double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903). This consciousness does not just alter how one shops; it alters how one stands, moves, and waits. Thus, consumption is experienced not as an autonomous act of agency but as a racialised negotiation of space, gaze, and suspicion.

Arnould and Thompson (2018) observe that the "overwhelming array of 'free' market choices" (p. 5) promised by neoliberal consumer culture functions differently for racialised consumers. Rather than offering liberation, this abundance becomes a terrain marked by microaggressions, exclusions, and systemic omissions where marketplaces fail to recognise or accommodate racialised identities. They caution that these freedoms and opportunities are unevenly distributed and can entail high costs, such as the burdens of constant self-fashioning, microaggressions directed at stigmatised consumers, and

omissions in the marketplace that reflect and reinforce structural inequalities. For racialised consumers, consumption becomes not autonomous agency but racialised negotiation of space, gaze, and suspicion.

The gap between ideology (free market choice) and reality (racialised constraint) reveals what Crenshaw (1991) identifies as one mechanism through which structural racism persists: it cloaks itself in the ostensibly race-neutral language of market freedom while continuing to allocate resources, comfort, and legitimacy along racial lines. Tendai's inability to browse leisurely, despite possessing the economic capital to shop, demonstrates that marketplace citizenship is not equally accessible to all who can pay; it remains a racialised privilege that Black women must continuously earn through performances of non-threatening docility, spatial self-limitation, and temporal self-regulation that white consumers never face.

Amogelang describes how class hierarchies embedded within spatial organisation create differential emotional atmospheres:

It is unfortunate. It dampens the shopping experience. However, I do consider it from a different perspective. In the UK, there is so much classism that it feels like there is an unspoken rule about who belongs where. You know what I am referring to, people of colour and other marginalised members of society are often seen as if they should only be at LIDL or Aldi, as if they do not belong in certain places. I realised it is not a personal issue; it is more of a societal problem. I do not need to prove anything to anyone. I want to do my shopping and leave quickly. It is just very unfortunate.

Amogelang's observation that "people of colour are often viewed as if they should only shop at LIDL or Aldi" highlights how race influences spatial hierarchies within consumer spaces.

This spatial sorting operates through what Lipsitz (2006) terms the "possessive investment in whiteness," a system in which whiteness confers not merely cultural capital but also material access to privileged spaces, freedom of movement, and assumptions of legitimate belonging. In this framework, whiteness transcends phenotype to encompass spatial entitlement: the unquestioned right to occupy upscale retail spaces, receive attentive service, and move through commercial spaces without justifying one's presence. Conversely, Blackness becomes constructed as spatially incompatible with wealth, taste, and elite consumer spaces. This racialised geography establishes "unspoken spatial rules" that discipline consumption patterns, not through explicit prohibition but through what Anderson (2009) theorises as "affective atmospheres", the ambient qualities of spaces that shape how bodies feel and what becomes possible within them.

Anderson (2009) defines affective atmospheres as "a class of experience that occurs before and alongside the formation of subjectivity, across human and non-human materialities, and in-between

subject/object distinctions" (p. 78). Crucially, atmospheres are not simply individual feelings but collective phenomena that suffuse spaces and work upon all bodies within them, though not equally or uniformly. In marketplace contexts, affective atmospheres communicate exclusion through what Anderson describes as their "transpersonal" quality; they exceed any single interaction or explicit statement, instead operating as diffuse but palpable tensions that Black women register viscerally before they can articulate cognitively. The chilling silence that greets their entry, the tightening of white customers' postures, the ambient hostility that seems to emanate from the space itself, these constitute atmospheric phenomena that signal who is welcome and who remains under suspicion.

What makes Anderson's framework particularly valuable is his insistence that atmospheres are both "indeterminate" and "determinate" (2009, p. 78); they lack fixed qualities yet produce tangible effects on bodies and behaviours. For Black women in upscale retail spaces, this indeterminacy manifests as the difficulty of proving discrimination occurred: there may be no explicit racial slur, no overt denial of service, yet the atmospheric pressure is unmistakable, shaping their movements, shortening their stay, and producing what several participants describe as the urge to leave. As Anderson (2009) argues, atmospheres "envelop and thus press onto bodies" (p. 78), exerting a force that is felt rather than seen, ambient rather than localised.

While Anderson does not explicitly theorise race, his framework shows how marketplace atmospheres serve as subtle but powerful gatekeeping mechanisms that do not require explicit discrimination to enforce racial boundaries. The atmosphere itself does the work of exclusion, making certain bodies feel out of place without anyone needing to say so directly.

5.3.4. Navigating Safety: Hypervigilance, Surveillance, and Tactical Responses

For marginalised consumers, particularly Black women, safety is not assumed; it must be actively and continually negotiated. Consumer spaces are often filled with identity-based discrimination, requiring individuals to engage in vigilance and strategic preparation. This form of vigilance is not incidental; it is a strategic, embodied risk assessment shaped by a history of racialised marginalisation in the marketplace. Safety navigation, therefore, becomes an essential precondition for marketplace engagement.

Unlike emotional labour (managing feelings) or aesthetic labour (managing appearance), safety labour involves: Hypervigilant body regulation, Surveillance response tactics, Legitimacy documentation, and Escalation/de-escalation decisions. This represents the cognitive, emotional, and physical work required to assess and manage racialised harm in real time.

The concept of navigating safety is used as a framework for understanding how Black women manage their well-being in consumer spaces. This extends beyond the traditional notion of a coping mechanism typically found in literature (Pittman, 2020). The findings show that for Black women, physical and emotional safety are not just reactive responses to specific incidents but proactive actions that shape every aspect of their interaction in consumer spaces. The traditional understanding of coping strategies (Pittman, 2020; Crocket, 2003) assumes that negative experiences are rare disruptions in neutral consumer spaces that require specific responses. However, the interviews showed that for Black women, there is always potential for threats, microaggressions, and other disruptions occurring in everyday experiences. This means they must stay continuously alert and be quick to adapt, rather than just responding occasionally.

Safety, in this context, must be understood as deeply spatial. The architectural layout of stores, the placement of surveillance technologies, the temporal rhythms of shopping (busy versus quiet times), and the geographic location of retail establishments all shape the safety strategies participants must employ. In consumer spaces, new safety calculations emerge from real-time interactions with staff, security personnel, and other consumers.

Beyond interpreting ambiguous encounters, participants described constant, debilitating awareness of external surveillance paired with internalised self-monitoring, a duality of hypervigilance that fundamentally structures Black women's navigation of consumer spaces (Sobande, 2022). This dual surveillance operates simultaneously: participants remain intensely aware of how others perceive them (external surveillance) while meticulously regulating their own behaviours, movements, and bodily presentations (internal surveillance) to mitigate anticipated suspicion.

Participants consistently highlighted the pervasive experience of being monitored, followed, and racially profiled in retail settings. Beyond passive observation, Black women actively modify their behaviour to pre-empt suspicion, an anticipatory form of emotional labour undertaken before any explicit accusation arises (Pittman, 2017). Femi articulated this pre-emptive self-regulation:

For example, when I am in shops, I make a deliberate effort not to touch things unless I am sure I am going to buy them. I do not want to be watched or followed; I do not want to be that person.

Femi's statement reveals how the threat of surveillance transforms ordinary browsing into a calculated performance. Her refusal to touch merchandise unless committed to purchase represents a defensive spatial practice, constraining her own consumer agency to avoid becoming "that person", the racialised figure presumed criminal. This self-imposed restriction illustrates Browne's (2015) concept of racialising surveillance, wherein Black bodies have historically been and continue to be subjected to intensified scrutiny rooted in slavery-era tracking systems and contemporary racial policing.

Femi's description of deliberate hand positioning and sustained eye contact as intentional signals of non-threat is interpreted as a form of embodied performance immediately recognisable, not at an abstract level but corporeally. There is a distinct quality to the consciousness she articulates, in which the body becomes both subject and object simultaneously, both shopping and performing the act of shopping. During the interviews, as participants described these physical negotiations, the researcher remained attentive to their bodily responses as a form of interpretive data: moments of recognition that emerged before analytical framing, a knowing that preceded theorisation. This aligns with Collins's (2000) notion of the epistemological authority of lived experience. Such authority does not replace rigorous analysis, but rather enables a heightened sensitivity to the experiential texture of participants' accounts, an attentiveness that is otherwise difficult to access. Femi's precision, "*I am conscious of where my hands are at all times*", requires no translation; instead, it calls for careful preservation, ensuring that her account is theorised on its own terms rather than subsumed into the researcher's interpretive frame.

Femi also describes the multidimensional nature of this hypervigilance:

It means I become hyperaware of my actions. I am cautious about touching things unnecessarily. I am conscious of where my hands are at all times. And although I normally do this, I make an extra effort to establish eye contact, both when I enter the store and again when I leave, almost as a way of saying goodbye. It's intentional. I am actively trying to present myself as non-threatening.

These tactics reflect a broader emotional distress commonly reported in studies of racial trauma and discrimination (Bennett et al., 2016; Mirabito et al., 2016), where individuals experience heightened anxiety in spaces marked by potential hostility or surveillance (Lukate, 2022). Femi's intentional efforts to project non-threat serve both as a shield against microaggressions and as a source of emotional burden, as she must continually monitor and modulate her behaviour to avoid misinterpretation.

Amogelang's account exemplifies this hyper-awareness through her navigation of cosmetics sections:

In the makeup section, where the products are small, I will make it clear that I am putting something back slowly and intentionally, just to show that I am not taking anything.

The slowness and deliberateness of her movement is a defensive strategy, a self-policing that foresees and pre-empts suspicion of shoplifting. This behaviour aligns with Black Feminist Theory, which highlights how Black women's bodies are subjected to increased scrutiny and social regulation (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1992).

Tendai expressed her apprehension when she was looking for something in the store:

I remember I was crouching to pick up something, and the way I was looking at myself, I do not remember just being paranoid, but you know, the way they look at you when they want to assist you or when they can come and say hi. Sometimes, they do not say anything; it was just her walking. She came back; she was peeping and trying to see what I was doing.

This represents a form of embodied navigation in space, a survival strategy developed in response to a racially charged gaze that marks Black bodies as already suspicious, already guilty, and already out of place (Yancy, 2017; Anderson, 2022). Tendai's reflexive self-monitoring, assessing how she appears while crouching, calculating whether her posture might be misread, illustrates the doubled consciousness required to navigate spaces structured by anti-Black suspicion.

Elizabeth described how this surveillance-induced hypervigilance evolved:

And then there is also the experience of going into shops. I do not know if this happens to other people, but initially, I used to feel like somebody was following me, not because they wanted to help me, but because they wanted to see what I was doing. Because, as time went on, that feeling of being too self-aware became less and less, I lived here. However, initially, yes, it was there.

Elizabeth's account suggests that prolonged exposure to racialised surveillance may produce habituation, not the elimination of the threat, but the normalisation of constant, low-level vigilance as the baseline for consumer participation. Her phrasing "*that feeling of being too self-aware became less and less*" indicates an adjustment to chronic suspicion rather than its resolution, a troubling accommodation wherein being watched becomes so routine it no longer registers as exceptional.

Femi elaborates on how this awareness fluctuates contextually:

I would say I am always conscious of my Blackness, but I am especially aware of it when I am in spaces where no one looks like me. That is when it becomes more pronounced. I am more cautious and more intentional about how I carry myself. However, if I have been there before, I feel more at ease. I am less concerned about presenting myself as non-threatening or as someone who "belongs" in the space. And honestly, my awareness fluctuates. It depends on how my week has gone.

Femi's account illustrates that even within familiar consumer spaces, awareness of Blackness never fully recedes; it fluctuates in intensity rather than disappearing altogether. Her concern with "*presenting myself as non-threatening*" or as someone who visibly "*belongs*" captures a central dilemma for Black women in the marketplace: presence alone demands justification through continuous self-monitoring and performance.

These calculated gestures are not incidental but constitute spatial and bodily negotiations through which racialised consumers anticipate and manage how their bodies will be read. Such anticipatory labour reflects what Yancy (2017) conceptualises as the *anti-Black racist gaze*, a disciplining mode of perception that renders Black bodies perpetually suspect. Within this gaze, consumer space becomes a site where Black women must actively mitigate threat attribution to access ordinary market participation.

The spatial dimension of this surveillance becomes particularly evident when participants describe how different retail spaces structure different forms of watching. Tinashe highlights this dynamic by contrasting budget retailers such as Aldi with luxury stores like Waitrose, revealing how class distinctions shape surveillance practices:

There is just a different vibe, a different experience. It has more of a luxury feel. You also notice the people shopping in these places, and it is because of the area I live in. My area is not one of the posh parts of Edinburgh, so they do not have that atmosphere. There are these armed-looking security guards. But if you go to, say, a Waitrose, you are less likely to see that kind of thing. So, there is a difference in experience. People are more likely to assume others might steal from cheaper shops. I do not know why, since you would get better quality from higher-end stores, but people still do. So, it is one of those things where I am aware it is happening, but at the same time I'm thinking, "I'm shopping in ALDI." It is super affordable, and they likely get a lot of people coming in and out regularly.

Tinashe observes that budget stores deploy "armed-looking security guards" under the assumption that shoppers are theft risks, while upscale retailers minimise visible security. However, Black shoppers in Waitrose may encounter intensified surveillance precisely because their presence violates racialised spatial expectations. This differential security apparatus operates through racialised logics where Blackness becomes linked to threat, poverty, and illegitimacy through repeated associations (Ahmed, 2007).

While hypervigilance involves active self-monitoring, participants also described moments where they minimised themselves, making their presence smaller, quieter, and less noticeable, as a safety strategy. Naledi described how she consciously "minimises herself" during interactions to maintain control and prevent being misread as aggressive or uncooperative:

I tone down my voice, mimicking whoever is helping me in that designer store. I am more polite than I usually am, and I am so focused on being polite that sometimes I have questions lined up about a product I am interested in, but they just disappear during the interaction because I'm concentrating so much on being polite.

Naledi's self-regulation highlights how navigating safety extends beyond physical protection to include emotional and reputational safeguarding. Her heightened alertness demonstrates the invisible labour required to manage encounters in racially charged spaces. This alertness is not born of paranoia but of experience; as she becomes more aware of potential misinterpretation, her goal shifts from curiosity or consumer engagement to ensuring she does not "escalate" the situation.

This experience ties into the concept of "Black fatigue" (Winters, 2020) and the invisible job that they have to do to navigate situations that are beyond their control, because how can one 'watch themselves' if the person they are interacting with already has a bias against them (Newton, 2022). The paradox, however, lies in the futility of such self-surveillance: how can one successfully "watch oneself" when the gaze that defines the interaction is already racialised and predisposed to misrecognition? Naledi's experience exemplifies this dilemma; her restraint and politeness do not guarantee safety.

Lebohang describes safety through compartmentalisation and transactional efficiency:

I need to know I have experienced it, and I suppose you think about self-protection if you need it. You are on guard if you need to protect yourself. But not that it is an outside thing, and if it doesn't get to that, then it is just that you are on guard. I will be on my high, wired, and for me, that is my response. And if it is not necessary to escalate, then I leave it alone. I go in. It is a transactional interaction; I leave, and then it is done.

Lebohang's transactional approach, "*I go in. It is a transactional experience, and then I leave, and then it is done*", highlights how Black women practice safety through compartmentalisation, prioritising self-survival over emotional engagement. She describes the subtlety of microaggressions: "*tones, a look, or something subtle that you might miss*," requiring constant scanning for vague signals of danger. According to Brownlow (2023), consumer racialisation studies describe a recurring pattern among Black women of heightened caution for potential harm. Brownlow's work draws on the way minority consumers, and Black women in particular, invest considerable time not only in responding to blatant examples of discrimination but in being in a position of perpetual vigilance for elusive, obscure, and even imperceptible missteps.

At times, the participants' minimisation was accompanied by acceptance of the racialised dynamics they encountered. Bontle described how she often resorts to a form of acceptance, recognising that some individuals' prejudices are too entrenched to challenge in the moment:

Look, there are people you are not going to convince. You could show up in a suit or whatever, and they will not be convinced. They will want to denigrate and disparage you if they can. Some individuals you simply will not win over. But the fact that I am out here trying to win people over in the first place is ridiculous. Sometimes, I do find that yes, certain people, like I have had countless conversations with older white individuals. For example, at the train station, I have had many

interactions with people over 60 who are white. I do not think they would have spoken to me if I were not dressed in a particular way or smiling. They feel safe enough to approach me and ask, 'Where are you from?' which I always find interesting.

Bontle's reflection reveals how acceptance functions as a protective strategy that manages racial tension while preserving dignity. Her use of "interesting" conveys an understated critique: the asymmetry of performing politeness to ensure both her own safety and white comfort. This highlights how Black women perform care work for white consumers' comfort, regulating their behaviour so others "feel safe enough" to engage (Ahmed, 2007). Her statement that *"the fact that I am out here trying to win people over in the first place is ridiculous"* reveals both fatigue and awakening. Realising that "some people you simply will not win over" becomes a coping mechanism and quiet resistance: an acknowledgement that her worth need not depend on white validation.

Receipt collection emerges from participant narratives not as routine consumer practice but as a racialised survival strategy. Natasha terms it "a ticket to life" and "a ticket to innocence":

I would say that is how I have come to treat something as simple as a receipt as incredibly precious, almost like a ticket to life. It represents proof, protection, and legitimacy. At the same time, I often find myself avoiding certain places where I have had negative experiences. Even if I want something from there, I will sometimes tell myself, "Let it go." The discomfort is not worth it. Depending on what I am looking for, I might even opt to search for it online instead of physically going into a store and risking another unpleasant encounter.

The term "proving legitimacy" captures the dual labour this practice entails: participants actively produce proof of lawful purchase while simultaneously attempting to prove themselves against racialised suspicion, creating protective documentation that might shield them from accusations, detainment, or worse.

"It is annoying that a receipt is your ticket to innocence," Natasha reflects, describing how she has come to treat receipts as *"incredibly precious, almost like a ticket to life."* Her language, tickets, proof, protection, and legitimacy signals that receipts function not merely as transaction records but as racialised insurance against accusations of theft. This seemingly mundane consumer practice, retaining purchase documentation, reveals a profound inversion of justice principles: Black women in UK retail spaces must produce evidence of innocence in anticipation of being presumed guilty.

Natasha describes her in-space preparation:

You can usually anticipate it. So, does that help you react when you are in the moment? Yes, yes. So, I make sure I have got my armour ready. I check, "Do I have my receipt?" Yes. "Have I parked my

car?" Yes. I also hope I have not forgotten to get them to remove the security tag, especially at self-checkout. It is easily done. You can buy something, like clothing, and forget to take off the tag. I end up thinking, "Did I forget?" and suspecting they might see it. The cameras might notice, and it feels like we have to do double the work to make sure everything is in order.

Natasha's "armour", from checking receipts to ensuring security tags are removed, functions as an essential shield against heightened surveillance and suspicion. The necessity to perform this double diligence not only increases the cognitive load but also embodies the burden of proof Black women bear to assert their innocence and credibility in marketplaces where racialised bias is pervasive. This emphasises how receiving, documenting, and verifying purchases are not neutral acts but are embedded within racialised power dynamics that demand continual vigilance and resilience. Such burdens both reflect and reproduce systemic inequities, making receipt collection a poignant example of the broader racialised labour Black women perform to navigate consumer spaces safely and legitimately, again linking to gatekeeper discretions and minority vulnerability (Rosigno et al., 2009).

Natasha's understanding crystallised through witnessing racialised double standards in action. She recounts watching someone at Greggs join the queue, pick up a sandwich, and walk out without paying:

Did I just see that? And the person? Pure Scottish. No one noticed, no one cared, no one thought twice about it.

The contrast between this unmonitored exit and her own hyper-monitored consumer experiences highlights what CRT identifies as differential racialisation (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017, p. 9): identical behaviours produce radically different institutional responses depending on the race of the actor. For white consumers, the presumption of innocence operates automatically; for Black consumers, innocence must be continuously performed, documented, and proven.

Tinashe's experience at Tesco exemplifies why receipt collection becomes necessary:

It feels so unexpected in those moments. During that experience, I remember thinking, "I have my receipt, I haven't done anything wrong," yet here I am being profiled. Each time it happens, I feel like I'm at the final hurdle. Do you know what I mean? It's as if, after going through everything, suddenly this happens.

Most participants reported being stopped by security, chased outside stores, and required to verify purchases, transforming receipt retention from an optional practice into a survival necessity. This challenge intensifies with digital receipts that may be delayed or lost, and at self-checkouts, where missing the brief printing moment leaves participants exposed to suspicion without means to defend themselves.

For participants, receipts serve as documentation and self-protection against criminalisation rooted in racial stereotyping, where Black consumers are "judged as not legitimate and worthy of service" (Pittman, 2020, p. 16). Drawing on CRT's attention to how systems presume Black guilt (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) and Browne's (2015) theorisation of racialising surveillance as the fact of anti-Blackness, receipt collection represents both a pragmatic navigational strategy and a troubling indicator of how thoroughly anti-Black racism structures contemporary consumer experience.

When it came to navigating safety when speaking out or standing up for oneself, the participants were divided on how much they could speak up or tell others. Some participants mentioned that they would need to consider the potential consequences if they attempted to stand up for themselves. Josephine, who teaches the women she works with to understand their rights, demonstrates how anticipatory safety work extends into ongoing in-space decision-making about when and how to speak. Her approach involves a constant assessment process: weighing the immediate benefits of addressing discrimination against potential repercussions, evaluating who holds power in the situation, and determining whether the context allows for safe confrontation. This reflects what she teaches, that knowing one's rights is only part of the equation; equally important is the strategic judgment about when exercising those rights might be safely enacted versus when silence or alternative responses better serve one's safety and long-term goals.

Zoe articulates the discernment required in deciding when to speak:

When you experience situations, it is about discernment, knowing when to speak up and when to take a step back. If you know it is a situation that does not necessarily need to be escalated... some things do need to be escalated, but sometimes, you just know it is not worth it. Especially if you are having a difficult day, I do not want to be branded as the "angry Black woman." But if I need to be the angry Black woman, I will be. You are not going to disrespect me and get away with it. However, there are times when I just think, "I don't have time to deal with this, or you. Do not ruin my mood. I have better things to focus on." So, it is really about discernment, choosing when to engage. Because if you are constantly in a defensive state, it is draining. You are always watching out for the slightest... what do you call it? Aggression. So yes, you really must choose your battles.

While speaking out can be helpful, some participants said they do not have the personality to do so or do not see the point. For many participants, preparing for negative experiences was described as a learned coping strategy for managing the realities of "shopping while Black." This anticipatory vigilance connects closely to Black Feminist Thought (hooks, 1992; Collins, 2000), which highlights Black women's capacity to "read the room", to interpret subtle social cues and anticipate hostility as a way to protect themselves in racially charged spaces.

Moreover, as Newton (2022) argues, this kind of emotional vigilance contributes to *Black fatigue* and the invisible labour of "watching oneself." The paradox, as Zoe's reflection makes clear, is that this vigilance aims to prevent escalation but simultaneously drains emotional energy, perpetuating cycles of fatigue and self-censorship.

Therefore, while Zoe's reflection overlaps with *navigating identity* and *emotions*, it extends the analysis into the terrain of *navigating safety*, where emotional control becomes an act of self-preservation. It emphasises how the ability to "*choose one's battles*" is less about passivity and more about strategic agency, exercised within the constraints of racialised power relations that make even ordinary consumer interactions potentially dangerous.

Esther argued:

You could walk into that store the next day, and the same person who treated you poorly could be all smiles, acting like nothing ever happened. And you are left wondering, "Do you even remember what you did to me yesterday?" But they often do not. So, my approach is to address it right then and there. I will call you out on your behaviour; I will not let it slide. I am clear: do not do that with me. Nope. I will not accept it. But sometimes it feels pointless to even escalate it to a manager because, honestly, a lot of the time, the managers do not know any better either. And at the end of the day, I just do not have the energy to keep fighting those battles every single time.

The question of when to escalate, challenge, or speak out was central to all participants' accounts. Escalation is never neutral; it risks being interpreted through the "angry Black woman" stereotype, while silence can feel like complicity in one's own erasure. As one participant noted, "*resilience seems to be the Black woman's job.*" Participants faced rapid calculations: Will speaking up make me safer or less safe? Will I be listened to, or will I be punished?

Additional safety strategies included avoidance, compliance with nonsensical instructions, and self-restricted behaviour, such as refraining from touching merchandise or limiting time spent in stores. Participants repeatedly asked, "*How can you cope?*" when this happens continuously, *noting, Sometimes you have to choose your battles.*" This reflects both acceptance and resignation. Here, coping appears as both harm and survival (Collins, 2000): the harm comes from internalising safety's fatigue; survival depends on how one leaves the encounter, whether disempowered and diminished, or self-assured, intact, and dignified.

5.3.5. In-Space Conclusion

This section has examined how Black women navigate consumer spaces through three interconnected dimensions: identity, emotions, and safety. Crucially, these are not separate domains but deeply entangled aspects of a single experience, all shaped by the spatial contexts within which they unfold.

The dual function of hypervisibility and invisibility here exemplifies what Browne (2015) terms 'racialising surveillance', technologies and practices that specifically target Black bodies as inherently suspicious."

Space operates throughout as both context and actor. The physical arrangement of retail spaces, the placement of surveillance cameras, the organisation of products, the demographic composition of staff and customers, all these spatial elements actively produce the conditions within which Black women must navigate identity, emotion, and safety. As Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) argue, space is "not merely the background where things happen; it is also a medium that shapes interactions and relations in ways that can liberate or constrain" (p. 32). The findings here powerfully demonstrate the constraining dimensions of racialised consumer spaces, extending this framework by showing how constraint operates through surveillance technologies, product segregation, and atmospheric cues that communicate who belongs.

These findings contribute to consumer research by theorising what we term safety labour: the cognitive, emotional, and physical work required to assess, navigate, and manage racialised harm in real time within consumer spaces. This concept extends existing work on emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Williams et al., 2019) by foregrounding how safety itself becomes a form of uncompensated work for racialised consumers. Unlike emotional labour, which focuses primarily on the management of feelings, safety labour encompasses the broader spectrum of anticipatory, performative, and tactical practices required to protect one's physical, psychological, and social well-being in hostile spaces.

The analysis now turns to post-space, the examination of what happens after these in-space encounters conclude. How do Black women process, reflect on, and make meaning from these experiences? How do accumulated in-space navigations shape future consumption patterns, avoidance strategies, and relationships to the marketplace? If pre-space involves anticipation and preparation, and in-space involves active management and navigation, then post-space involves reflection, recovery, and the reshaping of consumer consciousness in response to what has been endured. Understanding post-space is crucial because it reveals how in-space experiences become knowledge that informs future pre-space preparations, completing the recursive cycle of spatial navigation.

5.4. Post-Space - Reflection, Processing, and Recovery

5.4.1. Introduction to post-space

If navigating safety concerns, the *immediate* negotiation of racialised risk within consumer spaces, *post-space* captures what happens *after* the encounter. This reflective, emotional, and behavioural aftermath follows participants as they leave the space, but continues to carry its affective traces. For many participants, the experience of shopping or consuming while Black did not end at the store's exit but lingered in the body and mind. Feelings of exhaustion, disbelief, or self-questioning often resurfaced later, sometimes hours or even days after.

The post-space phase highlights that past experiences actively shape future expectations, strategies, and identities. Here, the burden of being surveilled and sometimes feeling out of place becomes evident, revealing the invisible mental and emotional work that continues beyond the marketplace threshold. This burden influences future consumer decision-making and identity formation, particularly as participants anticipate and seek ways to mitigate risks when entering consumer spaces. Participants are forced to rely on their own past experiences and other social influences to process and reflect, which shapes how they engage moving forward.

This stage shows how consumers make sense of their evaluations of space, considering accessibility, spatial dynamics, and future decisions based on past experiences. Post-space represents both a continuation of safety work and a site of reclamation, where the emotional residues of exclusion are acknowledged, reinterpreted, and, at times, rechannelled into forms of resilience and resistance. This structure of themes aims to highlight how under-theorised post-space recovery is, as it captures the aftermath and the subsequent healing process.

Post-space is critical to understanding the full temporal arc of Black women's consumer experiences because it is here that meaning-making occurs (Goor et al., 2024). While much consumer research focuses on pre-purchase information search and purchase decisions, these frameworks assume relatively contained temporal boundaries and do not account for the extended processing required when consumption itself has been a site of trauma, surveillance, and exclusion. The data presented here reveal that for Black women, post-consumption processing extends far beyond product evaluation to encompass identity reassessment, emotional recovery, and strategic planning for future encounters.

5.4.2. Navigating Identity: Reflection and Reassertion

Participants described that leaving consumer spaces required moving beyond the immediate consumer encounter, enabling them to examine their body movement and the performance of identity critically. This involved reflecting on the performance of wanting to appear respectable and non-threatening, coupled with being overly polite to avoid refusal or confrontation. The post-space provides a moment

of reflection and reassertion of selfhood, where consumers can critically examine and contextualise their racialised and gendered identity work.

Reflection is needed after they felt compelled to suppress parts of themselves to remain legible within the white consumer gaze. By disentangling imposed stereotypes, Black women can evaluate their personal choices and the recursive process between societal expectations and their internalised norms and self-truths. Black women review the spatial dynamics of post-encounters to adjust how they move, exit, and protect themselves in future interactions.

The notion of a post-space resonates with scholarship emphasising the significance of afterlives, aftermaths, and reflective temporality in racialised experience. Ahmed's (2007) work on affective economies suggests that emotions do not remain contained within the encounter itself but "stick" to bodies and move with them after the event. Similarly, Sharpe's (2016) idea of "wake work" emphasises how Black people live in the afterlives of racialised events, processing, negotiating, and reorienting themselves beyond the moment of harm. The post-space, then, is not merely a moment of emotional decompression; it is a site where meaning-making occurs, where individuals reassemble themselves after having been subjected to external scrutiny or self-surveillance.

Participants consistently described leaving consumer spaces and entering this post-space as a critical moment where the labour of performance becomes conscious. Whereas the in-space performance involves instinctive self-regulation, the post-space performance involves *evaluation*: a mental and emotional revisiting of gestures, tone, facial expressions, clothing, and body language. This aligns with Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical conception of backstage regions, where individuals withdraw from the demands of "frontstage" social performances. However, unlike Goffman's neutral framing, for Black women, this backstage is explicitly racialised. It is not merely a return to authenticity; it is a return to safety, dignity, and self-definition after a period of enforced self-discipline.

In this post-space, participants described engaging in a reflexive process of asking themselves questions about 'gaslighting,' giving the benefit of the doubt, or asking, 'Did that actually happen?' These questions highlight a broader politics of racialised embodiment, in which Black women evaluate not only how they acted but also the structural forces that necessitated such action. This reflective process can be understood through Du Bois's (1903) notion of double consciousness: seeing oneself through the eyes of others while simultaneously reclaiming one's own perspective. The post-space becomes the temporal location where the "second sight" of double consciousness is processed, where participants mentally replay the encounter to understand how their identity was mediated through the white gaze.

Thus, the post-space is not simply after the event; it is a space of *repair*. It allows Black women to understand the emotional and physical labour they performed, to contextualise it within broader structures of racialised gendered surveillance, and to re-centre their own definitions of identity. Through this process, they transform the encounter from an isolated moment of stress into part of a larger narrative about their resilience, self-knowledge, and resistance. In this way, the post-space becomes essential to navigating racialised consumer experiences, offering both a site of introspection and a pathway toward reasserting dignity after navigating the constraints of racialised suspicion.

This ongoing process reflects a form of *embodied spatial awareness*, a learned sensitivity to spaces shaped by racialised histories of exclusion and threat. Rooted in the pursuit of safety and survival, such awareness is not innate but cultivated through repeated encounters with hostility and surveillance (Browne, 2015; Yancy, 2017). While the continual need to anticipate harm demonstrates how racialised experiences accumulate over time, Elizabeth's reflection anchors this awareness and reveals how space itself operates as an instrument of racial power.

She highlights that harm is not only repeated but also systemically reproduced through institutions designed to exclude:

It is not so much the people; sometimes it is just the system and the way the policies are designed. Some things are structured in a way that leaves no room for flexibility. If something is designed to work in a certain way, that is just how it works, and it may not align with what we are used to. However, no one is going to change it to suit you; you just must fit into it. You may like it, you may not like it, but you still must adjust. I have learned to accept some things as they are. If there is nothing I can do about it, I do not complain. Sometimes it is also about perception, the feeling that you are fighting against the system.

Her realisation, which occurs in the quiet solitude of post-space, summarises what CRT scholars argue is not a dysfunctional system but one that functions *exactly as designed* (Collins, 2000; Thomas et al., 2020; Francis and Robertson, 2021). These systems are part of a design that makes whiteness seem normal while making Black people stand out and look suspicious. Elizabeth adds further reflection on this system:

But if the system is the way it is, that is just how it stands, right? You can feel angry and frustrated with it, and that is the first thing you go through, that initial emotional response. Once you have been through that, you start to recognise that the way people are trained also plays a role. They are trained to do things in a specific way, and you must get used to that as well. It might not match what you are used to, but that's just how things operate. Then there is the feeling of not being wanted in a space. Sometimes, the people there do not go out of their way to be welcoming because they do not feel they have to. They might say a quick "Hi, how are you?" but often, they do not. And you might wonder why

they are not being friendly, especially if you are coming from a place where people regularly engage with one another.

Her statement, "*you just must fit into it,*" reveals a racialised expectation of assimilation and compliance. Through her emotional path from frustration to resignation, we observe the internalisation of structural tension. Her focus on rigid systems highlights the racialised burden of assimilation, aligning with Thomas et al.'s (2020) argument that "structural oppression...permeates institutions throughout society in ways that make it appear 'normal'" (p. 1157).

Post-space here becomes a place of critical consciousness, where safe navigation extends beyond physical removal to encompass emotional adjustments within systems of normalised exclusion. Elizabeth's post-space reflection allows her to identify this structural permanence, not as individual paranoia but as institutional reality. Her adaptation is less about acceptance and more about enduring structural neglect and normalised exclusion, a reality CRT critiques as the 'permanence of racism' (Bell, 1992; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Francis and Robertson, 2021).

Natasha reveals the core processes of navigating space in post-entry contexts as she recalls specific encounters and interprets their emotional impact. She captures the essence of spatial navigation as not merely improvising in the moment but engaging in ongoing reflection after leaving the space. This reflective practice involves coming to terms with the emotional weight of disappointment and threat experienced in those encounters, a process essential for adapting future movements and self-protection strategies. As she recalls:

As much as I resist being defined by how others perceive me, there are moments when I genuinely feel that I do not belong in certain spaces. That sense of not belonging influences my decisions in subtle but significant ways. For instance, I may desire something, but then second-guess myself, or decide not to pursue it at all. I might avoid particular shops because I perceive them as spaces designated for 'those people,' not for someone like me. I should not even be thinking like that, but the reality is, there are places I did not step into until quite recently, simply because I had internalised the idea that they were not meant for me.

Natasha's reflection demonstrates how post-space processing involves recognising internalised exclusion and working to disentangle it from authentic preference. Her acknowledgement that she "*should not even be thinking like that*" reveals self-awareness about how systemic messages have shaped her consumer consciousness. The fact that she only "quite recently" began entering previously avoided spaces suggests that post-space reflection can lead to future resistance, a refusal to accept imposed spatial boundaries. However, this contestation requires significant emotional labour and

courage, as she must overcome years of accumulated messages about where she does and does not belong.

While in space, participants showed how they discussed delayed processing; the post-space provided them with a site where they could process everything. Post-space gives them the chance to reflect on their experiences and decide whether to return. Bontle mentioned an experience where she was asked to leave a regular coffee shop. She was forcibly removed by a staff member who grabbed her belongings without permission and demanded she leave, citing that she visited "all the time" and consumed coffee and tea "too frequently." Despite her attempts to assert her customer status and address the manager by name, the staff member refused to hear her out, escalating the interaction into a public confrontation. The incident proved "immensely traumatising" when Bontle realised she was the sole person of colour present. Rather than acquiescing as she typically might, Bontle resisted, calling her husband and demanding police involvement if ejection proceeded without explanation. The confrontation resulted in formal complaints, management investigations, and an eventual apology. She followed the right steps by:

I filed an official complaint, and eventually, the manager I knew came in the next day because he was not available at the time. He brought me flowers and said we would go through the whole situation. I had interviews with management, HR, and others, but it turned into a massive issue. I just could not believe that this happened in this day and age.

In that moment, she had to navigate safety actively and could not focus on whether she would return. Only after leaving was she able to decide that she would never go back, having processed what had happened, how she felt, and its impact on her. She expressed that she never wanted to experience that microaggression or discrimination again, which led her to decide never to return to that location. However, she was already looking for another coffee shop, hoping for a better experience than she had at the last one.

Sometimes, it is better to disengage and leave, especially when someone becomes physical or aggressive. This decision stems from an understanding that some situations escalate naturally. As a Black woman, safety is paramount. Leaving the scene, even if wronged, serves as a form of self-protection. Reflection happens later, outside the situation. While the flowers Bontle received might temporarily ease the tension, they do not undo what happened. The incident itself should never have occurred.

Experiences of microaggression and discrimination while in space influenced how participants chose new spaces. If they had a negative experience in a specific store, they had to weigh the risk of returning where they knew they might face microaggressions against the uncertainty of seeking a new place,

where they did not know what to expect, whether the microaggressions would be worse or if they might encounter nothing at all. This example of choosing not to go back can also be seen in the accounts of other people's encounters.

Multiple participants discussed their different experiences at a particular store, especially Primark. Zoe mentioned:

I had gone into Primark to pick up a couple of basics, but I did not find what I was looking for. Do you know how sometimes you walk into a store, realise there is nothing there for you, and within seconds, you are back out again? That was exactly the case. However, as I was walking out, I heard someone speaking on the store's radio to the security guard. I clearly heard them say, "You need to check her." And sure enough, the security guard stopped me and asked, "Hi, did you buy anything?" If you make me feel uncomfortable coming into your store, I am simply not going to shop there again. After that experience, I boycotted Primark for a whole year.

Similarly, Jane and Naledi described incidents in the fitting rooms at Primark where their belongings were singled out for inspection, even though others waiting in line were not subjected to the same scrutiny. Such experiences of targeted suspicion contributed to their hesitation and discomfort about returning to the store again. Both mentioned that they were unsure about the incidents at the time and were only able to process afterwards, in post-space, what had actually occurred and what it meant for their future consumer decisions.

Bontle captures the complexity of this post-space reflection, particularly around the demand to prove financial capability:

I am trying to break that expectation for myself. What people think of me does not have to be my reality. I do not have to fulfil any stereotype just because you do not expect me to be the bill payer. That does not mean I have to live up to that.

Here, Bontle articulates how post-space allows for critical distance from the immediate consumer encounter. She moves from awareness of stereotypical expectations about Black women's financial capability to active resistance against those expectations. The post-space becomes a site where she can interrogate why she feels compelled to prove herself as "the billpayer" and ultimately reject the notion that others' assumptions should dictate her self-presentation. Her statement, "*what people think of me does not have to be my reality*", represents a crucial moment of post-space work: the separation of external perception from internal truth. This detachment from performative responses to racialised ideas of her Blackness represents the labour-intensive process of untangling internalised stereotypes from authentic self-expression.

Grace provides another dimension by unpacking her evolving relationship with femininity in post-space reflection:

It is a question that plays on my mind a lot, but it is just a case of accepting who I am and acknowledging that this is me. That is how I choose to practice my femininity. It is yours to own; it is not something dictated by someone else. Just because someone's or society's idea of femininity contradicts your own does not mean it is not valid. It has been a definite learning curve to own my femininity in the way I choose. I am getting to a stage where I am happy. I used to think that if I only had five products, it was because I was limited and did not have the money.

Grace's reflection on "practising my femininity" reveals how post-space navigation involves the active reconstruction of identity categories distorted by racialised consumer encounters. Her insistence that femininity "is yours to own; it is not something dictated by someone else" represents a form of post-space work that involves reclaiming agency over self-presentation in the face of external judgment (Bone et al., 2014). Her observation that she "used to think that if I only had five products, it was because I was limited and did not have the money" illustrates how racist consumer spaces can internalise shame about one's purchasing patterns. The post-space work involves separating authentic preferences from imposed limitations, recognising that minimalist consumption can be a choice rather than a constraint. This echoes Black Feminist Theory's call to redefine identity on one's own terms (Collins, 2000), challenging both Eurocentric standards of beauty and the normalisation of consumption as a marker of womanhood. Collins (2000) asserts that actively rejecting externally imposed narratives that marginalise and dehumanise Black women is just as important to self-definition as asserting one's own identity.

Grace further explains the importance of post-space reflection in recognising how power operates in consumer spaces and making strategic decisions to protect her sense of self:

Based on the power structures of our society, my solution is to remove power from them. If you do not want me as a consumer, then I am not going to consume. I am not going to put my money into growing your business and then say, "Buy from this brand." I know that it is not a problem with me or my insecurities; I am just aware of the beauty standards that exist around me. I recognise that I do not fit into those beauty standards, so I do not fit into that projected consumer image. Therefore, I adjust accordingly and think, "Well, that is fine. I can live my life in a way that allows me to invest in other aspects that bring me joy and make me feel like a valued consumer member of society.

Her recognition that she does not conform to dominant beauty standards and therefore does not align with the "projected consumer image" makes her act of disengagement self-affirming. This choice transcends mere avoidance of discomfort; it actively challenges the consumerist logic that marginalises Black women's bodies and aesthetic presence (Sandlin and Maudlin, 2012; Ndichu and Upadhyaya,

2018; Lukate, 2022). Grace's insight into not "*fitting into that projected consumer image*" demonstrates a deep understanding of the racialised boundaries of consumer citizenship. Her response, "*I adjust accordingly*", reflects a sophisticated cultural literacy regarding consumer practices, as she interprets marketplace signals and responds in a strategic manner rather than internalising negative perceptions. Importantly, this post-space work represents a moment of agency and personal empowerment; it is where reflection gains its significance as a healing process. By choosing to "*invest in other aspects that bring me joy*", Grace redefines what it means to be "*a valued member of society as a consumer*" on her own terms, resisting the notion that consumer validation must come from spaces that exclude her. Ultimately, navigating identity in the post-space phase serves as a means of reconstitution, allowing Black women to assert their presence, power, and purpose, even after being marginalised in spaces designed to consume and erase them, while also considering how to position themselves within those spaces strategically going forward (Poole et al., 2021).

Yolanda's reflections present a different but complementary dimension of post-space identity work: the transformation of consumer behaviour into a vehicle for community solidarity and collective identity affirmation.

In the last couple of years, since transitioning from being a kid and receiving an allowance from my parents to being in university, where my parents would send me money for expenses, I have noticed a change. Going from that to managing my own money and deciding how I want to spend it has been a key difference. One of the major shifts in my consumer habits has been that I have tried to shop less on mainstream sites, like big online stores, and instead focus on supporting small, Black, and women-owned businesses. I think this change ties into my identity because I want to support people from my community. Specifically, I have been more intentional about supporting Black women and Muslim-owned businesses.

Yolanda's reflection reveals how post-space identity work can extend beyond individual self-definition to include collective solidarity and community reinvestment. Her shift from "*mainstream sites*" to "*small, Black, and women-owned businesses*" represents a conscious reorientation of consumption practices that emerged through the kind of reflection post-space enables. The phrase "*I just realised something else recently*" signals the reflexive nature of this shift; it is not automatic but emerges through contemplation about her values, identity, and position within multiple communities.

Her navigation of identity is outward-facing; she is not only reconstructing her sense of self but also connecting it to broader networks of cultural, racial, and religious solidarity. Post-space enables her to transform consumer behaviour from an individual act into a collective practice of mutual support and recognition. This strategic redirection of economic energy reflects what Collins (2000) describes as Black women's ethic of care extended into the marketplace, where consumption becomes a means of

nurturing and sustaining community. Yolanda's approach embodies intersectional consciousness (Crenshaw, 1991), as her consumer choices simultaneously honour her identity as a Black, Muslim woman and aspiring entrepreneur.

However, identity work alone does not fully encompass the complexity of experiences that unfold in post-space. Traditionally, consumer research has conceptualised identity work as the ongoing process through which individuals construct, negotiate, and maintain a coherent sense of self through their engagement with the marketplace (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Schau, 2018). This body of work highlights how consumption functions as a site for meaning-making, self-expression, and the regulation of social identities. More recent scholarship, particularly from the Transformative Consumer Research perspective, extends this understanding by considering how marginalised consumers navigate stigma, misrecognition, and social exclusion (Crockett, 2017; Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013; Mirabito et al., 2016).

Hutton (2019) further develops this perspective by foregrounding the “care-less” marketplace as a generative site of structural inequality in the affective domain of life. The care-less marketplace not only excludes but continually creates and reproduces inequalities in women’s resources, perpetuating inequalities of power and status and places tremendous strain on their effective relations with others” (Hutton, 2019; p. 540). Over time, these dynamics shape not only identity but also well-being and agency. Importantly, this research underscores that for marginalised consumers, identity work is deeply intertwined with the labour of managing harm from discriminatory encounters and safeguarding oneself against future injury. However, even this broadened lens, which attends to both self-construction and the ongoing management of marketplace harms, does not fully capture the subtle, affective, and recursive reflections that participants in this research reported during post-space.

By situating post-space within these literatures, it becomes clear that what occurs after the encounter is not only a process of *thinking about identity* but a process of *feeling through identity*, a moment where Black women metabolise the emotional residue of discrimination, reflect on the identity performances they enacted, and reassert a sense of self that the consumer space attempted to constrain.

5.4.3. Navigating Emotions: Emotional Processing and Meaning-Making

Building on the previous section, this part examines how Black women handle the aftershocks of racialised consumer experiences. Participants noted that immediately after leaving consumer marketplaces, they try to replay and emotionally interpret their experiences, often resulting in feelings of confusion, self-doubt, and, for some, a sense of “*gaslighting themselves*.” Leaving the consumer space does not necessarily mean that “the work is done”; for many participants, their emotional labour and processing continued long after exiting the physical marketplace. This section explores Black

fatigue in consumer spaces and its persistence, examining the ongoing emotional labour that characterises post-space navigation (Winters, 2020).

One pattern in participants' accounts is the delayed emotional reaction to microaggressions, with these often only fully recognised and processed after leaving the consumer space. Tinashe's experience vividly illustrates this temporal lag. After purchasing something from Primark, she was indirectly asked for a receipt for an earlier purchase in the same shop, an implicit accusation of theft. She describes her processing:

I am a delayed reaction person, which frustrates me so much sometimes. There are times when I wish I could respond more immediately. Often, I get a sense of shock, and I think it is because these situations do not happen all the time. So, when they do, it is like, "This is happening," and then I look back and think, "Wow." Like with the whole yoga mat incident, at the time, I was just thinking, "He is just doing his job." It was only after I left that I started feeling awful and questioning, "Was I being racially profiled? What was happening here?" They could have just checked my receipt. Another time, I was in Lidl, and someone said, "Oh, I saw you put your stuff in your bag; I did not see you check out." I was shocked because, well, you cannot go through security without checking out. The alarm would have gone off if I had not paid for my stuff. At that moment, I was just shocked. I switched into compliance, thinking, "Okay, I am showing this man my receipt; I am doing everything he is asking." But once I left, I realised it was not a nice experience. I do not want to be accused of theft or looked at with suspicion when I am just living my life.

Tinashe's extended reflection captures the complexity of post-space emotional processing. In the moment, she experiences shock and "switches into compliance", prioritising getting through the interaction safely over asserting herself. Her immediate response, "*He is just doing his job*", demonstrates how she initially rationalises the encounter to make it bearable. However, once she exits the marketplace and enters post-space, the full emotional weight hits her: "*I started feeling awful, "I felt like I could have handled that situation differently," "I felt awful, and then I started making excuses for their behaviour."*

This delayed reaction is not simply about slow processing; it reflects the ambiguous nature of microaggressions, which disarm through their entanglement with deniability. How does one confront being followed in a store or dismissiveness from a staff member who can easily claim they were "*just doing their job*"? The ambiguity of microaggressions can be understood as epistemic violence, which Pérez (2019) describes as "a structural phenomenon is a key factor, though unrecognised, in systems of privilege such as racism, sexism and cissexism, and as such it is strengthened by its imperceptibility" (p.1). This is crucial because, when unable to name something, one cannot fully challenge it. Post-space

becomes the site where participants attempt to name what happened, to make sense of ambiguous encounters that left them feeling violated but uncertain about whether they can legitimately claim harm. Tinashe's post-space processing oscillates between self-blame ("I should have said something"), doubt ("Maybe it was not racism"), and a longing for clarity ("If I could have had a conversation with that person, maybe I would have confirmed"). This speculation, instead of clarity, characterises much of post-space emotional work; Black women are left to decode their experiences alone, without external validation or confirmation. The thought "*Maybe I should go back*" reveals the unfinished quality of these encounters; they lack closure because the microaggression was never acknowledged, never confronted, and therefore never resolved.

The delayed recognition participants describe extends Crockett's (2017) analysis of how racial stereotyping operates in consumer spaces. While Crockett demonstrates how Black consumers are subjected to surveillance and suspicion during marketplace encounters, the temporal lag in processing these experiences reveals an additional dimension: the epistemic violence of being unable to name harm in real-time (Pérez, 2019). This delay is not individual cognitive failure but reflects the structural ambiguity through which contemporary racism operates. As Bonilla-Silva (2013) argues, colour-blind racism functions precisely through deniability; microaggressions are designed to be ambiguous enough that challenging them risks appearing "oversensitive" or "making everything about race." Post-space becomes the temporal location where this ambiguity can be confronted, where Black women can name experiences that were strategically designed to resist naming.

Natasha extends this discussion of delayed reactions by emphasising the importance of naming experiences as part of post-space recovery:

For me, it is usually afterwards. I do not think much about it at the time. But later on, maybe a week later, I will look back and think, "Wait, what happened?" Maybe it's about perception. Someone else might look at the same scenario and think, 'That's fine.' Others might recognise it as a problem. Sometimes, it's just that lack of awareness. Let me give you an example, it's an extreme one, but it shows the point. When we come from elsewhere and settle here, we begin to gain an understanding of women's rights, of gender-based violence or domestic violence. And then we look back at what we considered 'normal' in our culture and realise, "Oh, that was gender-based violence." Once you begin to see things differently, you start giving them names. And in naming them, you start to understand what they are. I think it is the same with microaggressions. Some of the things we've maybe accepted as normal, they're not. And sometimes we don't name them because they've just become part of everyday. A man can say something sexist, and it's brushed off because maybe that's how we grew up seeing things. But when your eyes are opened, when you become aware, then you begin to recognise these moments.

Natasha's reflection reveals post-space as a site of epistemological growth. Like Tinashe, she experiences a temporal lag, "*maybe a week later*", before fully processing what occurred. However, Natasha goes further by theorising this process through the metaphor of "naming." Her analogy to recognising gender-based violence demonstrates how language and conceptual frameworks enable recognition of harm that was previously normalised or invisible. Post-space provides the distance necessary for this naming to occur: "*Once you begin to see things differently, you start giving them names. And in naming them, you start to understand what they are.*"

This naming is not merely descriptive; it is transformative. When Natasha identifies normalised behaviour as a microaggression, she challenges the discourse that renders these experiences invisible. Language provides the knowledge and understanding necessary for processing and recovery (Collins, 2000; Koonce, 2012; Alinia, 2015). Natasha's examples of examining gender-based violence and her understanding of other symbolic forms of harm illustrate how the intersections of race, gender, migration, and cultural background influence Black women's interpretations and processing of emotions—her perception of the past changes as she gains access to important concepts and terminology.

The emotional labour participants describe builds on, but differs from, emotional labour as traditionally theorised in service work (Hochschild, 1983) and consumer contexts (Bone et al., 2014). While these scholars examine emotion work as performance for others, displaying appropriate feelings to customers or managing emotions to fit commercial contexts, Black women's post-space emotional labour is primarily for themselves: processing harm, managing trauma responses, and preparing for future encounters. This distinction is critical. As Pittman (2020) argues, much consumer research "has not adequately grappled with the degree that Blacks' consumption had been restricted, constricted, or taxed" (p. 5). The emotional taxation continues in post-space, where Black women bear the burden of processing experiences that white consumers never face.

The cumulative emotional toll of repeated marketplace encounters creates Black fatigue (Winters 2020). Unlike acute traumatic events, this fatigue, in the consumer spaces context, accumulates through the repeated cycle of entry, performance, exit, and emotional processing. This creates, as participants describe, an overwhelming feeling of "*everything all at once.*"

Zoe expressed her frustration with navigating the duality between private frustration and public presentation:

It is exhausting to come out of the store and think, "Okay, that is done, that is out of the way," and move on to the next one. It is back and forth, back and forth. But you just must cope in the way that works for you. You cannot be moody all the time, either. You cannot be hyper-aware all the time. Some

situations call for that, but everyone needs to deal with things in a way that is best for them. For me, it does not mentally affect me to the point where I cannot function. Part of my personality is that I put on a persona; I am front stage most of the time. Few people see me backstage. I am frustrated a lot of the time, but I have a reputation to uphold, or at least a persona that I need to present. So, when I walk out the door, the persona is on, and it does not affect me. But I know for other people, if they were in the same situation, it would not work for them at all.

Zoe's account reveals the relentless nature of emotional labour that extends beyond the marketplace itself. The phrase "*back and forth, back and forth*" captures the exhausting repetition of entering consumer spaces, performing composure, and then attempting to process the emotional residue in post-space, only to repeat the cycle. Her maintenance of a "*persona*" that remains "*on*" even after "*walking out the door*" demonstrates how post-space does not always offer genuine release. As someone managing multiple professional roles and public visibility, Zoe cannot afford the luxury of dropping the performance entirely; her "*backstage*" remains largely private, accessible to "*few people*."

Zoe's experience can be understood through Goffman's dramaturgical theory, which conceptualises social life as performance on the "*front stage*" and authentic self-expression on the "*backstage*." However, as Tyler (2020) persuasively argues in her critique of Goffman's work on stigma, his framework inadequately accounts for how race structures both the necessity and consequences of performance. For Zoe and other Black women, the choice to perform is not optional but compulsory, a racialised survival strategy (Henderson and Williams, 2013). The emotional persona she wears is not merely social nicety but armour against potential racial and gendered scrutiny.

Critically, Zoe's post-space experience demonstrates how emotional regulation extends beyond the physical marketplace. She acknowledges being "*frustrated a lot of the time*", yet this frustration must remain hidden behind her public persona. The statement "*it does not mentally affect me to the point where I cannot function*" suggests a high threshold for what constitutes unmanageable emotional impact, a threshold likely raised through repeated exposure to racial microaggressions. Her recognition that "*everyone needs to deal with things in a way that is best for them*" also signals awareness that her coping strategy of sustained performance is not universal and may not be sustainable for others.

While Zoe manages her emotions through sustained performance and controlled public presentation, other participants demonstrate different approaches to post-space emotional processing. Femi offers another strategy: emotional distancing through reframing experiences as collective rather than individual:

I would not say it is classically challenging because I feel like I have accepted that this is the world I live in, and that people will be people. I am not sure, you know? And, like, in terms of protecting my

own space, my peace, and my well-being, I try not to let those things reflect on me. It is more about how I see it as a collective experience, not as something that is a personal burden on me. I do not think these people know who I am as an individual; they think they know who we are as a collective.

So, it helps when I look at it more as an "us" thing, not a "me" thing. Because when I take it personally, it becomes too overwhelming and starts to feel like a personal burden, whereas, in reality, it is more of a collective issue that they are imposing on us.

Femi's post-space work involves creating a psychological buffer by depersonalising microaggressions while still acknowledging their impact. She states that she finds it overwhelming when she personalises experiences, so she reframes them as directed at Black women collectively rather than at her individually. This strategy has both protective and political dimensions: it shields her from the full emotional weight of each encounter while also recognising the systemic nature of racism. By seeing discrimination as "*an 'us' thing, not a 'me' thing*", Femi situates her experiences within a broader pattern of anti-Black racism rather than as personal failure or inadequacy.

This concept builds upon Derrick Bell's racial realism, as outlined in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (1992). Bell argues that there is an acceptance that racism is permanent in everyday life and that Black people must develop strategies to navigate this unchanging reality. Femi's approach reveals this emotional complexity; she must recognise the racist systems that shape her experiences in consumer marketplaces while simultaneously protecting herself from being consumed by them. This paradox is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of Black women, who must constantly negotiate visibility and erasure, individuality, and community (Newton, 2022; Alormele and Robles, 2025).

These three participants, Zoe, Naledi, and Femi, demonstrate the highly individualised nature of post-space emotional navigation. Zoe wears a persona as armour, maintaining front-stage performance even after leaving the marketplace. Naledi oscillates between withdrawal and confrontation, burdened by the knowledge that "this is going to happen again." Femi reinterprets encounters as collective experiences, thereby creating emotional distance. Despite their diverse methods of processing and recovery, all three develop coping strategies rooted in understanding and knowledge about race, power, and consumer spaces. As Collins (2000) argues, Black women develop a "critical social consciousness" (p. 287) born from their marginalised position; they become experts in reading power dynamics and developing survival strategies.

Each participant moves through multiple layers of power that shape how they manage their emotions. Their strategies differ based on identity, background, class, profession, and emotional capacity. These differences show that there is no single way to respond to racialised consumer experiences. Black

feminist epistemology values these varied emotional strategies while recognising their shared foundation in negotiating white-dominated spaces.

As Collins (2000) argues, Black women's collective standpoint is "characterised by the tensions that accrue to different responses to common challenges" (p. 28), avoiding essentialism while recognising heterogeneity. This reinforces that emotional navigation among Black women is diverse yet connected through shared encounters with intersecting systems of power.

The emotional labour of post-space often begins as a solitary endeavour. As Tinashe's and Natasha's accounts demonstrate, the need to understand one's emotions and contextualise them frequently occurs in isolation; it becomes a personal search for meaning in the absence of external affirmation from the marketplace itself. There is no systemic incentive for consumer spaces to recognise or validate Black women's emotions unless it aligns with dominant commercial interests. Black women must therefore expend emotional labour to decode and interpret their experiences, turning inward to make meaning of ambiguous encounters.

However, solitary reflection is not the only mode of post-space processing. At the same time, individual sense-making forms the foundation; this emotional navigation can later transform into a communal process when participants share their stories with others who understand. Elizabeth explains:

That is why I have never personally encountered anything like being called the N-word in Glasgow. But we are talking about microaggressions, which may be a new form of anti-racism. It is difficult to know how to respond when it happens, but some of the things we do, like in group work, are to talk amongst each other and give each other support.

Elizabeth's reference to "group work" and "talking amongst each other" reveals how Black women create spaces for collective reflexivity. These conversations serve multiple functions: they validate individual experiences by demonstrating shared patterns, they provide alternative interpretations that might not have occurred to someone processing alone, and they offer emotional support that counters the isolation of solitary reflection. Esther articulates this collective dimension more explicitly:

I mean, I talk it out with people around me and talking it out and just giving it another perspective, another meaning for my own sanity. I will not peek at your direct motive so that I do not keep replaying it in my head, and you start to live rent-free instead. I give it a definition that suits me. That will make me get over it on time without suppressing it and waiting for a day to explode, if that makes sense.

Esther's account demonstrates how communal processing helps prevent rumination ("so that I do not keep replaying it in my head") and emotional suppression that might lead to eventual breakdown ("me

waiting for a day to explode"). By *"talking it out"*, she gains *"another perspective, another meaning"*, demonstrating that collective processing offers interpretive resources that solitary reflection may lack. Her phrase *"I give it a definition that suits me"* echoes Natasha's emphasis on naming, but here the naming occurs through dialogue rather than individual contemplation. This collective sense-making allows her to move through the experience, *"get over it on time"*, without either suppressing emotions or allowing them to overwhelm her.

The movement from solitary processing to collective reflection is significant because it counters the isolation that racist consumer spaces impose. When microaggressions are ambiguous and deniable, and when Black women are made to question their own perceptions (as Tinashe's self-gaslighting demonstrates), communal validation becomes crucial. Hearing others' names, similar experiences confirm that *"this happened"*, that *"you are not making it up"*, and that your emotional response is legitimate. This collective epistemology aligns with Black feminist thought, which positions shared experience as a source of knowledge and resistance (Collins, 1986, 2000).

5.4.4. Navigating Safety: Safety Recovery and Future Preparation

Understanding safety navigation requires moving beyond the physical act of removing oneself from a racialised consumer space. It encompasses a form of gaining emotional clarity and resilience. This process extends beyond the immediate task of managing emotional labour within space to include preparation for future encounters in *pre-space*. Participants described how post-space involves leaving a space, looking back, processing what happened and their emotional responses, and contemplating different approaches for next time. These reflections reveal that navigating safety is a recursive process requiring forward-looking engagement. Black women bear the emotional burden of being surveilled because of their Blackness, being misunderstood based on appearances, and facing ongoing exclusion across various times and places. Post-space thus becomes an important site for reorientation, where participants, having gone through an experience, must carefully balance their emotional well-being with how they present themselves in future consumer encounters.

Zoe describes how being reflective helps her navigate safety and develop alternative strategies. She explains:

One of the biggest things is being reflective. You are constantly thinking about, "Could I have managed that situation better? Do I need to do something different?" It helps me think, "Okay, maybe next time I will do this instead of that. Maybe next time I will not be so passive; maybe I can be more assertive." But especially if I have had a long day, and something happens, I need to give myself grace as well. You can easily beat yourself up about it, like, "Why didn't you speak up for yourself?" But having a long day does not mean I should come back and be fighting for my life. I do not need to be

fighting for my life all the time. I also deserve to rest; I deserve not to be fighting people every single time I step out of my house.

Zoe's reflection foregrounds the limitations of agency in contexts where systemic inequalities restrict available actions. Her ability to respond, or not respond, is filtered through risks shaped by intersectional factors and prior exposure to harm (Crenshaw, 1991; Poole et al., 2021). Her reflections frame post-space as a site of critical self-assessment and adaptive strategy, where emotional processing intersects with the anticipation of future encounters. As Collins (2000) argues, "BFT encompasses general knowledge that helps... Black women survive in, cope with, and resist differential treatment" (p. 31). Zoe's narrative rejects the "strong Black woman" trope and redefines emotional withdrawal as an act of boundary-setting and care.

The cumulative strain of repeated entry, exit, and re-entry into consumer spaces perceived as potentially hostile contributes to ongoing post-space safety management. Zoe stresses that this constant vigilance is exhausting and asserts her right to disengage when her energy is depleted. This need to constantly be prepared for a 'fight' highlights the toll that safety labour, the emotional, cognitive, and physical work required to assess, navigate, and recover from racialised harm in consumer spaces, takes on Black women. She redefines rest as an intentional boundary-setting practice rather than mere avoidance.

Post-space serves as a recurring checkpoint in this recursive safety process, where Black women adjust their behaviours, anticipate risk, and secure their emotions. This ongoing process shows that safe navigation is not just about reacting to events; it is also about predicting what might happen, based on past experiences of harm, marginalisation, and racialised systems. This observation highlights a disjuncture between the embodied norms that Black women bring to consumer spaces and the expectations those spaces place on them (Collins, 2000).

In response to Elizabeth's description of how retail spaces operate, "*They are trained to do things in a specific way, and you must get used to that as well. It might not match what you are used to, but that's just how things operate*", Zahara offers a counter-response grounded in intentional healing. As a yoga instructor who specialises in teaching Black women how to process racial trauma through movement, breathwork, and mindfulness, Zahara centres wellness as a form of recovery in post-space. She explains her shift in perspective:

There are tools to be more reflective than thinking about, like, or things that you could change before. Be like, maybe if I've done this, or maybe said something or kind of more ruminating on it, whereas now, well, it happened and there's nothing I can do, but I need to look after myself. And yes. It's more of a perspective change of mindset.

In this moment, Zahara moves away from overthinking and self-blame, common emotional responses after difficult experiences in consumer spaces, and instead focuses on what scholars term radical self-care. Nicol and Yee (2017) define radical self-care as practices that "involve embracing practices that keep us physically and psychologically healthy and fit, making time to reflect on what matters to us, challenging ourselves to grow, and checking ourselves to ensure that what we are doing aligns with what matters to us" (p. 134). They define this as radical because it requires people to have genuine choice over how they spend their time, money, and energy, a form of autonomy often denied to marginalised communities.

Zahara's approach reflects a decisive shift from internalising systemic harm to actively resisting it through practices of radical self-care. Her question, "*Do you think that wellness needs to be a huge part of, especially racial trauma?*", functions as a political assertion, highlighting the urgent need to foreground holistic, embodied, and culturally grounded modes of care in the recovery processes of Black women navigating consumer spaces.

The findings of this research support Zahara's assertion. The results show that rather than being optional acts of self-improvement, wellness-oriented practices, such as boundary-setting (boycotting), selective disengagement from hostile spaces, and deliberate cultivation of affirming consumer spaces, act as essential strategies for reducing racialised stress. Black women may use wellness to rebel against the market's logic that demands careless endurance. Zahara's story highlights the need to go beyond resilience narratives and towards frameworks that see care as politically and structurally vital for overcoming racial trauma within consumer spaces, emphasising holistic, culturally grounded forms of wellbeing.

This emphasis on wellness aligns with the growing discourse on care within consumer research. The Care Collective's (2020) *Care Manifesto* calls for reconfiguring social and economic systems around care rather than profit, arguing that care must be recognised as a foundational societal value. Similarly, Hutton's (2019) critique of the "care-less marketplace" demonstrates how contemporary consumer capitalism systematically devalues care work and weakens the conditions necessary for caring relationships to flourish. Zahara's wellness practice can therefore be understood as a form of resistance to this care-less marketplace: a purposeful cultivation of caring, restorative spaces in which Black women can heal from the violence and extraction embedded in marketplace interactions.

Through yoga, Zahara creates a space for rest and reclaiming that directly challenges dominant narratives of resilience, which often demand constant strength, performance, or confrontation. Her practice becomes both a physical and symbolic space where Black women can breathe, where stillness serves as a form of resistance, and wellness becomes a tool for political empowerment. As she notes,

mindfulness and physical practices help people "*become more aware of their body*" and recognise when "*they carry tension without realising it.*"

Through Zahara's account, post-space recovery should not solely focus on preparing for re-entry into racialised consumer spaces; it must also centre on reclaiming time, breath, and bodily autonomy as acts of survival and empowerment.

While Zahara's approach highlights post-space as a place for healing and reclaiming oneself, other participants navigated safety through more direct forms of resistance, such as withdrawal, refusal, and boycott. This shift is demonstrated by Zoe's decision to boycott a retailer after a racially charged encounter, showing how post-space can also serve as grounds for consumer defiance and boundary-setting. Zoe confronts the discomfort she experiences and uses it to navigate the safety of post-space. She recalls an incident at Primark: after finishing her shopping and walking out, she overheard someone speaking to the security guard over the walkie-talkie, saying, "*You need to check her.*" The security guard then approached her and asked, "*Hi, did you buy anything?*"

Zoe reflects:

In that moment, I could not help but think that other people had not bought anything, but somehow, it was I who was stopped. It is not just about being watched around stores, though that happens constantly, but also about being singled out and stopped for no reason. I do not understand why it is so difficult to treat Black women, or Black people in general, with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. And I am not saying we are not different; we are different. We reign in our differences; there's power in that. But that difference should not be treated as a threat.

Zoe's experience reflects Browne's (2015) "racialising surveillance", the targeting of bodies marked by race through monitoring practices that render Blackness inherently suspect. This form of surveillance, embedded within retail security practices, treats Black consumers as potential criminals rather than legitimate customers. After this incident, Zoe stopped shopping at Primark for a year:

If you make me feel uncomfortable coming into your store, I am simply not going to shop there again. After that experience, I boycotted Primark for a whole year. It was only very recently that I went back for the first time in a very long while. And honestly, even now, if I am buying something from Primark, I will just order it online instead of going into the store. Sure, it is cheaper in person, but to be very candid, I would rather respect myself than prioritise price and cheapness.

Zoe's decision to boycott Primark reflects strategic marketplace resistance, aligning with Roux and Izberk-Bilgin's (2018) framework of "opposing, thwarting, escaping or circumventing marketing

techniques and powers" (p. 296). Her choice to prioritise dignity over convenience transforms post-space from a mere site of avoidance into a space of deliberate counter-consumption.

From a Black Feminist Thought perspective (Collins, 2000), this act symbolises self-definition and emotional autonomy. Zoe reclaims agency by refusing to participate in spaces that question her legitimacy as a consumer, challenging both aesthetic norms and the racialised surveillance embedded in consumer capitalism. As Browne (2015) argues, "surveillance is nothing new to Black folks. It is the fact of anti-Blackness" (p. 10). Zoe's refusal to return responds to a consumer culture that upholds whiteness as the normative standard, treating Black consumers as suspects rather than valued customers.

This decision reflects the fact that resistance often emerges from marginalisation and constrained choice rather than from pure autonomy. Zoe's boycott represents what can be understood as safety-oriented resistance, where the primary motivation is not ideological alignment or brand activism but rather the protection of psychological and emotional well-being in future consumer encounters, extending marketplace resistance literature by foregrounding safety as a primary driver of resistance behaviours.

Grace's experience similarly illuminates the practice of removing herself from potentially harmful consumer spaces, not necessarily through boycotting a specific store like Zoe, but through exercising autonomy by choosing where to spend her money:

If it happened again in my local area, I would not go back because I would not want to spend my money somewhere that condones this. But I tend to think it has not affected me much, since it happened while I was in another country. Fair enough, but it was one of those funny things. Based on the power structures of our society, my solution is to remove power from them. If you do not want me as a customer, then I will not be a customer. I am not going to put my money into growing your business and then say, "Buy from this brand." I know that it is not a problem with me or my insecurities; I am just aware of the beauty standards that exist around me. I recognise that I do not fit into those beauty standards, so I do not fit into that projected consumer image. Therefore, I adjust accordingly and think, "Well, that is fine. I can live my life in a way that allows me to invest in other aspects that bring me joy and make me feel like a valued member of society as a consumer."

Grace's repeated emphasis in this quote on her decision-making process within post-space is significant. She explicitly frames her withdrawal as a response to exclusion, "*If you do not want me as a customer*", and as a strategic reallocation of economic power toward spaces where she feels valued. This demonstrates post-space as a temporal and reflective site where she processes the exclusion, evaluates its implications for her safety and dignity, and determines future consumer behaviours accordingly. Grace reframes consumer withdrawal not as a personal reaction but as an intentional reallocation of economic power. By declaring, "*If you do not want me as a consumer, then I am not going to consume*",

she explicitly challenges capitalist assumptions that associate market participation with belonging. Her account offers a critique of consumer structures that subtly reinforce exclusion through aesthetic and normative standards (Poole et al., 2021; Schmitt et al., 2021). In Grace's post-space processing, refusal becomes a strategy of empowerment. Her redirection of economic energy toward affirming spaces highlights the ideological and emotional complexity behind everyday purchasing decisions for marginalised consumers.

Grace and Zoe describe experiences in which their post-space processing and recovery assert the right to exist, to refuse, and to reclaim power through consumer choices. The participants' decisions not to participate and to boycott reflect BFT principles of self-definition and self-validation (Collins, 2000). Withdrawal from harmful institutions is not construed as weakness but as autonomy, an active choice made in post-space that shapes future engagements.

Post-space gives Black women agency to make choices they might not have had during pre-space planning or in-space navigation. This temporal site allows for clarity and resolution regarding consumer spaces, producing knowledge that informs them about where they feel safe and how to navigate space, identity, and emotions in future encounters. It demonstrates that non-engagement and withdrawal can become acts of agency, shaped by an awareness of one's racialised vulnerability in consumer spaces rather than by market trends and personal preferences alone. This highlights that consumer spaces are not neutral territories; they are racialised, aestheticised, and economically coded (Maciel and Wallendorf, 2021; Crockett, 2021), requiring Black women to seek safety and dignity continually. Safety, in this context, is not merely about avoiding violence or microaggressions; it involves affirming one's worth by redirecting economic energy toward affirming spaces, even when that means sacrificing convenience or affordability. The participants' refusal to financially support brands that exclude them reflects a broader critique of racial capitalism, where Black consumers are expected to contribute economically to institutions that fail to affirm their humanity (Francis and Robertson, 2021).

For some participants, switching to online shopping represented not a preference but a survival strategy to avoid future racialised encounters. However, this substitution also created new challenges and constraints. Esther's experience illuminates the transition from physical to online retail spaces:

I am sure it has happened in the past, but I cannot even remember any specific incidents. I think right now, a lot of things do not happen to me anymore because I spend more time at home than out there. Everything I do is online, you know? So, I do not get to interact with people like that anymore, which, to be honest, is exactly what I want. I order everything online, my clothes, my groceries, just please bring it to my doorstep. I am not crazy about being around other people and dealing with all that, you know?

Esther's retreat to online shopping might initially appear as an empowered consumer choice enabled by digital platforms. However, her statement "*I am not crazy about being around other people and dealing with all that*" reveals that this shift is motivated by the desire to avoid racialised harm rather than genuine preference. This represents what can be termed "defensive consumption", consumer behaviours adopted not to maximise satisfaction but to minimise exposure to discrimination and emotional labour.

Moreover, online spaces present their own limitations. These platforms offer limited representation of products tailored to Black consumers, particularly for items like hair care and makeup that ideally need to be tried in person before purchase. The absence of diverse shade ranges, limited product information for textured hair, and algorithmic biases in product recommendations all constrain the ostensible freedom of online shopping, the *systemically restricted choice* examined by Bone et al. (2014). Thus, what appears to be an empowered consumer decision is, in reality, a compromised choice made under structural duress. The move online does not eliminate safety concerns but rather displaces them, trading physical surveillance and microaggressions for digital exclusion and limited product access.

Additionally, several participants described shopping as a form of self-care or therapy, a way to relieve stress and practise self-nurturing. Participants mentioned enjoying the sensory experience of browsing, the social aspect of shopping with friends, and the pleasure of discovering new products. But if the shopping space itself becomes a site of harm, where does one turn for therapeutic relief? This question highlights the paradox of agency for Black women consumers: they must balance the perceived empowerment of withdrawal against the stark reality of constrained choices.

Taken together, these findings underscore what can be termed a consumer agency paradox: participants reported feeling empowerment in post-space through practices of reflection, retreat, wellness, and recuperation. At first glance, such practices would seem to represent autonomous consumer agency. However, many of these choices were reactive, forged in response to racialised injury and the expectation of future hurt, rather than emerging from unencumbered freedom.

Participants were not choosing from an open field of possibilities but from a limited set of options already narrowed by structural racism, racial profiling, and exclusionary design. Acts such as shopping online rather than in-store, frequenting only "safe" outlets, or retreating into wellness routines can be read simultaneously as expressions of agency and as symptoms of market unfreedom.

Conceptually, this paradox can be explained by the notion of "unfreedom" developed by Bauman (1976) and further elaborated in critical consumer research by Varman and Vikas (2007). Unfreedom captures conditions in which subjects are formally free to choose, yet their choices are structured, narrowed, and often pre-scripted by deeper relations of power, inequality, and exclusion. In racialised consumer

spaces, unfreedom manifests when Black consumers must engage in constant self-monitoring, strategic avoidance, and protective withdrawal to minimise harm, even as market discourse celebrates their sovereignty as "empowered" choosers.

Building on Varman and Vikas (2007), the consumer agency paradox highlights how market unfreedom is reproduced through the subtle reconfiguration of agency into risk management and self-protection. Participants' practices of reflection, withdrawal, and wellness are thus doubly coded: they constitute important forms of resistance and care but also attest to the conditions of unfreedom that make such strategies necessary in the first place.

The theoretical contribution here extends beyond documenting discrimination to revealing its temporal structuring of consumer subjectivity. Market unfreedom persists in post-space through the ongoing work of processing past harm and preparing for future encounters. This temporal extension of the constraint represents a racialised consumer consciousness, in which safety and dignity must be actively fought for rather than assumed as consumer rights.

Participants also described positive consumer interactions as rare, ambiguous, and difficult to interpret, and sometimes reflected upon after leaving the space, realising that it should not always be that hard. As Precious reflected:

But then again. Those are like experiences far and few between. People are sweet. People are helpful. I feel like if I had those experiences, it could be maybe because I was self-conscious, but also sometimes because I am not sure, because it is micro. Do you know what I mean? The thing about microaggression is you? It is not overt. So sometimes it is really hard to.

She argues that while people are sometimes "sweet" or "helpful," such experiences are "few and far between," making it difficult to determine whether moments of discomfort stem from overt mistreatment, personal self-consciousness, or subtle racialised cues. This uncertainty reflects a defining feature of microaggressions: their non-overt, ambiguous nature. As she noted, microaggressions are "not overt," which makes them "hard" to identify with certainty. Rather than producing clear moments of recognition, these encounters generate doubt, self-questioning, and emotional labour as participants attempt to interpret intent and meaning.

Natasha's account further shows how rare moments of respectful treatment are reinterpreted as exceptional rather than expected. She describes an "isolated incident" that stood out precisely because it disrupted a broader pattern of neglect:

Moreover, because it's so rare to get the goodness, when you do, I mean, it's just a normal shopping experience, it should be like that. But because you rarely get it, it now feels like, "Oh my gosh! You went out of your way," when really, it should be normal. I walk into banks and other places, and I notice the way people are treated, the way we are treated. I worked in a bank, and I would go out of my way to help people. But nobody does that for you.

Importantly, Natasha notes that such incidents “cloud the goodness,” not because they are negative, but because they highlight how infrequent basic care and attentiveness actually are. What should constitute a normal shopping experience becomes remarkable instead. As she explains, when she receives standard service, it feels as though someone has “gone out of their way,” even though this level of engagement should be routine.

This recalibration of expectations reveals how sustained exposure to marginalisation reshapes perceptions of normality. The absence of overt hostility does not equate to inclusion; rather, neutrality and basic respect become elevated to the status of generosity. Natasha’s reflections underscore how systemic patterns of differential treatment condition Black women to expect less, such that moments of adequacy are experienced as surprising or noteworthy.

Her comparison to her own professional experience working in a bank further sharpens this analysis. Natasha recalls actively going “out of [her] way to help people,” contrasting this ethic of care with her experiences as a customer, where “nobody does that for you.” This asymmetry reveals how racialised and gendered hierarchies shape the distribution of attentiveness and service. Black women are positioned as providers of care and competence, yet they rarely receive the same consideration in return. The marketplace thus reproduces broader social relations in which Black women’s labour, professionalism, and humanity are taken for granted while their needs are deprioritised.

Collectively, these accounts demonstrate that marketplace harm does not only manifest through overt discrimination but also through the persistent absence of care, recognition, and responsiveness. Microaggressions operate not solely through what is done, but through what is withheld: warmth, assistance, and the assumption of legitimacy. This produces a space in which Black women must constantly assess interactions, manage expectations, and recalibrate their understanding of what constitutes “normal” service, reinforcing both emotional fatigue and a diminished sense of belonging within consumer spaces.

5.4.5. Post-Space Conclusion

Post-space processing reveals what Lipsitz (2007) identifies as the 'white spatial imaginary', the accumulated knowledge that predominantly white spaces treat Black presence as 'disturbing and dangerous,' requiring continuous strategic navigation. Post-space, as this chapter has demonstrated, is

not merely the aftermath of consumer encounters but a critical temporal site where Black women engage in essential labour: making meaning of ambiguous experiences, processing accumulated emotional harm, reconstructing identity beyond performance demands, and developing strategies for future navigation. This work, cognitive, emotional, embodied, and often collective, reveals the temporal extension of marketplace racism beyond discrete encounters. Harm does not end at the store's exit but reverberates through memory, emotion, and anticipatory anxiety.

Importantly, the knowledge produced through post-space reflection directly informs pre-space preparation. Having examined how Black women process and recover from racialised consumer experiences, the analysis now turns to the anticipatory phase, how participants mobilise post-space lessons to prepare for future marketplace encounters, making strategic decisions about when, where, and how to enter potentially hostile consumer spaces. Pre-space, as the next chapter reveals, is not merely practical preparation but represents the recursive loop through which systemic racism structures Black women's consumer consciousness across time.

The recursive nature of this cycle is evident in how participants' post-space reflections directly inform pre-space preparations. Firstly, Bontle's coffee shop experience (5.4.2) led her to avoid that location in future pre-space planning. Secondly, Zoe's Primark boycott (5.4.4) transformed post-space anger into a pre-space avoidance strategy. Lastly, Tinashe's receipt-keeping practice (5.3.4) emerged from post-space processing and became part of the pre-space routine. This demonstrates that a Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle operates not as three discrete stages but as a continuous feedback loop where knowledge gained in one stage shapes behaviour in others.

While this research documents extensive racialised harm, participants also recounted instances of positive service, welcoming spaces, and respectful treatment. These counter-narratives are analytically significant, as they illuminate important nuances in how marketplace racism operates rather than undermining its presence.

When participants spoke about positive encounters, they consistently framed them as exceptions rather than expectations. As Natasha reflected: *"And also, because it is so rare to get the goodness, when you do... it should be normal. But because you rarely get it, it now feels like, 'Oh my gosh! You went out of your way when really, it should be normal.'"* The fact that basic courtesy is experienced as remarkable underscores how deeply normalised poor treatment has become.

Similarly, Precious described positive interactions as "few and far between," often leaving her uncertain whether she was being overly self-conscious or whether the service was genuinely good. This lingering doubt, the inability to fully trust even positive treatment, reveals the enduring effects of pervasive racism, which produce scepticism rather than reassurance.

These variations suggest that marketplace racism is not uniform but shaped by organisational culture, staff composition, and spatial conditions. Such contextual differences do not contradict the core findings of this research; instead, they demonstrate that meaningful change is possible when structural conditions are altered.

This research does not suggest that Black women's marketplace experiences are uniformly negative or that racism manifests identically across all contexts. Rather, it argues that racism is structural, pervasive, and patterned to such an extent that even positive encounters are interpreted through its lens. The temporal navigation cycle persists not because every shopping experience involves overt discrimination, but because the *possibility* of discrimination necessitates constant vigilance. Even when anticipated harm does not materialise, the preparatory labour has already been undertaken, alertness has been sustained, and the emotional cost has already been incurred.

As the dissertation moves to its concluding chapter, it will synthesise these findings with the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches outlined in earlier chapters, articulating the broader implications of this research for consumer scholarship, policy, and practice. The concluding chapter will also return to the central research question: *How do structural racism and intersectional identity shape the experiences of Black women in consumer spaces?*

5.5. Conclusion

A central methodological challenge in researching marketplace discrimination is distinguishing racialised harm from poor service or interpersonal friction. This research addresses that challenge through three interlocking analytical strategies: pattern recognition, comparative observation, and embodied knowledge.

First, the analysis foregrounds pattern recognition. While isolated instances of poor service affect all consumers, racial discrimination is revealed through repetition and consistency. Participants described recurring experiences in which the same Black woman encountered differential treatment across multiple stores, multiple Black women reported similar treatment within the same retail spaces, and these dynamics persisted across time and location. As participants repeatedly noted, "*this keeps happening,*" "*it is always the same,*" and "*I can predict it before it occurs.*" Such patterned repetition distinguishes racialised exclusion from random or situational service failures.

Second, the research draws on comparative observation. Participants consistently reported witnessing white customers receive markedly different treatment under identical circumstances. Naledi's account, where "*white tourists going into these stores in casual outfits*" *received the service she felt compelled to "dress up"* to access, illustrates how racial differentiation operates in practice. These comparisons provide empirical grounding for identifying racial bias rather than attributing experiences to poor service in general.

Third, the analysis centres embodied knowledge as a form of interpretive expertise. Through repeated exposure to racial microaggressions, Black women develop a sophisticated capacity to read subtle racial cues. Participants' references to "*gut feelings*" reflect not paranoia but accumulated experiential knowledge. As Tinashe explained, "*If something makes you think twice, if it does not feel straightforward... that is when I feel it is a microaggression.*" The constant labour of questioning "was that racial?" itself signals the pervasiveness of racialised harm within consumer spaces.

In taking Black women's experiential knowledge as authoritative (Collins, 2000), this research also recognises that contemporary racism operates through ambiguity and deniability (Sue et al., 2007). The analytical focus, therefore, shifts away from determining whether any single incident was definitively "racial," an epistemologically untenable standard given the subtlety of modern racism, and toward understanding what accumulated experiences reveal about how marketplace racism functions and the consequences of sustained uncertainty.

Building on this methodological foundation, the chapter demonstrates that Black women's consumer experiences cannot be understood solely from isolated moments of marketplace interaction. By tracing consumption across pre-, in-, and post-space, the analysis reveals a cyclical, recursive process in which anticipation, encounter, and reflection are continuously entangled. Consumer spaces emerge not as neutral sites of exchange, but as racialised, gendered, and affectively charged terrains that demand sustained cognitive, emotional, and bodily labour from Black women to participate.

In pre-space, participants described extensive anticipatory labour involving identity management, emotional regulation, and safety planning before entering consumer spaces. These practices demonstrate that exclusion often begins before physical entry, as Black women draw on embodied knowledge from prior encounters to prepare for potential harm. Pre-space is therefore not merely preparatory, but constitutive of the consumption experience itself, shaping where, when, and how Black women engage with the marketplace.

In-space experiences reveal how these anticipatory strategies are enacted and tested in real time. Under conditions of surveillance, racialised suspicion, and conditional inclusion, Black women must continually perform respectability, regulate emotion, and manage safety while navigating spaces that render them hyper-visible as potential threats yet invisible as legitimate consumers. These findings extend existing scholarship by showing that racial profiling is not episodic or exceptional but embedded within the spatial organisation and everyday practices of consumption.

Crucially, the chapter advances consumer research by theorising post-space as a distinct and necessary analytical phase. Post-space captures the emotional processing, identity reflection, and recovery work that occur after leaving consumer spaces. Rather than marking the end of consumption, post-space functions as a site where experiences are interpreted, meanings consolidated, and future strategies

recalibrated. Emotions such as suspicion, distrust, and exhaustion do not dissipate upon exit; instead, they linger, accumulate, and attach to bodies, shaping future orientations toward consumer spaces.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate the recursive nature of racialised consumption. Reflections formed in post-space directly inform anticipatory labour in pre-space for subsequent encounters, producing an ongoing cycle of preparation, negotiation, and adaptation. By foregrounding this temporal and affective continuity, the research adds depth to scholarship on marketplace discrimination (Crockett, 2017; Gabbidon, 2003; Henderson and Williams, 2013) and challenges frameworks that treat racialised harm as discrete or isolated events.

Throughout the analysis presented in this chapter, the researcher's positionality as a Black woman is not treated as a background condition but as an active analytical resource. The interpretations offered are informed not only by theoretical frameworks but also by an embodied familiarity with the dynamics described by participants. This familiarity carries both responsibilities and advantages: the researcher must hold her own experiential knowledge in accountable relation to participants' accounts, ensuring that what is recognised does not substitute for what participants are actually articulating, and that a shared social location does not obscure important differences in individual histories, migratory experiences, and coping strategies. The analysis is thus the product of an ongoing negotiation.

It does not claim objectivity, as objectivity understood as a view from nowhere would be epistemologically dishonest about the conditions under which this knowledge was produced. Instead, it claims accountability: to the participants who entrusted their experiences to the inquiry, to the theoretical frameworks that shape the analytical lens, and to the standpoint from which that lens is necessarily held.

Ultimately, the chapter shows that Black women's consumer experiences are structured across time as much as space. Pre-space anticipation, in-space navigation, and post-space reflection operate as interdependent phases through which racialised power is both reproduced and resisted in everyday consumption. Recognising this cyclical process is essential for understanding the full extent of the labour demanded of Black women in the marketplace and for reimagining consumer spaces not as momentary sites of interaction, but as enduring conditions that shape identity, emotion, and belonging over time.

Chapter 6: Contributions

6.1. Introduction

This dissertation began with a seemingly straightforward empirical question: how do Black women navigate consumer spaces in Scotland? As the research progressed, however, it became evident that answering this question required more than documenting individual experiences. Instead, it demanded a bigger understanding of how consumer research understands race, space, time, and knowledge production. The findings presented in Chapter 5 showed that Black women's marketplace participation cannot be adequately explained through conventional frameworks that treat consumption as a series of discrete transactions, discrimination as isolated events, or consumer agency as freely exercised choice. Rather, the data revealed racialised consumption as a recursive and temporally extended process in which anticipation, encounter, and reflection continuously shape one another. This dynamic is conceptualised in this dissertation as the *Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle*.

This chapter advances three interconnected contributions to consumer research. First, it introduces the Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle as a temporal-spatial framework that addresses a critical blind spot in existing scholarship. By viewing marketplace discrimination as continuous rather than episodic, the framework demonstrates how Black women's consumer experiences are shaped not only by current encounters but also by accumulated past experiences and anticipated future interactions. It shows that understanding discrimination requires attention to the extensive work performed before entering consumer spaces and the ongoing processing that follows exit, rather than focusing solely on in-store interactions.

Second, the chapter expands on the forms of racialised emotional labour, showing how these practices are simultaneously racialised and gendered and how they are unevenly distributed across the different temporal stages of consumer engagement. By tracing emotional labour across pre-space preparation, in-space performance, and post-space processing, the findings reveal how consumer participation entails sustained emotional, cognitive, and bodily work that remains largely invisible within dominant consumer research frameworks.

Third, the chapter highlights methodological contributions, demonstrating how operationalising Black feminist epistemology enhances both the depth and authenticity of the research process. Through strategic identity framing and reflexive engagement with researcher positionality, the research creates conditions for participants to articulate experiences that are often minimised, fragmented, or rendered unspeakable within conventional research designs. Together, these contributions extend existing understandings of consumption, power, and inequality, offering a more nuanced account of how racialised consumer experiences are produced, navigated, and sustained over time.

6.2. Contribution 1: The Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle - A Temporal-Spatial Framework

6.2.1. Beyond "Shopping While Black": Theorising Temporal Dimensions of Marketplace Racism

The Race in the Marketplace (RIM) scholarship has established a substantive body of evidence documenting the discriminatory experiences Black consumers face in retail spaces. Research on "shopping while Black" (Pittman, 2020; Schreer et al., 2009; Gabbidon and Higgins, 2020), security profiling (Bennett et al., 2014), and differential service treatment (Crockett, 2017) has made visible the persistent racialised violence embedded in consumer spaces. However, despite these critical interventions, the field remains constrained by showing marketplace racism as isolated, episodic encounters contained within the boundaries of the service interaction itself.

This obscures the structural continuity of anti-Black marketplace violence. By framing discrimination as discrete incidents, a security guard's surveillance here, a cashier's rudeness there, existing scholarship inadvertently fragments what is fundamentally a continuous, cumulative process of racialised harm. As Pittman Claytor (2019) observes, "existing literature on Black people... relies on antiquated or oversimplified notions of racial difference... more research is needed to advance a nuanced account of Black consumers' marketplace experiences" (p. 154). What remains undertheorised is how marketplace racism extends beyond the moment of commercial transaction to colonise the temporal horizons before and after the encounter: the anticipatory labour of pre-shopping strategising, the affective residue that lingers long after leaving the store, and the accumulated weight of navigating spaces perpetually organised around one's exclusion.

This contribution addresses this theoretical gap by proposing the Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle, a temporal-spatial framework that conceptualises marketplace racism not as a series of disconnected discriminatory events, but as an ongoing, cyclical process that structures Black women's entire relationship to consumer spaces. Moving beyond the spatially and temporally bounded "shopping while Black" paradigm, this framework shows how racialised marketplace harm operates across three interconnected temporal phases: anticipatory preparation, embodied negotiation during the encounter, and post-encounter processing. In doing so, it reveals marketplace racism as a totalizing system that demands constant vigilance, extracts continuous emotional and cognitive labour, and fundamentally shapes how Black women experience commercial participation, not merely as consumers making choices, but as racialised subjects managing the perpetual threat of violence embedded in everyday acts of consumption.

This research extends scholarship by analysing how Black women navigate consumer spaces structured around what Anderson (2015) terms "white space", environments organised through white normativity where Black presence becomes marked as exceptional, hypervisible, or suspect. While Anderson establishes the spatial dimensions of racial exclusion, this dissertation reveals that navigating such

spaces demands substantial invisible labour occurring before, during, and after marketplace encounters. This temporal dimension of racialised marketplace navigation represents a significant extension of existing RIM literature.

To deepen this spatial-temporal analysis, the dissertation integrates Kwan's (2010) concept of body consciousness, which theorises body management as a form of self-surveillance that intensifies for marginalised groups denied bodily privilege in public spaces. Where previous scholarship has treated body consciousness primarily as abstract spatial awareness, this research demonstrates how it operates as a deliberate, ongoing practice embedded within Black women's marketplace experiences. Across participant accounts, body consciousness manifests through heightened attentiveness to bodily movement, appearance, and spatial positioning, functioning as a protective strategy against anticipated surveillance, judgment, and potential exclusion.

This empirical grounding of body consciousness reveals how navigating consumer spaces requires Black women to engage in continuous embodied vigilance, constantly monitoring and managing their bodies in relation to both physical spaces and social encounters. By documenting this labour as simultaneously spatial, temporal, and embodied, the dissertation contributes to RIM scholarship by offering a more comprehensive understanding of how intersectional oppression operates within marketplace contexts and of the substantial yet often invisible work required to negotiate racialised and gendered consumer identities.

By bringing this framework into the consumer context, the present research shows how Black women similarly become symbolically loaded yet voiceless within consumer spaces: expected to embody diversity yet denied dignity; visually instrumentalised yet socially excluded; present yet not fully recognised as legitimate consumers. The findings reveal that across pre-space anticipatory labour, in-space identity, emotional and safety work, and post-space recovery and sense-making, Black women navigate what is termed *the Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle*, a recursive system in which the emotional and cognitive labour of one encounter becomes the preparatory labour for the next. In doing so, this research highlights how marketplace participation is shaped not only by interpersonal discrimination but by the branding and symbolic construction of space itself, which can either reproduce or resist racial hierarchies.

The Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle is a framework that operationalises CRT's principle of racism's permanence (Bell, 1992) by showing how racial harm is not confined to discrete incidents but constitutes an ongoing process distributed across three temporal stages, **Pre-Space** (anticipatory preparation), **In-Space** (active navigation and performance), and **Post-Space** (Reflection, Processing, and Recovery), and three dimensions of experience, identity, emotions, and safety. Each stage informs

the others recursively: post-space processing generates knowledge that shapes pre-space preparation, which influences in-space navigation, which creates new material for post-space reflection.

Understanding why these temporal patterns exist requires examining the spatial structures that produce them. Consumer spaces operate as white spaces (Anderson, 2015; McKittrick, 2006), spaces designed with white bodies, white needs, and white normativity as default, where Black presence is marked as exceptional, suspicious, or out of place. This spatial organisation necessitates the temporal navigation documented throughout this research. Black women must engage in anticipatory labour because consumer spaces are structured around whiteness; they must perform legitimacy because racialising surveillance positions Blackness as suspicious; they experience cumulative fatigue because navigating white spatial imaginaries requires sustained labour across time. The integration of spatial and temporal analyses reveals that the temporal navigation cycle is not merely a response to individual prejudice but a necessary adaptation to consumer spaces structurally organised to privilege whiteness and police Blackness.

6.2.2. Consumer Spaces as White Spaces

The structural production of temporal navigation involves three interconnected spatial mechanisms: architectural whiteness, surveillance as a form of spatial control, and conditional belonging. Instead of analyzing these theorists in isolation, it is more effective to demonstrate how Anderson's (2015) concept of "white space," McKittrick's (2006) theory of "space as race," Lipsitz's (2007) idea of the "white spatial imaginary," and Browne's (2015) notion of "racializing surveillance" collectively shed light on the reasons why Black women must engage in the temporal labour discussed in this research.

Consumer spaces are overwhelmingly designed with white consumers as the imagined default customer. Anderson (2015, p. 10) defines white spaces as settings "where Black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalised when present," arguing that in such spaces, Black presence itself constitutes disruption requiring explanation or justification. McKittrick (2006, p. x) extends this by demonstrating how spatial organisation actively produces racial hierarchies: "where we are located indicates, and makes meaningful, who we can become. Space and place give Blackness meaning." Lipsitz (2007) theorises the "white spatial imaginary" as "a perception of minority presence in public space as disturbing and dangerous" combined with "a positive view of predominantly white spaces as safe, secure, and valuable" (p. 24).

While Anderson, McKittrick, and Lipsitz theorise spatial racism in educational, residential, and public contexts, this research reveals the specific consumer mechanisms through which architectural whiteness operates and necessitates temporal navigation. Consumer spaces materialise racial hierarchies through seemingly neutral design choices: the segregation of Black hair care and beauty products into

marginalised "ethnic aisles" communicates who constitutes "primary" versus "secondary" consumers, functioning as retail redlining (D'Rosario and Williams, 2005); the placement of "security guards" in budget stores frequented by Black shoppers versus minimal visible security in upscale retailers signals differential threat perception (Tinashe's observation); limited shade ranges in beauty products and the absence of diverse representation signal that Black consumers do not fit the "projected consumer image" (Grace's reflection); and staff training emphasising theft prevention over customer care disproportionately targets Black shoppers.

Building on Browne's (2015) concept of "racialising surveillance", this research documents how consumer surveillance operates as racialised spatial control through differential monitoring intensity (Black women followed and watched while browsing), discretionary interpretation (staff exercising informal gatekeeping power deciding whom to monitor and assist), receipt verification as surveillance ritual (transforming mundane documentation into racialised proof of innocence, as Natasha's "ticket to life" showed). This dual function renders Black bodies suspect while erasing their consumer needs, extending Roscigno et al.'s (2009) employment framework on gatekeeper discretion to consumer contexts.

Critically, all three spatial theorists demonstrate that whiteness operates through conditional inclusion rather than complete exclusion. This dissertation's contribution reveals how this conditional inclusion necessitates the temporal navigation patterns documented throughout this research: Black women cannot simply enter stores and shop but must anticipate which spaces will be hostile (pre-space consciousness shaped by spatial racism), perform legitimacy continuously through regulated behaviour, speech, and appearance (in-space labour demanded by surveillance), and process the exhaustion and harm of conditional access (post-space recovery from spatial exclusion). These spatial structures do not merely create hostile moments; they produce ongoing temporal cycles of preparation, performance, and processing, revealing a dialectical relationship where spatial structures determine how racialised bodies must navigate, while accumulated temporal experiences refine understanding of spatial racism.

These theoretical insights about white spatial organisation materialise clearly in participants' everyday experiences. Product segregation was evident in Grace's difficulty finding foundation shades that matched her skin tone (5.3.2) and in Tendai's need to travel to Glasgow city centre to access the only African-owned store with suitable hair products (5.3.2). Participants repeatedly noted that "ethnic aisles" were marginal, limited, and segregated rather than integrated throughout the store, signalling who is centred and who is peripheral in retail design. Surveillance architecture further reinforced these dynamics: Tinashe contrasted the "armed-looking security guards" in budget retailers such as Aldi with the minimal security presence in Waitrose (5.3.4), while others described cameras and mirrors

disproportionately positioned in aisles where Black consumers browsed, reflecting profiling practices based on racial demographics rather than behaviour.

Aesthetic exclusion also shaped participants' encounters. Jane emphasised that most UK salons are owned and staffed by white workers with little knowledge of Black hair, often leading to outright refusal of service (5.3.2), and Grace described growing up without representation in retail spaces, developing a "deficit model" of herself as a result (5.3.2). Store aesthetics, staffing, and marketing imagery consistently communicated that white consumers were the primary audience. These dynamics extended to differential service norms: Naledi observed that white tourists in casual clothing received the same level of service that she could only access by "dressing up" (5.2.2), while Thando described staff being "courteous and kind to older white women" but abrupt with her. Participants also noted that staff training prioritised theft prevention over customer care in ways that disproportionately targeted Black shoppers. Together, these spatial, aesthetic, and behavioural patterns show that retail spaces are not neutral but actively produce racial meaning, exemplifying McKittrick's (2006) argument that space functions as a material dimension of racial hierarchy rather than merely reflecting it.

6.2.3. The Three-Stage Temporal Cycle: Pre-Space, In-Space, Post-Space

The temporal navigation model integrates three dimensions that Black women must simultaneously navigate across all stages: **identity** (managing how Blackness is perceived and maintaining self-concept under misrecognition), **emotions** (regulating feelings of anger, fear, shame, exhaustion), and **safety** (assessing and mitigating physical and psychological threats). Building on Pittman Claytor's (2019) call for research that situates Black consumer experiences within the historical and contemporary contexts of racism, this model theorises racial harm as cumulative and cyclical rather than episodic.

Each consumer encounter leaves participants with memories, bodily sensations, and learned expectations that shape subsequent marketplace interactions, extending Essed's (1991) theorisation of everyday racism as routine and predictable by demonstrating how the predictability of discrimination generates sustained forms of labour across temporal stages.

In the pre-space stage, Black women engage in anticipatory labour, cognitive, emotional, and performative work carried out before entering a store. This includes strategic presentation, such as choosing "respectable" clothing, styling hair professionally, and using visible markers of consumption to counter assumptions about legitimacy. They also undertake emotional preparation, rehearsing possible microaggressions and readying themselves for surveillance. Participants described this preparation as necessary rather than optional, as inadequate preparation heightens vulnerability to discriminatory treatment.

Once inside consumer spaces, anticipatory labour becomes active navigation. Black women perform hypervigilance by monitoring their bodies, scanning the space, and reading social cues. They simultaneously manage identity through code-switching, moderating emotional expression, and adjusting comportment to counter stereotypes. Interpretive labour is required to discern whether ambiguous encounters are microaggressions. In contrast, safety labour involves deciding whether to speak up, when to disengage, and how to document incidents, such as retaining receipts. This complex labour unfolds alongside basic shopping tasks, revealing how racialised consumer spaces demand constant cognitive and emotional work.

In the post-space stage, women engage in recovery and sense-making. They process emotions such as anger or exhaustion, replay interactions to interpret them, and validate their experiences amid potential minimisations. They also plan for future encounters by deciding which spaces to avoid and refining strategies for managing racialised scrutiny. Participants emphasised that this phase is rarely restorative; post-space labour quickly becomes new pre-space labour, creating an ongoing cycle of vigilance. Across all stages, these cumulative forms of labour impose emotional costs, including frustration, resentment, and grief for the ease and spontaneity that others can take for granted.

The Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle shows how each stage of the process continually feeds into the next: post-space reflection produces knowledge that shapes pre-space preparation, which, in turn, influences in-space navigation and generates new experiences that require further post-space processing. Zoe's case makes this dynamic especially clear. A single discriminatory encounter triggers a sustained loop of anticipatory anxiety, revised safety strategies, and enduring emotional strain. Her post-space meaning-making directly informs her next pre-space approach, demonstrating the cycle's recursive structure. When such encounters accumulate over months and years, the toll becomes significant, contributing to chronic racial fatigue and shaping long-term patterns of consumer behaviour.

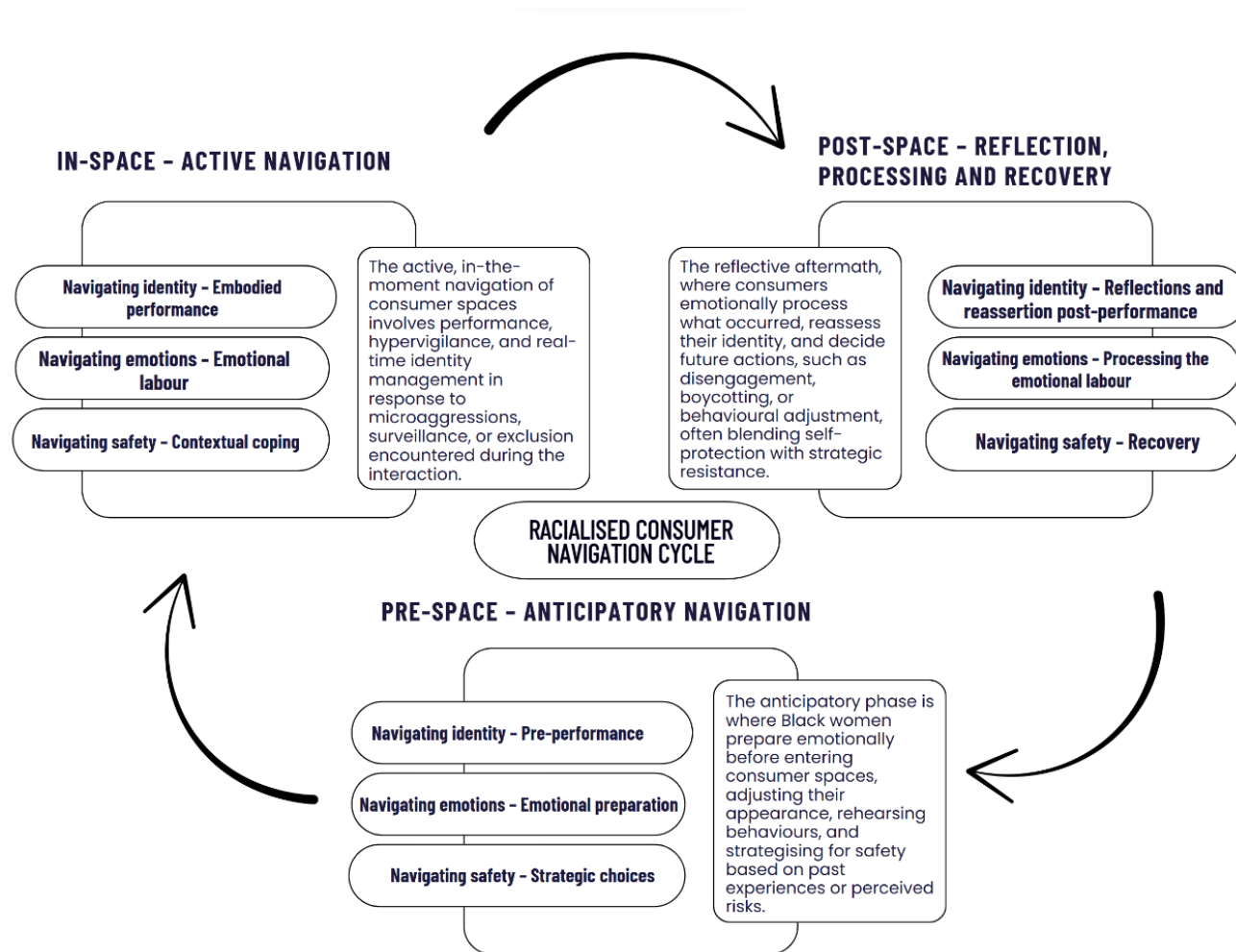


Figure 4: Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle

Pre-Space Navigation - Anticipatory Labour Before Entry

Existing RIM scholarship on "shopping while Black" (Pittman, 2020; Crockett, 2017; Gabbidon and Higgins, 2020) focuses primarily on in-store encounters, documenting what happens during discriminatory incidents but largely overlooking the substantial invisible labour Black women perform *before* entering consumer spaces.

The contribution includes theorising **anticipatory labour** as the cognitive, emotional, and embodied work performed before entering the marketplace to manage predicted racialised harm. This concept advances existing frameworks by illustrating how identity management, emotional regulation, and safety planning occur *before* marketplace interaction. First, extending Crockett's (2017) work on respectability politics, anticipatory labour highlights the temporal dimension of respectability performances: Black women engage in pre-emptive strategies such as clothing management to appear respectable, spatial and temporal planning to minimise exposure to surveillance and hostility, and bringing companions as protective witnesses. These practices demonstrate that respectability work begins well before consumers enter commercial spaces.

Second, building on Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour, this research shows that Black women, unlike workers performing emotions for customers, must regulate their feelings to access service. They manage anticipatory anxiety, fear, and anger to avoid negative stereotyping and brace for potential microaggressions, an emotional burden that accumulates across everyday consumer activities and produces racial fatigue.

Third, extending Anderson's (2015) concept of white space consciousness, anticipatory labour reveals how Black consumers assess risks before entering white-dominated spaces, leading to spatial avoidance, temporal strategising, exit planning, and even digital displacement through online shopping. Together, these insights demonstrate that consumer decision-making, often framed as rational choice among equal options, is profoundly shaped by racialised spatial hierarchies that render some "choices" psychologically or physically unsafe, challenging neoliberal assumptions about consumer freedom and agency.

In-Space Navigation - Performing Legitimacy Under Surveillance

While pre-space involves anticipatory preparation, in-space navigation reveals the actual labour of managing surveillance, proving legitimacy, and regulating emotions in real-time within hostile consumer spaces.

The contribution theorises **safety labour** as the emotional, cognitive, and physical work Black women must perform to assess, navigate, and manage racialised harm during consumer encounters, thereby

extending current understandings of surveillance, service, and legitimacy in the marketplace. Building on Roscigno et al.'s (2009) concepts of "gatekeeper discretion" and "minority vulnerability" developed in employment contexts, this research demonstrates how frontline service workers function as consumer space gatekeepers who determine whether Black women are legitimate customers or suspect bodies requiring surveillance. Roscigno et al. analysed how workplace authority figures exercise discretionary power that creates and maintains racial inequalities in employment through hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and disciplinary actions. This research extends Roscigno et al.'s (2009) gatekeeper framework from formal workplace authority to informal discretionary power in consumer spaces. Where Roscigno et al. (2009) focused on explicit organisational authority, the findings demonstrate that frontline service workers and security personnel wield significant power through informal discretion, the ability to decide whom to monitor, assist, question, or treat with suspicion.

Black women described how service workers and security guards exercised gatekeeping power through differential surveillance, selective service, legitimacy questioning, and spatial control. This research advances RIM scholarship by theorising *discretionary surveillance* as a key mechanism through which marketplace actors reproduce racial hierarchies. Unlike overt discrimination, discretionary surveillance operates subtly, through glances, body language, spatial positioning, and uneven attention. These individually deniable micro-practices accumulate to produce what Pittman (2020) defines as *retail racism*. By revealing how gatekeeper discretion functions within consumer contexts, this research demonstrates that marketplace marginalisation arises as much from the informal, moment-to-moment judgments of frontline workers as from formal institutional policies. Extending Pittman's (2020) analysis, it identifies the specific mechanism at play: gatekeepers' discretionary surveillance renders Blackness itself evidence of potential criminality or illegitimacy.

Extending Browne's (2015) racialising surveillance framework, the data reveal the **surveillance–service paradox**, in which Black women are hypervisible to security, followed, watched, and suspected, yet simultaneously invisible to service staff who ignore or overlook them. This paradox highlights surveillance's dual function: constructing Blackness as a threat while erasing Black consumers as legitimate recipients of care. Further, by expanding Crockett's (2017) theorisation of respectability and Pittman's (2020) work on retail racism, this research identifies the micro-level bodily practices through which legitimacy must be continuously performed, including hypervisible compliance, temporal self-limitation, treating receipts as proof of innocence, practising excessive politeness, and carefully managing bodily movements. These practices show that legitimacy is neither granted nor stable for Black consumers but must be arduously earned and remains vulnerable to discretionary rejection.

Finally, drawing on Hochschild's (1983) emotional labour framework and Collins' (2000) analysis of controlling images, the findings show how emotional labour under surveillance is both more intensive and more consequential than in conventional service contexts: Black women must manage anger to

avoid confirming racist stereotypes, regulate facial expressions to appear non-threatening, process shame and self-doubt, and navigate the psychological toll of being treated as a suspect. Unlike service workers who can end their emotional performance at the close of a shift, Black consumers carry this labour into everyday leisure activities, where a failure to regulate emotions risks not only poor service but escalation to police contact or physical danger.

Overall, in-space navigation demonstrates that safety labour operates through constant embodied vigilance and constraint, revealing that marketplace marginalisation is driven not only by institutional policies but also by the informal, moment-to-moment discretionary surveillance that renders Blackness itself evidence of potential criminality.

Post-Space Navigation - Processing, Recovery, and Future Preparation

While existing RIM research focuses on immediate responses to discrimination (Harris et al., 2005; Pittman Claytor, 2019; Pittman, 2017), the post-space stage reveals how reflection, emotional processing, and strategic planning shape future marketplace participation. Far from being merely an endpoint, post-space represents a bridge between past experiences and future preparations, completing the recursive cycle.

This contribution conceptualises the **post-space stage** as a critical site of knowledge production in which Black women process, interpret, and respond to marketplace harm, transforming experiences of discrimination into navigation strategies for the future. While previous RIM research emphasises immediate reactions to discriminatory encounters, the post-space stage reveals how reflection, emotional recovery, and strategic planning bridge past experiences with future preparations. Extending Essed's (1991) theorisation of everyday racism and Pérez's (2019) insights on epistemic violence, this research shows that post-space is where microaggressions are often recognised only in retrospect, where naming becomes a form of knowledge creation, and where ambiguity and self-doubt are negotiated through community validation.

Building on Hochschild's (1983) emotional labour framework and Winters' (2020) concept of Black fatigue, this research demonstrates that emotional labour can lead to sustained exhaustion, negatively impacting overall well-being. Participants often replay incidents, seek collective support, and experience cumulative fatigue from repeated cycles of vigilance, performance, and recovery.

Furthermore, by extending Crockett's (2017) work on constrained agency and Varman and Vikas's (2007) notion of market unfreedom, the research shows that "post-space" is where consumers develop adaptive strategies such as spatial and temporal avoidance, boycotts, digital displacement, and

collective resistance. However, these strategies reveal a paradox: agency is exercised within the confines of structural constraints.

Collectively, these insights challenge dominant consumer meaning-making theories (Goor et al., 2024) by revealing that interpretation and meaning occur not only during consumption but after it. Post-space thus completes the recursive cycle of racialised marketplace navigation, illustrating the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992) and showing how post-space processing directly shapes pre-space preparation and ongoing consumer life.

6.2.4. Conclusion

The **Racialised Consumer Navigation Cycle** offers a structural critique of marketplace inequality by demonstrating how racism operates across interconnected temporal stages. First, it extends understandings of racialised harm by showing that discrimination is not confined to isolated incidents but unfolds through continuous cycles of anticipation, in-space performance, post-space processing, and future preparation. Second, it reveals the multiplication of labour required from Black women, who must engage in distinct forms of uncompensated work, including anticipatory, safety, aesthetic, and affective labour, to participate in consumer spaces. Third, the cycle highlights post-space as a site of knowledge production, where harm is interpreted and transformed into survival strategies through accumulated experience. Fourth, it exposes the limits of consumer agency: strategic navigation reflects adaptation to structural inequality rather than evidence of genuine marketplace freedom. Together, these insights challenge assumptions that markets are neutral or apolitical, showing instead that consumer spaces materialise racial hierarchies through design, policy, and everyday interaction. Surveillance technologies operate less as protective tools than as mechanisms of racial control, and the burden of “performed legitimacy” required of Black consumers. In contrast, white consumers enjoy presumed legitimacy, which imposes high emotional and psychological costs even when such performances appear successful.

Meaningful inclusion, therefore, cannot be achieved through diversity marketing or surface-level representation; it requires structural intervention, including redesigning spatial organisation (such as eliminating segregated ethnic aisles), reforming surveillance practices, retraining staff to deliver equitable service, and establishing robust accountability mechanisms. Ultimately, the cycle demonstrates that notions of consumer choice must be reconsidered: when racism is systemic, choices cannot be understood as free.

6.3. Contribution 2: Methodological Contribution - Operationalising Black Feminist

Epistemology

This research was not conducted *about* Black women in the marketplace. It was conducted *from within* that community, by a Black woman researcher whose own embodied history of consumer spaces was not bracketed out of the inquiry but drawn into it as a methodological resource. This distinction is not merely biographical; it is epistemological, and it does real theoretical work. The second contribution of this dissertation is therefore not simply that Black feminist epistemology was *applied* to consumer research, as though it were an instrument selected from a shelf of available options, but that it was inhabited and enacted at every stage of the research process. The methodological choices made throughout this study were not neutral technical decisions; they were ethical and political acts, each one either reproducing or resisting the epistemological hierarchies that have historically governed who counts as a knower in consumer scholarship.

Building on critical consumer research that has increasingly challenged extractive and reductionist methodological traditions (Crockett et al., 2011; Grier and Poole, 2020), this contribution responds to calls for more reflexive, ethical, and culturally grounded approaches to researching marginalised consumers. It unfolds across two interconnected dimensions. The first centres on the strategic foregrounding of shared racial and gender identity in research design, demonstrating how this alignment can expose and disrupt the reductionist logics embedded in consumer encounters. The second shows the practical application of Black feminist epistemology in generating data that honours participants' experiential knowledge as theoretically generative rather than supplementary. Together, these dimensions offer consumer scholarship a template that is analytically rigorous precisely because it is ethically grounded.

6.3.1. Methodological Resistance Through Foregrounding Race

Scholars have increasingly called for consumer research to move beyond extractive methodologies that treat marginalised consumers as data sources to be mined, filtered, or evaluated through dominant epistemic frameworks (Crockett et al., 2011; Grier and Poole, 2020; Sobande, 2020). Yet operationalising alternative epistemologies in the grain of actual fieldwork practice, in the specific texture of a research encounter, remains underexplored. This research responds by embedding Black feminist principles of positionality, reciprocity, and experiential authority into the research design itself (Collins, 2000), not as a prefatory acknowledgement but as a live methodological commitment.

Black feminist epistemology asserts that knowledge is situated, relational, and grounded in lived experience, and that the experiential knowledge of marginalised groups carries distinct epistemic authority (Collins, 2000). Crucially, it holds that the researcher's own social location is not a contamination of the research process but a constitutive part of it. The researcher's identity as a Black

woman shaped this inquiry from its inception. The questions asked, the silences recognised, and the moments of unspoken understanding between researcher and participants were not incidental to the data generated; they were the conditions of its generation. The researcher entered each interview carrying an embodied knowledge of the marketplace as a racialised space: the hypervisibility, the surveillance, the calibrated self-presentation, the quiet calculations that precede entering certain stores. This knowledge informed how participants were listened to, what was heard, and what was understood without requiring explicit articulation. Such understanding was not supplementary to the analytical work; it was constitutive of it.

This dynamic was made visible by participants themselves. Bontle reflected:

The fact that the conversation was conducted between two Black women made me feel like I did not have to double-speak or over-explain myself. I could express my thoughts honestly without worrying about offending anyone or censoring myself. This means that now you have an authentic view of my experiences.

Her reflection is not simply an endorsement of the methodology. It is a diagnosis of what is ordinarily lost, systematically and invisibly lost, when marginalised participants must expend cognitive and emotional labour translating their racialised experiences into forms that will not alarm, confuse, or burden a researcher positioned outside their community. The phrase *double-speak* names the exhausting, ongoing negotiation between what one knows and what one is permitted to say, a negotiation that Black women conduct not only in consumer spaces but also in research spaces. That Bontle did not need to engage in that negotiation was not a fortunate byproduct of the research design. It *was* the research design. The political decision to foreground the researcher's identity as a Black woman, rather than assume a position of studied neutrality, was precisely what created the conditions for undiluted testimony.

However, insider positionality is not epistemologically straightforward, and this contribution is candid about its complexity. The intimacy that enables authentic disclosure can simultaneously produce moments in which the researcher's embodied knowledge functions as an invisible interpretive filter, in which the researcher's experience risks speaking in the space where the participant's experience should be heard. There were moments in the interviews when a participant's account closely mirrored the researcher's consumer experiences, creating a pull toward completion: the temptation to supply an interpretive ending already known through lived experience rather than recovered through the participant's own framing. Navigating this required a deliberate, ongoing methodological discipline, redirecting each conversation back to the participant's account whenever the researcher's own experiential knowledge threatened to do the interpretive work.

This is not a risk to be acknowledged and then set aside. It is a constitutive feature of insider research that demands active, sustained management. Reflexivity, here, was not a methodological stage completed before fieldwork began; it was a continuous practice, sometimes disruptive, that had to be maintained across every interview and every moment of analysis. Critically, this was not the positivist discipline of bracketing the self out of the research process. It was the Black feminist discipline of holding the self accountable, present but not dominant, epistemically available but not overriding. This distinction matters: where positivist reflexivity seeks to minimise the researcher's influence on data, Black feminist reflexivity seeks to make that influence visible, accountable, and analytically productive.

Integrating Black feminist epistemology into consumer research is therefore not only a methodological choice but a corrective intervention into wider structures of epistemic injustice. Hutton and Cappellini (2022) have demonstrated how dominant Western epistemologies, particularly positivist and universalist traditions, systematically marginalise other ways of knowing within consumer scholarship. This dissertation aligns with the epistemic justice approach they call for: by valuing participants' experiential accounts as theoretically generative rather than supplementary, and by embracing a methodology grounded in shared identity, co-produced meaning, and embodied dialogue, it resists the hierarchical knowledge structures that have historically positioned Black women as objects of research rather than as knowers within it.

Tinashe gave precise articulation to this methodological orientation:

You are asking people who identify with these specific identities. You are not speculating and saying, 'Oh, this is what Black women want. They should be happy we have one darker shade.' Instead, you are getting insights from those with real experience... At the end of the day, no one can understand the experiences, wants, and needs of a person with a specific identity better than they can. I cannot assume to know the experiences of a white woman, just as no one else can fully grasp mine.

Her words cut to the ethical core of the contribution. Knowledge produced *with* marginalised communities carries an authority and a texture that cannot be replicated by knowledge produced *about* them. The researcher's positionality as a Black woman did not merely facilitate access to this knowledge; it constituted the conditions under which such knowledge could be honestly produced. The absence of the translation burden Bontle named, the moments of knowing that passed between researcher and participants without requiring verbal elaboration, the way participants moved fluidly between "I" and "we" as though the boundary between individual and collective experience was porous, these were not supplementary features of the fieldwork. They were epistemological events, evidence that the methodology was functioning as theorised.

This finding carries significant implications for consumer research seeking to engage authentically with marginalised communities. Methodological choices are not merely technical decisions; they are ethical and political acts that either reproduce or challenge existing power relations. When participants are freed from the cognitive and emotional labour of managing a researcher's perceptions, they provide richer, more textured accounts of consumer experiences marked by systemic racism and exclusion. Conversely, when research design is epistemologically misaligned with the communities it purports to study, the data it generates is not simply incomplete; it is distorted, shaped by the very power relations the research claims to investigate. By foregrounding the researcher's positionality as a Black woman and operationalising it as a methodological resource rather than a methodological liability, this study demonstrates that epistemic alignment between researcher and participant constitutes a form of rigour, not a departure from it.

In doing so, this research creates space for other ways of knowing to shape not only the findings but the conceptual and methodological architecture of the discipline itself. The contribution is not simply that this research used a Black feminist methodology. It demonstrates, concretely and empirically, in the lived texture of fieldwork encounters, what becomes analytically possible when the researcher's own embodied knowledge is brought into honest and accountable relation with the communities she studies, and what remains foreclosed when it is not. This is a shift from extracting data from marginalised groups to co-creating knowledge with them, and this research argues that it is a necessary condition for epistemic justice in marketplace scholarship.

6.3.2. Conclusion

This methodological contribution advances consumer research by offering both conceptual insight and practical guidance for conducting ethically grounded research with marginalised consumers. The operationalisation of Black feminist epistemology demonstrates what becomes analytically available when research is grounded in cultural understanding, relational trust, and epistemic humility, and what is foreclosed when it is not. This speaks to fundamental debates within consumer research about whose knowledge counts, under what conditions it is gathered, and what constitutes rigorous scholarship (Crockett et al., 2011; Grier and Poole, 2020; Sobande, 2020).

The implications extend beyond methodological technique to foundational questions about the purpose and ethics of consumer research. If the discipline aspires to contribute to social justice and challenge systemic inequalities, it must critically examine the epistemological foundations that have historically marginalised certain voices and experiences. It must do so not only in theory but in practice, in the specific choices made about who conducts the research, how they position themselves within it, and what they bring into accountable relation with the people they study (Burton, 2009). This research demonstrates that such transformation is not only possible but generative, yielding insights that

conventional methodological approaches would not merely miss but would actively preclude. The researcher's positionality, when rendered accountable rather than invisible, is not a limitation on what can be known. It is, this contribution argues, a condition of it.

6.4. Limitations and Future Directions

The research focused on a specific cohort of Black women, primarily located in Scotland (Edinburgh and Glasgow), with varied age ranges and predominantly middle-class backgrounds characterised by university education and professional employment. This sample provided depth of insight into how relatively privileged Black women navigate predominantly white consumer spaces, revealing that even economic and cultural capital cannot fully shield against racialised exclusion. However, this focus necessarily limits the breadth of representation across Black women's diverse experiences.

As discussed in the findings, while this research was centred around Blackness as the primary identity marker to expose how race alone triggers bias, participants' class positioning emerged as significant in shaping their capacity to deploy certain resistance strategies. Middle-class participants described greater ability to escalate complaints, change retailers, or mobilise social and economic capital to challenge poor treatment. Working-class Black women, who face compounded marginalisation at the intersection of race and class (Pittman, 2020), may have fewer resources to resist discriminatory treatment and may experience more severe material consequences from marketplace exclusion, including limited access to quality goods, services, and employment opportunities.

6.4.1. Future Research

The most immediate priority is deepening understanding of Black women's consumer experiences through research that addresses the limitations identified above. Future studies should centre working-class and economically Black women's consumer experiences to explain how class mediates both the intensity of racialised harm and the available repertoires of resistance. Comparative research across diverse geographic contexts within the UK and internationally would reveal whether the model's mechanisms are universal or require contextual adaptation, examining experiences in majority-Black neighbourhoods, racially diverse metropolitan centres, and rural areas with minimal Black populations.

Future work should also incorporate digital and hybrid consumer spaces, examining anticipatory labour in online shopping, in-platform navigation amid algorithmic bias, and post-space processing following digital racist encounters. Hybrid practices such as curbside pickup or augmented-reality shopping introduce new temporal dimensions that require updated analytical tools.

Additionally, future research should recruit samples deliberately designed to capture intersectional complexity, exploring how sexuality, disability, religion, class, age, immigration status, and other

identity markers interact with race and gender to produce unique experiences of marketplace marginalisation. Such research would extend the temporal navigation model by revealing how different combinations of marginalised identities require distinct forms of anticipatory labour, in-space management, and post-space processing, which are not limited to internalised processing but also involve collective forms offering respite and solidarity from social cues. For example, disabled Black women may need to navigate both racial surveillance and ableist assumptions about their capacity as consumers, requiring additional temporal planning around accessibility and energy management that compounds race-based anticipatory labour.

Longitudinal research tracking Black women's consumer experiences across different political administrations would show whether marketplace racism intensifies or recedes in response to national-level political discourse and whether temporal navigation strategies evolve accordingly. Such research could examine how broader political shifts, including electoral outcomes, policy changes, or social movements, influence the manifestation of marketplace racism.

6.5. Practical Implications and Recommendations

Beyond academic contributions, this research has direct implications for retail practice, organisational policy, and broader efforts to create equitable consumer spaces. The findings reveal that Black women's consumer experiences are shaped not by individual prejudice alone but by systemic patterns of surveillance, exclusion, and microaggression embedded in marketplace structures. Addressing these harms requires multilevel intervention spanning staff training, organisational diversity initiatives, and structural reform.

First, retail organisations must move beyond superficial diversity training toward comprehensive anti-racism education that addresses unconscious bias, cultural competency, and the specific ways anti-Black racism manifests in consumer service encounters. Training must equip staff to recognise how practices framed as "good customer service", such as following customers through stores or asking repeated questions, are experienced as surveillance and harassment by Black consumers.

Second, meaningful representation matters, not as tokenism but as structural change. Organisations must recruit, retain, and promote Black women into customer-facing roles, management positions, and leadership levels where they can influence organisational culture and decision-making. However, representation alone is insufficient without addressing hostile workspaces that drive Black employees out through discrimination, microaggressions, and a lack of support.

Third, product development and marketing must be genuinely inclusive rather than performative. This requires consulting Black women throughout product design processes, ensuring diverse representation

in advertising that reflects varied skin tones, hair textures, and body types, and offering product ranges that serve Black consumers' actual needs rather than token "diverse" options.

Fourth, effective accountability mechanisms are essential, including transparent reporting systems, thorough investigation of complaints, and ongoing monitoring of patterns rather than treating discriminatory incidents as isolated. At the structural level, consumer spaces must be fundamentally reimagined. As one participant emphasised, systemic change requires leadership that acknowledges and actively addresses the prejudices built into organisational structures. This involves interrogating how surveillance technologies, store layouts, security protocols, and service standards disproportionately target Black consumers; redesigning systems that prioritise equity and dignity over theft prevention; connecting marketplace reform to broader racial justice movements; and challenging capitalist logics that sustain extraction and create Hutton's (2019) "care-less marketplace."

6.6. Conclusion: Toward Marketplace Justice

Looking forward, Grier et al. (2024) call for research that centres racial justice and equity more explicitly as goals. They advocate for scholarship that moves beyond the description of racial disparities toward the examination of mechanisms of change and the identification of interventions that can create more inclusive marketplace systems. The authors encourage researchers to engage with critical methodologies, including participatory action research and community-based approaches that position affected communities as co-creators of knowledge rather than merely research subjects. They also emphasise the need for greater reflexivity among consumer researchers regarding their own positionality and the ways research itself can reproduce or challenge racial hierarchies. This future-oriented vision positions consumer research as a potential site for transformative scholarship that contributes to broader movements for racial justice.

This research advances the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) literature by theorising the temporal dimensions of Black women's navigation of racialised consumer spaces, introducing the temporal navigation model as a framework for understanding anticipatory labour, in-space management, and post-space processing that characterise marginalised consumers' marketplace experiences. The limitations discussed here, spanning sample characteristics, geographic specificity, intersectional complexity, political context, and the exclusion of digital spaces, reflect the bounded yet deep insights qualitative research provides and the deliberate choices made to centre Black women's standpoint. Future research building on this foundation should expand representational diversity within Black women's communities, explore intersectional complexity, examine digital and hybrid consumer spaces, consider carefully grounded extensions to other marginalised groups, and develop policy-oriented interventions that translate academic insights into tangible improvements in marketplace equity. The goal is not a single universal model but a constellation of context-specific, epistemologically grounded

frameworks that collectively advance understanding of how marginalisation structures consumer experiences across diverse communities.

Ultimately, this research enhances two key areas: it broadens academic understanding while also offering a guide for systemic and cultural change within consumer spaces. This research, described by another participant as “*one of the first people doing this kind of research,*” directly addresses these gaps by centring Black women’s voices and offering practical insights into representation, diversity, and inclusivity.

As this research concludes, it is fitting to return to the participants' voices, whose experiences and insights have shaped this work. Femi, reflecting on both the present realities documented throughout this research and the future she envisions, offers a vision that acknowledges the ongoing nature of this struggle while affirming the importance of self-preservation and growth:

I hope that, while the world figures itself out, Black people, and Black women specifically, can discover their sense of self, learn how to protect their peace and personal space and grow while the world catches up.

References:

- Abbas, M.-S. (2019). The promise of political blackness? Contesting blackness, challenging whiteness and the silencing of racism: A review article. *Ethnicities*, 20(1), pp.202–222.
- Acuff, J. (2018). Confronting Racial Battle Fatigue and Comforting My Blackness as an Educator. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 20(3), pp.174–181.
- Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), pp.149–168.
- Alinia, M. (2015). On Black Feminist Thought: Thinking Oppression and Resistance through Intersectional Paradigm. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(13), pp.2334–2340.
- Alormele, N. and Robles, J.S. (2025). Speaking back through repetition: Black women's resistance and empowerment in global university spaces. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp.1–19.
- Alsaigh, R., and Coyne, I. (2021). Doing a Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Underpinned by Gadamer's Philosophy: A Framework to Facilitate Data Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1–10.
- Aluwihare-Samaranayake, D. (2012). Ethics in Qualitative Research: A View of the Participants' and Researchers' World from a Critical Standpoint. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(2), pp.64–81.
- Anderson, B. (2009). Affective atmospheres. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2(2), pp.77–81.
- Anderson, E. (2015). The White Space. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(1), pp.10–21.
- Anderson, E. (2022). *Black in White space: the enduring impact of color in everyday life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Andrews, K., Crenshaw, K. and Wilson, A. (2024). *Blackness at the Intersection*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Arday, J. (2018). Being Black, Male and Academic: Navigating the White Academy. In: *Dismantling Race in Higher Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp.161–174.
- Arday, J. (2018). Dismantling power and privilege through reflexivity: negotiating normative Whiteness, the Eurocentric curriculum and racial micro-aggressions within the Academy. *Whiteness and Education*, 3(2), pp.141–161.
- Arnould, E. J. and Thompson, C. J. (2018). Introduction: What Is Consumer Culture Theory? In: *Consumer Culture Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Arnould, E. J., Thompson, C. J. and Press, M. (2020). Consumer Culture Theory: An Anthropological Contribution to Consumption Studies. In: *The Routledge companion to anthropology and business*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Arnould, Eric J. and Thompson, Craig J. (2005). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), pp.868–882.
- Ashton, N. A., and McKenna, R. (2018). Situating Feminist Epistemology. *Episteme*, 17(1), pp.1–20.

- Askegaard, S. and Linnet, J. T. (2011). Towards an epistemology of consumer culture theory. *Marketing Theory*, 11(4), pp.381–404.
- Aya Pastrana, N., Somerville, C. and Suggs, L.S. (2022). Integrating gender into social marketing programmes. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38(11-12), pp.1–32.
- Baboolall, D., Burns, T., Weaver, K., and Zegeye, A. (2022). Black representation in the beauty industry. *The McKinsey Quarterly*.
- Baker, S. M., and Gentry, J. W. (2007). Framing the research and avoiding harm: representing the vulnerability of consumers. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Baker, S. M., Gentry, J. W. and Rittenburg, T. L. (2005). Building Understanding of the Domain of Consumer Vulnerability. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 25(2), pp.128–139.
- Banaji, M. R., Fiske, S. T. and Massey, D. S. (2021). Systemic racism: individuals and interactions, institutions and society. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 6(1), pp.1–21.
- Banet-Weiser, S., and Glatt, Z. (2023). “Stop treating BLM like Coachella” The branding of intersectionality. In *The Routledge Companion to Intersectionalities*. London: Routledge.
- Bauman, Z. (1976). Critique of Freedom. In *Book Towards a Critical Sociology (Routledge Revivals), An Essay on Commonsense and Imagination*. London: Routledge.
- Bay, M., and Fabian, A. (2015). *Race and Retail: Consumption Across the Color Line*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Beagan, B. L., Mohamed, T., Brooks, K., Waterfield, B. and Weinberg, M. (2020). Microaggressions experienced by LGBTQ academics in Canada: ‘just not fitting in... it does take a toll’. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 34(3), pp.1–16.
- Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bell, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3), pp.518–533.
- Bell, D. R., Corsten, D., and Knox, G. (2011). From Point of Purchase to Path to Purchase: How Preshopping Factors Drive Unplanned Buying. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(1), pp.31–45.
- Bell, M. P., Leopold, J., Berry, D. and Hall, A. V. (2018). Diversity, Discrimination, and Persistent Inequality: Hope for the Future through the Solidarity Economy Movement. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(2), pp.224–243.
- Bennett, A. M. , Baker, S. M. , Cross, S. , James, J. P. , Bartholomew, G. , Ekpo, A. E. , Henderson, G. R. , Hutton, M. , Khare, A. , Roy, A. , Stovall, T. and Taylor, C. R. (2016). Omission and Commission as Marketplace Trauma. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 35(2), pp.280–291.
- Bennett, A. M., Hill, R. P. and Daddario, K. (2014). Shopping While Nonwhite: Racial Discrimination among Minority Consumers. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 49(2), pp.328–355.

- Bettany, S., Coffin, J., Eichert, C. and Rowe, D. (2022). Stigmas that matter: Diffracting marketing stigma theoretics. *Marketing Theory*, 22(4), pp.501–518.
- Bhar, S. (2019). Introducing Phenomenological Research Methodology in Sustainable Consumption Literature: Illustrations From India. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, pp.1–14.
- Black, I., and Veloutsou, C. (2017). Working consumers: Co-creation of brand identity, consumer identity and brand community identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 70(1), 416–429.
- Bleich, E. (2005). The Legacies of History? Colonization and Immigrant Integration in Britain and France. *Theory and Society*, 34(2), pp.171–195. Available at: [https://www.jstor.Org/stable/4501720](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4501720).
- Blocker, C. P. , Ruth, J. A. , Sridharan, S. , Beckwith, C. , Ekici, A. , Goudie-Hutton, M. , Rosa, J. A. , Saatcioglu, B. , Talukdar, D. , Trujillo, C. and Varman, R. (2013). Understanding poverty and promoting poverty alleviation through transformative consumer research. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(8), pp.1195–1202.
- Bone, S. A., Christensen, G. L. and Williams, J. D. (2014). Rejected, Shackled, and Alone: The Impact of Systemic Restricted Choice on Minority Consumers’ Construction of Self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(2), pp.451–474.
- Bone, S. A., Christensen, G. L., Cross, S. N. N. and Dellande, S. (2023). Moving Beyond Perceptions: Examining Service Disparities Among Consumers. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 8(1), pp.107–119.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2013). “New Racism,” Color-Blind Racism, and the Future of Whiteness in America. In *White out : the continuing significance of racism*. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, January.
- Bonnett, A. (2002). How the British Working Class Became White: The Symbolic (Re)formation of Racialized Capitalism. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11(3), pp.316–340.
- Bourdieu, P. (2003). Symbolic violence. In *Beyond French feminisms: Debates on women, politics, and culture in France, 1981–2001* (pp. 23-26). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Bourke, B. (2010). Experiences of black students in multiple cultural spaces at a predominantly white institution. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 3(2), pp.126–135.
- Boutté, R. L., Johnson, A., Goel, N. J., Simpson, C. C., and Mazzeo, S. E. (2025). Racialized body dissatisfaction in Black women: development of the Black feminist model of body image. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 13(1), pp.1–17.
- Bristor, J. and Fischer, E. (1995). Exploring Simultaneous Oppressions: Toward the Development of Consumer Research in the Interest of Diverse Women. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 38(4), pp.526–536.

- Britannica (2022). Critical Race Theory - Basic tenets of critical race theory. [online] Encyclopedia Britannica. Available at: <https://www.Britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory/Basic-tenets-of-critical-race-theory>.
- Browne, S. (2015). *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Brownlow, B. N. (2023). How Racism ‘Gets Under the Skin’: An Examination of the Physical- and Mental-Health Costs of Culturally Compelled Coping. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18(3), pp.576–596.
- Burton, D. (2009). “Reading” whiteness in consumer research. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 12(2), 171–201.
- Burton, D. (2009). Non-white readings of whiteness. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 12(4), pp.349–372.
- Cabrera, N. L., Franklin, J. D. and Watson, J. S. (2016). Whiteness in Higher Education: The Invisible Missing Link in Diversity and Racial Analyses. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 42(6), pp.7–125.
- Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and Psychological and Emotional Injury: Recognizing and Assessing Race-Based Traumatic Stress. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(1), pp.13–105.
- Carter, R. T. and Pieterse, A. L. (2020). *Measuring the effects of racism: guidelines for the assessment and treatment of race-based traumatic stress injury*. New York: Columbia University Press, Cop.
- Castilhos, R. B. (2019). Branded places and marketplace exclusion. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(5-6), pp.582–597.
- Chaney, K. E., Sanchez, D. T. and Maimon, M. R. (2019). Stigmatized-Identity Cues in Consumer Spaces. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29(1), pp.130–141.
- Charles, C. Z., Kramer, R. A., Torres, K. C. and Brunn-Bevel, R. J. (2015). Intragroup Heterogeneity and Blackness: Effects of Racial Classification, Immigrant Origins, Social Class, and Social Context on the Racial Identity of Elite College Students. *Race and Social Problems*, 7(4), pp.281–299.
- Chou, T., Asnaani, A. and Hofmann, S. G. (2012). Perception of racial discrimination and psychopathology across three U. S. ethnic minority groups. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(1), pp.74–81.
- Cleveland, M., Papadopoulos, N., and Laroche, M. (2011). Identity, demographics, and Consumer Behaviors. *International Marketing Review*, 28(3), pp.244–266.
- Clifford, J. (1983). On Ethnographic Authority. *Representations*, 2(2), pp.118–146.
- Coates, T. -N. (2015). *Between The World And Me*. New York: Random House.
- Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. *Social Problems*, 33(6), pp.14–32.

- Collins, P. H. (1989). The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought. *Signs*, 14(4), pp.745–773.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2015). The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought. In: *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, pp.222–248.
- Collins, P. H. , da Silva, E. C. G. , Ergun, E. , Furseth, I. , Bond, K. D. and Martínez-Palacios, J. (2021). Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 20(3), pp.690–725.
- Comas-Díaz, L., Hall, G.N. and Neville, H.A. (2019). Racial trauma: Theory, research, and healing: Introduction to the special issue. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), pp.1–5.
- Corus, C. and Saatcioglu, B. (2015). An intersectionality framework for transformative services research. *The Service Industries Journal*, 35(7-8), pp.415–429.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of discrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), pp.139–167.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), pp.1241–1299.
- Crenshaw, K. (2011). From private violence to mass incarceration: Thinking intersectionally about women, race, and social control. *UCLA L. Rev.*
- Crenshaw, K. (2013). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. In *Feminist legal theories* (pp. 23–51). Chicago, Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1988). Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law. *Harvard Law Review*, 101(7), pp.1331–1387.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (2013). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In *The Public Nature of Private Violence* (pp. 93-118). Chicago, Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K., Wilson, A. and Andrews, K. (2024). *Blackness at the Intersection*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Crockett, D. (2008). Marketing blackness: How advertisers use race to sell products. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8(2), 245–268.
- Crockett, D. (2017). Paths to Respectability: Consumption and Stigma Management in the Contemporary Black Middle Class. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(3), pp.554–581.
- Crockett, D. (2021). Racial Oppression and Racial Projects in Consumer Markets: A Racial Formation Theory Approach. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49(1), pp.1–24.
- Crockett, D. and Grier, S. A. (2020). Race in the Marketplace and COVID-19. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40(1), pp.89–91.

- Crockett, D., Anderson, L., Bone, S. A., Roy, A., Wang, J. J., and Coble, G. (2011). Immigration, Culture, and Ethnicity in Transformative Consumer Research. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 30(1), pp.47–54.
- Crockett, D., Grier, S. and Williams, J. A. (2003). Coping with Marketplace Discrimination: An Exploration of the Experiences of Black Men. *Proceedings of the International Association for Business and Society*, 14(4), pp.1–21.
- Cross, S. N. N. and Ekpo, A. E. (2024). When marketplaces fail: How market-challenged consumers navigate the marketplace. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, pp.1–20.
- D’Rozario, D. and Williams, J. D. (2005). Retail Redlining: Definition, Theory, Typology, and Measurement. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 25(2), pp.175–186.
- Danquah, M.N.-A. (2011). *The Black Body*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Davis, J. F. (2018). Selling whiteness? – A Critical Review of the Literature on Marketing and Racism. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 34(1-2), pp.134–177.
- Dazey, M. (2021). Rethinking respectability politics. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 72(3), pp.580–593.
- Delgado, R. and Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. New York: New York University Press.
- DiAngelo, R. J. (2018). *White fragility: Why it’s so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dotson, K. (2015). Inheriting Patricia Hill Collins’s Black Feminist Epistemology. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(13), pp.2322–2328.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L. and Pearson, A. R. (2016). Aversive Racism and Contemporary Bias. In: C. G. Sibley and F. K. Barlow, eds. , *The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice*. Cambridge University Press, pp.267–294.
- Dowling, M. (2006). Approaches to reflexivity in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 13(3), pp.7–21.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of black folk*. London: Gildan Media LLC.
- Dumas, M. J. (2013). ‘Losing an arm’: schooling as a site of black suffering. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 17(1), pp.1–29.
- Duncan-Shepherd, S. and Hamilton, K. (2022). ‘Generally, I live a lie’: Transgender Consumer Experiences and Responses to Symbolic Violence. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 56(4), pp.1597–1616.
- Dyer, R. (1997). *White: essays on race and culture*. London: Routledge.
- Eichert, C. A. and Luedicke, M. K. (2022). Almost Equal: Consumption under Fragmented Stigma. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49(3), pp.409–429.

- Elias, A., Gill, R., and Scharff, C. (2017). Aesthetic labour: Beauty politics in neoliberalism. In *Aesthetic labour: Rethinking beauty politics in neoliberalism* (pp. 3-49). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Ellis, D. (2001). "The Produce of More than One Country": Race, Identity, and Discourse in Post-Windrush Britain. *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 31(2), pp.214–232.
- Emejulu, A., and Sobande, F. (2019). *To exist is to resist: Black feminism in Europe*. London. Pluto Press.
- Essed, P. (1991). Understanding everyday racism: an interdisciplinary theory. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publ.
- Fani, N., Carter, S. E., Harnett, N. G., Ressler, K. J. and Bradley, B. (2021). Association of Racial Discrimination With Neural Response to Threat in Black Women in the US Exposed to Trauma. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 78(9).
- Fanon, F. (1952). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Penguin Books.
- Finlay, L. (2002). "Outing" the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), pp.531–545.
- Finlay, R. (2023). University of Strathclyde and Historical Links to Slavery report. University of Strathclyde.
- Fiske, S. T. (2017). Prejudices in Cultural Contexts: Shared Stereotypes (Gender, Age) Versus Variable Stereotypes (Race, Ethnicity, Religion). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(5), pp.791–799.
- Francis, J. N. P. and Robertson, J. T. F. (2021). White spaces: how marketing actors (re)produce marketplace inequities for Black consumers. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37(1-2), pp.1–33.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Franklin, J. D., Smith, W. A. and Hung, M. (2014). Racial Battle Fatigue for Latina/o Students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(4), pp.303–322.
- Friedlaender, C. (2018). On Microaggressions: Cumulative Harm and Individual Responsibility. *Hypatia*, 33(1), pp.5–21.
- Friedman, M. (2017). Using Consumer Boycotts to Stimulate Corporate Policy Changes: Marketplace, Media, and Moral Considerations. In *Politics, Products and Markets: Exploring Political Consumerism Past and Present*. New York: Routledge.
- Gabbidon, S. L. (2003). Racial Profiling by Store Clerks and Security Personnel in Retail Establishments. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 19(3), pp.345–364.
- Gabbidon, S. L. and Higgins, G. E. (2020). *Shopping while black: consumer racial profiling in America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Gabbidon, S.L. (2003). Racial Profiling by Store Clerks and Security Personnel in Retail Establishments. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 19(3), pp.345–364.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). Hermeneutics and Social Science. *Cultural Hermeneutics*, 2(4), pp.307–316.
- Gaertner, S. L. and Dovidio, J. F. (2005). Understanding and Addressing Contemporary Racism: From Aversive Racism to the Common Ingroup Identity Model. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(3), pp.615–639.
- Gallagher, C. A. (2022). Black in white space: the enduring impact of color in everyday life. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 46(3), pp.1–3.
- Gallego, M. (2021). Black Female Bodies on (Dis)play: Commodification, Reembodiment and Healing. *ebuah. uah. Es*, (73), pp.73–88.
- Garcia, G. and Johnston-Guerrero, M. (2016). Challenging the Utility of a Racial Microaggressions Framework Through A Systematic Review of Racially Biased Incidents on Campus. *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*, 2(1), pp.48–66.
- Garcia, R. and Baack, D. W. (2022). The Invisible Racialized Minority Entrepreneur: Using White Solipsism to Explain the White Space. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 188(3), pp.397–418.
- Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, Critical Race Theory, and the Primacy of Racism. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), pp.277–287.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*. London: Verso.
- Goffman, E. (1956). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Touchstone.
- Goor, D., Keinan, A. and Ordabayeva, N. (2024). Historizing the present: Research agenda and implications for consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 35(1), pp.98–120.
- Grier, S. A. and Poole, S. M. (2020). Reproducing inequity: the role of race in the business school faculty search. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(13-14), pp.1190–1222.
- Grier, S. A., Crockett, D., Johnson, G. D., Thomas, K. D. and Williams Bradford, T. (2024). Race in Consumer Research: Past, Present, and Future. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 51(1), pp.56–65.
- Grier, S. A., Johnson, G. D. and Scott, M. L. (2021). From Anxious Spaces To Harmonious Relations? Interracial Marketplace Interactions Through The Lens Of Consumer Psychology. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 32(1), pp.97–126.
- Grier, S. A., Thomas, K. D. and Johnson, G. D. (2017). Re-imagining the marketplace: addressing race in academic marketing research. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(1), pp.91–100.
- Gunarathne, P., Rui, H. and Seidmann, A. (2021). Racial Bias in Customer Service: Evidence from Twitter. *Information Systems Research*, 33(1), pp.43–54.
- Hall, J. C., Everett, J. E. and Hamilton-Mason, J. (2012). Black Women Talk About Workplace Stress and How They Cope. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(2), pp.207–226.

- Hall, S. (1996). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (2018). *Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora*. London: Duke University Press.
- Harris, A. -M. G., Henderson, G. R. and Williams, J. D. (2005). Courting Customers: Assessing Consumer Racial Profiling and Other Marketplace Discrimination. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 24(1), pp.163–171.
- Harris, F. C. (2014). The Rise of Respectability Politics. *Dissent*, 61(1), pp.33–37.
- Hauber-Özer, M., Call-Cummings, M., Hassell-Goodman, S., and Chan, E. (2021). Counter-storytelling: toward a critical race praxis for participatory action research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 36(6), pp.1–16.
- Hautéa, T. (2021). Why Applying Intersectionality to Marketing Is Key. [online] Kindred. Available at: <https://kindredmembers.com/insights/intersectionality-marketing/> [Accessed 23 Nov. 2022].
- Hawkins, R. A. (2010). Boycotts, buycotts and consumer activism in a global context: An overview. *Management and Organizational History*, 5(2), pp.123–143.
- Haynes, C. , Joseph, N. M. , Patton, L. D., Stewart, S. and Allen, E. L. (2020). Toward an Understanding of Intersectionality Methodology: A 30-Year Literature Synthesis of Black Women's Experiences in Higher Education. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(6), pp.751–787.
- Heath, A. F. and Di Stasio, V. (2019). Racial discrimination in Britain, 1969–2017: a meta-analysis of field experiments on racial discrimination in the British labour market. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 70(5), pp.1–25.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Trans.). Harper and Row.
- Henderson, G. R. (2016). *Consumer Equality*. USA: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Henderson, G. R. and Rank-Christman, T. (2016). Diversity and consumer behavior. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10, pp.148–153.
- Henderson, G. R. and Williams, J. D. (2013). From Exclusion to Inclusion: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Marketplace Diversity and Inclusion. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 32(1), pp.1–5.
- Henderson, G. R., Hakstian, A. -M. and Williams, J. D. (2016). *Consumer Equality: Race and the American Marketplace*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.
- Hesse-Biber SN (2007). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. In: Hesse-Biber SN, Leavy PL (eds) *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp.111–148.
- Higgins, L., Husemann, K. C. and Zeyen, A. (2024). The disabling marketplace: towards a conceptualisation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 40(5-6), pp.371–377.

- Hill, J. and Tiu Wright, L. (2001). A qualitative research agenda for small to medium-sized enterprises. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 19(6), pp.432–443.
- Hill, R. P. and Sharma, E. (2020). Consumer Vulnerability. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 30(3), pp.551–570.
- Hill, T., Mannheimer, A. and Roos, J. M. (2021). Measuring White Fragility. *Social Science Quarterly*, 102(4), pp.1812–1829.
- Hobson, J. (2003). The ‘Batty’ Politic: Toward an Aesthetic of the Black Female Body. *Hypatia*, 18(4), pp.87–105.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- hooks, bell (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. New York: Routledge.
- Hope, E. C., Brinkman, M., Hoggard, L. S., Stokes, M. N., Hatton, V., Volpe, V. V. and Elliot, E. (2021). Black adolescents’ anticipatory stress responses to multilevel racism: The role of racial identity. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 91(4), pp.487–498.
- Hudson, D. L., Neighbors, H. W., Geronimus, A. T. and Jackson, J. S. (2015). Racial Discrimination, John Henryism, and Depression Among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 42(3), pp.221–243.
- Hudson, D., Sacks, T. A., Sewell, W., Holland, D. and Gordon, J. (2020). Surviving the White space: Perspectives on How middle-class Black Men Navigate Cultural Racism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(14), pp.1–19.
- Hungara, A. and Nobre, H. (2021). A consumer culture theory perspective of the marketplace: An integrative review and agenda for research. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), pp.805–823.
- Hutton, M. (2019). The care-less marketplace: exclusion as affective inequality. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(5-6), pp.528–544.
- Hutton, M., and Cappellini, B. (2022). Epistemic in/justice: Towards “Other” ways of knowing. *Marketing Theory*, 22(2), pp.155–174.
- Hylton, K. (2010). How a turn to critical race theory can contribute to our understanding of ‘race’, racism and anti-racism in sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3), pp.335–354.
- Ide, Y., and Beddoe, L. (2023). Challenging perspectives: Reflexivity as a critical approach to qualitative social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 23(4), pp.725–740.
- Jafari, A. (2022). The role of institutions in non-Western contexts in reinforcing West-centric knowledge hierarchies: Towards more self-reflexivity in marketing and consumer research. *Marketing Theory*, 22(2), pp.211–227.
- Jensen, S. Q. (2011). Othering, identity formation and agency. *Qualitative Studies*, 2(2), pp.63–78.

- Ji, L.-J., Yap, S., Khei, Z. A. M., Wang, X., Chang, B., Shang, S. X., and Cai, H. (2022). Meaning in Stressful Experiences and Coping Across Cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 53(9), pp.1015–1032.
- Johnson, A. J., Bell, J., Davis, V. A., Udeh, T. and Ochoa, A. (2025). Black women's experiences of racialized shame. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, pp. 1–9.
- Johnson, G. D., Thomas, K. D., Harrison, A. K. and Grier, S. A. (2019a). Introduction. In: G. D. Johnson, K. D. Thomas, A. K. Harrison and S. A. Grier, eds. *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Johnson, G. D., Thomas, K. D., Harrison, A. K. and Grier, S. A. (2019b). *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Johnson, R. B. and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp.14–26.
- Johnson, V. E., Nadal, K. L., Sissoko, D. R. G. and King, R. (2021). 'It's Not in Your Head': Gaslighting, 'Splaining, Victim Blaming, and Other Harmful Reactions to Microaggressions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 16(5), pp.1024–1036.
- Jones, N. E., Lewis, K. and Brown, A. M. (2022). Navigating a hyperracialized space: exploring the intersections of whiteness, social control, and mental health in St. Louis County, Missouri. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 46(5), pp.1–21.
- King, D. K. (1988). Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14(1), pp.42–72.
- Koonce, J. B. (2012). 'Oh, Those Loud Black Girls!': A Phenomenological Study of Black Girls Talking with an Attitude. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 8(2), pp.26–46.
- Kwan, S. (2010). Navigating Public Spaces: Gender, Race, and Body Privilege in Everyday Life. *Feminist Formations*, 22(2), pp.144–166.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1996). "Your blues ain't like mine": Keeping issues of race and racism on the multicultural agenda. *Theory into Practice*, 35(4), pp.248–255.
- Langdrige, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology : theory, research and method*. Pearson / Harlow. Prentice Hall.
- Leboeuf, C. (2023). Phenomenology at the Intersection of Gender and Race. In *Horizons of Phenomenology. Contributions to Phenomenology* (pp. 197–210). Springer Cham.
- Lee, J. (2000). The Salience of Race in Everyday Life. *Work and Occupations*, 27(3), pp.353–376.
- Lefebvre, H. (1981). *La production de l'espace*. Éditions Anthropos.
- Lewis, A. E. (2004). 'What Group?' Studying Whites and Whiteness in the Era of 'Color-Blindness'. *Sociological Theory*, 22(4), pp.623–646.
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2017). Microaggressions: Strong claims, inadequate evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(1), pp.138–169.
- Link, B. G. and Phelan, J. (2014). Stigma power. *Social Science and Medicine*, 103(1), pp.24–32.

- Link, B. G. and Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(1), pp.363–385.
- Lipsitz, G. (1995). The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the ‘White’ Problem in American Studies. *American Quarterly*, 47(3), pp.369–387.
- Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The possessive investment in whiteness: how white people profit from identity politics*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press.
- Lipsitz, G. (2007). The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape. *Landscape Journal*, 26(1), pp.10–23.
- Liu, C., and Kozinets, R. V. (2021). Courtesy Stigma Management: Social Identity Work among China’s “Leftover Women.” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49(2), pp.312–335.
- Lukate, J. M. (2022). Space, race and identity: An ethnographic study of the Black hair care and beauty landscape and Black women’s racial identity constructions in England. *Journal of Social Issues*, 78(1), pp.107–125.
- Luna, Z., Brown, M. C., Johnson, M. S., and Whitney N.L. Pirtle. (2024). On Joy and War: Black Feminism/Intersectionality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 50(1), pp.61–83.
- Lundman, R. J. and Kaufman, R. L. (2003). Driving while black: Effects of race, ethnicity, and gender on citizen self-reports of traffic stops and police actions. *Criminology*, 41(1), pp.195–220.
- Maciel, A. F., and Wallendorf, M. (2021). Space as a Resource in the Politics of Consumer Identity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48(2), pp.309–332.
- Madan, S., Basu, S., Ng, S. and Ching Lim, E. A. (2018). Impact of Culture on the Pursuit of Beauty: Evidence from Five Countries. *Journal of International Marketing*, 26(4), pp.54–68.
- Mady, S., Biswas, D., Dadzie, C. A., Hill, R. P. and Paul, R. (2022). ‘A Whiter Shade of Pale’: Whiteness, Female Beauty Standards, and Ethical Engagement Across Three Cultures. *Journal of International Marketing*, 31(1), pp.69–89.
- Mandavilli, S. R. (2023). Conceptualizing “cultural Frames of Reference” and “cross-cultural Frames of Reference” for Various Cultures and Societies: Employing These Concepts to Bring About Social and Cultural Change in Different Societies. *Social Science Research Network*, p.1–20.
- Mann, S. (2016). *The Research Interview: Reflective Practice and Reflexivity in Research Processes*. London : Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, J. L. (2015). *Racial battle fatigue: insights from the front lines of social justice advocacy*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McCall, L. (2005). The Complexity of Intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), pp.1771–1800.
- McGeever, B., and Virdee, S. (2018). Race, class and Brexit: how did we get here?. *LSE Brexit*.
- McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Mesmer, K. and Jahng, M. R. (2021). Using Facebook to Discuss Aspects of Industry Safety: How Women Journalists Enact Ethics of Care in Online Professional Space. *Journalism Studies*, 22(8), pp.1–20.
- Miller, J. C. and Stovall, T. (2019). The ‘right to consume’? Re-thinking the dynamics of exclusion/inclusion in consumer society. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(5-6), pp.568–581.
- Mirabito, A. M. , Otnes, C. C. , Crosby, E. , Wooten, D. B. , Machin, J. E. , Pullig, C. , Adkins, N. R. , Dunnett, S. , Hamilton, K. , Thomas, K. D. , Yeh, M. A. , Davis, C. , Gollnhofer, J. F. , Grover, A. , Matias, J. , Mitchell, N. A. , Ndichu, E. G. , Sayarh, N. and Velagaleti, S. (2016). The Stigma Turbine: A Theoretical Framework for Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Marketplace Stigma. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 35(2), pp.170–184.
- Mirabito, A., Adkins, N. R., Crosby, E., Farrell, J. and Machin, J. (2022). Guest editorial: Mental health and the marketplace: a research agenda. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 39(6), pp.565–568.
- Mitchell, T. A. (2020). Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Colorism: A Manifestation of Whitewashing in Marketing Communications? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(13-14), pp.1–24.
- Moi, L., Frau, M. and Cabiddu, F. (2018). Exploring the Role of NVivo Software in Marketing Research. *Mercadi and Competitivita*, (4), pp.65–86.
- Mothoagae, I. D. (2016). Reclaiming our black bodies: reflections on a portrait of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman and the destruction of black bodies by the state. *Acta Theologica*, 36(24), pp.62–83.
- Muganga, L. (2015). The Importance of Hermeneutic Theory in Understanding and Appreciating Interpretive Inquiry as a Methodology. *Journal of Social Research and Policy*, 6(1), pp.65–88.
- Mullen, S., and Newman, S. (2018). Slavery, abolition and the University of Glasgow: Report and recommendations of the University of Glasgow History of Slavery Steering Committee. University of Glasgow.
- Nadal, K. L., Davidoff, K. C., Davis, L. S., Wong, Y., Marshall, D. and McKenzie, V. (2015). A qualitative approach to intersectional microaggressions: Understanding influences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. *Qualitative Psychology*, 2(2), pp.147–163.
- Ndichu, E. G. and Upadhyaya, S. (2018). ‘Going natural’: Black women’s identity project shifts in hair care practices. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(1), pp.44–67.
- Neubauer, B. , Witkop, C. and Varpio, L. (2019). How Phenomenology Can Help Us Learn from the Experiences of Others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), pp.90–97.
- Newton, V. A. (2022). Hypervisibility and Invisibility: Black Women’s Experiences with Gendered Racial Microaggressions on a White Campus. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 9(2), pp.164–178.
- Ngo, H. (2019). *The Habits of Racism: A Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment*. S.L.: Lexington Books.

- Nicol, D. and Yee, J. (2017). 'Reclaiming Our Time': Women of Color Faculty and Radical Self-Care in the Academy. *Feminist Teacher*, 27(2-3), pp.133–156.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring : a feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. California, University of California Press.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., and Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), pp.1–13.
- Nunes, J. C., Ordanini, A., and Giambastiani, G. (2021). The Concept of Authenticity: What it Means to Consumers. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(4), pp.1–20.
- Omi, M., and Winant, H. (2020). Racial formation. In *The New Social Theory Reader* (pp. 405-415). London, Routledge.
- Osbourne, L., Barnett, J. and Blackwood, L. (2021). 'You never feel so Black as when you're contrasted against a White background': Black students' experiences at a predominantly White institution in the UK. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 31(4), pp.383–395.
- Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Wang, K., Burton, C. L., Crawford, F. W., Phelan, J. C. and Link, B. G. (2018). The Burden of Stigma on Health and Well-Being: A Taxonomy of Concealment, Course, Disruptiveness, Aesthetics, Origin, and Peril Across 93 Stigmas. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 44(4), pp.451–474.
- Pager, D. (2007). The Use of Field Experiments for Studies of Employment Discrimination: Contributions, Critiques, and Directions for the Future. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 609(1), pp.104–133.
- Pager, D. and Shepherd, H. (2008). The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34(1), pp.181–209.
- Palaganas, E., Sanchez, M., Molintas, Ma. V., and Caricativo, R. (2017). Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: A Journey of Learning. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), pp.426–438.
- Pascoe, E. A. and Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), pp.531–554.
- Pérez Huber, L. , González, T. , Robles, G. and Solórzano, D. G. (2021). Racial microaffirmations as a response to racial microaggressions: Exploring risk and protective factors. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 63, pp.1–9.
- Pérez Huber, L. and Solorzano, D. G. (2015). Racial microaggressions as a tool for critical race research. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 18(3), pp.297–320.
- Pérez, M. (2019). Epistemic violence: reflections between the invisible and the ignorable. *El lugar sin límites*, 1(1), pp.81–98.

- Pierce, C. 1974. "Psychiatric Problems of the Black Minority." In *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, edited by S. Arieti, 512–523. New York: Basic Books.
- Pitcan, M., Marwick, A. E. and Boyd, D. (2018). Performing a Vanilla Self: Respectability Politics, Social Class, and the Digital World. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(3), pp.163–179.
- Pitcan, M., Marwick, A.E. and Boyd, D. (2018). Performing a Vanilla Self: Respectability Politics, Social Class, and the Digital World. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(3), pp.163–179.
- Pittman Claytor, C. (2019). Are Black Consumers a Bellwether for the Nation? How Research on Blacks Can Foreground Our Understanding of Race in the Marketplace. In: *Race in the Marketplace*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp.153–172.
- Pittman, C. (2017). Black-Out: How the Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Literature Understudies Race and Ignores African American Consumers. In the *Consumer and Consumption Conference*, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- Pittman, C. (2020). 'Shopping While Black': Black Consumers' Management of Racial Stigma and Racial Profiling in Retail Settings. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 20(1), pp.2–22.
- Polanco-Roman, L., Danies, A. and Anglin, D. M. (2016). Racial discrimination as race-based trauma, coping strategies, and dissociative symptoms among emerging adults. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 8(5), pp.609–617.
- Poole, S. M., Grier, S. A., Thomas, K. D., Sobande, F., Ekpo, A. E., Torres, L. T., Addington, L. A., Weekes-Laidlow, M. and Henderson, G. R. (2021). Operationalizing Critical Race Theory in the Marketplace. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40(2), pp.126–142.
- Punch, K. F. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approach*. London: Sage.
- Puwar, N. (2004). *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place*. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- Randle, K., Forson, C. and Calveley, M. (2014). Towards a Bourdieusian analysis of the social composition of the UK film and television workforce. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(4), pp.590–606.
- Rank-Christman, T. and Wooten, D. (2022). Racial Regard and Black Consumers' Responses to Stigmatized-Identity Cues. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 8(1), pp.21–32.
- Resane, K. T. (2021). White fragility, white supremacy and white normativity make theological dialogue on race difficult. In *die Skriflig / In Luce Verbi*, 55(1), pp.1–10.
- Rocha, A. R. C., Campos, R. D., Casotti, L. M., and Nascimento, T. C. do. (2020). Producing beauty "the hard way": involuntary prosumption in a stigmatising context. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(13-14), 1223–1251.
- Rocha, R. R. and Veloso, A. R. (2024). Stigma in marketing and consumer research: A literature review and research agenda. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, pp.1–17.

- Roland, E. (2018). Intersections: Critical Issues in Education Understanding Intersectionality to Promote Social Justice in Educational Leadership: Review of JCEL Cases. *Intersections: Critical Issues in Education*, 2(1).
- Rosa-Salas, M. (2019). Making the Mass White: How Racial Segregation Shaped Consumer Segmentation. In G. D. Johnson, K. D. Thomas, A. K. Harrison, and S. A. Grier (Eds.), *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
- Rosa-Salas, M. and Sobande, F. (2022). Hierarchies of knowledge about intersectionality in marketing theory and practice. *Marketing Theory*, 22(2), pp.175–189.
- Roscigno, V. J., Karafin, D. L. and Tester, G. (2009). The complexities and Processes of Racial Housing Discrimination. *Social Problems*, 56(1), pp.49–69.
- Roux, D. and Izberk-Bilgin, E. (2018). Consumer Resistance and Power Relationships in the Marketplace. In: *Consumer Culture Theory*. London: SAGE.
- Ruparelia, R. (2009). 'I Didn't Mean it that Way!': Racial Discrimination as Negligence. *Racial Discrimination as Negligence*, 44, 2d.
- Saatcioglu, B. and Ozanne, J. L. (2013). A Critical Spatial Approach to Marketplace Exclusion and Inclusion. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 32(1), pp.32–37.
- Saatcioglu, B., and Corus, C. (2015). Exploring spatial vulnerability: inequality and agency formulations in social space. In *Consumer Vulnerability* (Vol. 32, pp. 230–251). London: Routledge.
- Sandlin, J. A. and Maudlin, J. G. (2012). Consuming pedagogies: Controlling images of women as consumers in popular culture. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 12(2), pp.175–194.
- Saren, M., Parsons, E. and Goulding, C. (2019). Dimensions of marketplace exclusion: representations, resistances and responses. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22(5-6), pp.475–485.
- Savas, G. (2013). Understanding critical race theory as a framework in higher educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(4), pp.506–522.
- Schau, H. J. (2018). Identity Projects and the Marketplace. In: *Consumer Culture Theory*. SAGE.
- Schmitt, B., Brakus, J. J. and Biraglia, A. (2021). Consumption Ideology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49(1), pp.74–95.
- Schreer, G. E., Smith, S. and Thomas, K. (2009). 'Shopping While Black': Examining Racial Discrimination in a Retail Setting. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 39(6), pp.1432–1444.
- Scotland's Census (2021). Scotland's Census at a glance: Ethnic groups. [online] Scotland's Census. Available at: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/at-a-glance/ethnicity/>.
- Scurfield, R. M. and Mackey, D. W. (2001). Racism, Trauma and Positive Aspects of Exposure to Race-Related Experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 10(1), pp.23–47.

- Seale, C. (2017). *Researching society and culture* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Settles, I. H., Jones, M. K., Buchanan, N. T. and Dotson, K. (2020). Epistemic exclusion: Scholar(ly) devaluation that marginalizes faculty of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 14(4), pp.3–53.
- Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shi, H. Y., Jing, F. J., Yang, Y. and Nguyen, B. (2017). The concept of consumer vulnerability: Scale development and validation. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 41(6), pp.769–777.
- Smith, W. A., J. Yosso, T., and Solórzano, D. G. (2006). Challenging Racial Battle Fatigue on Historically White Campuses: A Critical Race Examination of Race-Related Stress. In: C. A. Stanley, ed., *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominately White Colleges and Universities*. Publisher John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Smith, W. A. (2004). A long way to go: conversations about race by African American faculty and graduate students. In: *A Long Way to Go: Conversations about Race by African American Faculty and Graduate Students*. New York: P. Lang, pp.297–309.
- Smith, W. A., Hung, M. and Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial Battle Fatigue and the MisEducation of Black Men: Racial Microaggressions, Societal Problems, and Environmental Stress. *Journal of Negro Education*, 80(1), pp.63–82.
- Smith, W. A., Mustaffa, J. B., Jones, C. M., Curry, T. J. and Allen, W. R. (2016). ‘You make me wanna holler and throw up both my hands!’: campus culture, Black misandric microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 29(9), pp.1189–1209.
- Sobande, F. (2017). Watching me watching you: Black women in Britain on YouTube. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 20(6), pp.655–671.
- Sobande, F. (2022). Black women’s digital media and marketplace experiences: Between buying, branding, and Black Lives Matter. In: *The Routledge Companion to Marketing and Feminism*. London: Routledge, pp.341–350.
- Sobande, F. and Hill, L.-R. (2022). *Black Oot Here: Black Lives in Scotland*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sobande, F. and Hill, L.-R. (2022). *Black Oot Here: Black Lives in Scotland*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sobande, F., Fearfull, A. and Brownlie, D. (2019). Resisting media marginalisation: Black women’s digital content and collectivity. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 23(5), pp.1–16.
- Sojoyner, D. M. (2017). Another Life is Possible: Black Fugitivity and Enclosed Places. *Cultural Anthropology*, 32(4), pp.514–536.
- Solórzano, D. G., and Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), pp.23–44.

- Solórzano, D., Ceja, M. and Yosso, T. (2000). Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate: The Experiences of African American College Students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1/2), pp.60–73.
- Staddon Foster, L. (2024). Scotland's Census 2022: What do the latest statistics tell us about minority ethnic groups in Scotland? Retrieved from CRER website:
<https://www.crer.org.uk/blog/census-2022-bme-population>
- Steinfeld, L., Sanghvi, M., Zayer, L. T., Coleman, C. A., Ourahmoune, N., Harrison, R. L., Hein, W. and Brace-Govan, J. (2019). Transformative intersectionality: Moving business towards a critical praxis. *Journal of Business Research*, 100, pp.366–375.
- Stone, S. , Saucer, C. , Bailey, M. , Garba, R. , Hurst, A. , Jackson, S. M. , Krueger, N. and Cokley, K. (2018). Learning While Black: A Culturally Informed Model of the Impostor Phenomenon for Black Graduate Students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 44(6), pp.491–531.
- Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions and marginality: manifestation, dynamics, and impact*. Hoboken, N. J.: Wiley.
- Sue, D. W. , Capodilupo, C. M. , Torino, G. C. , Bucceri, J. M. , Holder, A. M. B. , Nadal, K. L. and Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), pp.271–286.
- Sue, D. W. and Spanierman, L. (2020). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M. and Holder, A. M. B. (2008). Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39(3), pp.329–336.
- Tadajewski, M. , Chelekis, J. , DeBerry-Spence, B. , Figueiredo, B. , Kravets, O. , Nuttavuthisit, K. , Peñaloza, L. and Moisander, J. (2014). The discourses of marketing and development: towards 'critical transformative marketing research'. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(17-18), pp.1728–1771.
- The Care Collective. (2020). *The Care Manifesto: the Politics of compassion*. S.L.: Verso Books.
- Thomas, K. D. (2013). Endlessly Creating Myself: Examining Marketplace Inclusion through the Lived Experience of Black and White Male Millennials. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 32(1), pp.95–105.
- Thomas, K. D., Cross, S. N. N. and Harrison III, R. L. (2018). Race and Ethnicity. In: *Consumer Culture Theory*. SAGE, pp.206–224.
- Thomas, K. D., Davis, J. F., Wilson, J. A. J. and Sobande, F. (2020). Repetition or reckoning: confronting racism and racial dynamics in 2020. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(13-14), pp.1153–1168.

- Thomas, K. D., Johnson, G. D. and Grier, S. A. (2023). Perspectives: race and advertising: conceptualising a way forward through aesthetics. *International Journal of Advertising*, 42(3), pp.1–21.
- Thompson, C. J. (1997). Interpreting Consumers: A Hermeneutical Framework for Deriving Marketing Insights from the Texts of Consumers' Consumption Stories. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(4), pp.438–455.
- Thompson, C. J. (2014). The Politics of Consumer Identity Work. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(5), pp iii–vii.
- Thurber, A. and DiAngelo, R. (2017). Microaggressions: Intervening in three acts. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 27(1), pp.17–27.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Mason, M. and Zingraff, M. (2004). Looking for the Driving While Black Phenomena: Conceptualizing Racial Bias Processes and their Associated Distributions. *Police Quarterly*, 7(1), pp.3–29.
- Tronto, J. C. (1993). *Moral boundaries : a political argument for an ethic of care*. London, Routledge.
- Tyler, I. (2018). Resituating Erving Goffman: From Stigma Power to Black Power. *The Sociological Review*, 66(4), pp.744–765.
- Tyler, I. (2020). *Stigma: the machinery of inequality*. London: Zed Books.
- Tyler, I. and Slater, T. (2018). Rethinking the sociology of stigma. *The Sociological Review*, 66(4), pp.721–743.
- Udah, H. (2017). 'Not by Default Accepted': The African Experience of Othering and Being Othered in Australia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 53(3), pp.384–400.
- Uduehi, E., Clair, J. S. and Crabbe, R. (2024). Intersectionality in Marketing: A Paradigm for Understanding Understudied Consumers. *Journal of Marketing*, 0(0), pp.1–21.
- Ulver, S., and Osanami Törngren, S. (2023). The empty body: exploring the destabilised brand of a racialised space. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 39(15-16), pp.1477–1501.
- Varman, R., and Vikas, R. M. (2007). Freedom and Consumption: Toward Conceptualizing Systemic Constraints for Subaltern Consumers in a Capitalist Society. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 10(2), pp.117–131.
- Vega-Centeno, J. (2019). 'Dirty Braids': How Hair Is Disrupting Dominant Racial Narratives in Puerto Rico Post-Hurricane Maria. In: *Race in the marketplace: Crossing critical boundaries*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wade, J., Alexander, R., Giscombé, C. W., Keegan, D., Parker, S., Jackson, K., Gibbs, J., McElroy, A. and Ferguson, J. V. (2021). Using Black Feminist Theory and Methods to Uncover Best Practices in Health Promotion Programming. *Qualitative Health Research*, 32(3), pp.581–594.
- Walsh, G. (2009). Disadvantaged consumers' experiences of marketplace discrimination in customer services. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(1-2), pp.143–169.

- Warhurst, C., and Nickson, D. (2007). Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1), pp.103–120.
- Warren, P., Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Smith, W., Zingraff, M. and Mason, M. (2006). Driving while black: Bias processes and racial disparity in police stops. *Criminology*, 44(3), pp.709–738.
- Weinberger, M. F. and Crockett, D. (2018). Critical reflections on consumer identity. In: *Consumer Culture Theory*. SAGE, pp.62–83.
- Weston, D. and Gardner-Chloros, P. (2015). Mind the gap: What code-switching in literature can teach us about code-switching. *Language and Literature*, 24(3), pp.194–212.
- Wigginton, B. and Lafrance, M. N. (2019). Learning critical feminist research: A brief introduction to feminist epistemologies and methodologies. *Feminism and Psychology*, 0(0), pp.1–17.
- Williams, A. A., Bryant, Z. and Carvell, C. (2019). Uncompensated emotional labor, racial battle fatigue, and (in)civility in digital spaces. *Sociology Compass*, 13(2), pp.1–12.
- Williams, A.A., Bryant, Z. and Carvell, C. (2019). Uncompensated emotional labor, racial battle fatigue, and (in)civility in digital spaces. *Sociology Compass*, 13(2), pp.1–12.
- Williams, D. R. and Mohammed, S. A. (2009). Discrimination and racial disparities in health: evidence and needed research. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 32(1), pp.20–47.
- Williams, J. D., Lee, W. -N., and Henderson, G. R. (2008). Diversity issues in consumer psychology. In C. Haugtvedt, P. Herr, and F. Kardes (Eds.), *Handbook of Consumer Psychology* (pp. 877–912). Psychology Press.
- Williams, M. T. (2019). Microaggressions: Clarification, Evidence, and Impact. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), pp.3–26.
- Wilson, T. (2012). What can phenomenology offer the consumer? Marketing research is a philosophical, method conceptual. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 15(3), pp.230–241.
- Wing-Fai, L., Gill, R. and Randle, K. (2015). Getting in, Getting on, Getting out? Women as Career Scramblers in the UK Film and Television Industries. *The Sociological Review*, 63(1), pp.50–65.
- Winters, M. -F. (2020). *Black fatigue: how racism erodes the mind, body, and spirit*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Witherspoon, D. J., Wooding, S., Rogers, A. R., Marchani, E. E., Watkins, W. S., Batzer, M. A. and Jorde, L. B. (2007). Genetic Similarities Within and Between Human Populations. *Genetics*, 176(1), pp.351–359.
- Wooten, D. B. and Rank-Christman, T. (2021). The significance and meaning of racial identity in consumer research: A review and call for research. *Consumer Psychology Review*, 5(1), pp.19–32.
- Yancy, G. (2017). *Black bodies, white gazes: the continuing significance of race in America*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Yap, S. , Xu, Y. and Tan, L. (2021). Coping with crisis: The paradox of technology and consumer vulnerability. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(6), pp.1239–1257.
- Yinger, J. (1998). Evidence on Discrimination in Consumer Markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12(2), pp.23–40.
- Yosso, T. , Smith, W. , Ceja, M. and Solórzano, D. (2009). Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/o Undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), pp.659–691.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Call for participants

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Black Bodies Out of Place: Investigating Black experiences in the marketplace



The conversation provides a safe space for you to share your experiences through narrative storytelling

About the Research:

This research explores racial disparities of Black people navigating marketplaces. Racial segregation continues, resulting in the vulnerability of "Black bodies in White spaces," and marketing landscapes of 'white spaces' perpetuating exclusion. The study investigates Black consumers' experiences in racially stratified marketplaces and implications for their consumer identities.

Looking for:

- Over the age of 18
- A woman
- Black and identify as a member of the Black community
- Must have not been born in the UK but moved from an African country
- Glasgow and Edinburgh

Procedure:

60- 90 minutes one-on-one interview



If you are intrested in contributing to or supporting this research, email:
tlholohelo.lekoro@strath.ac.uk





University of
Strathclyde
Business
School

Participant Information Sheet

Name of department: Strathclyde Business School

Title of the research: Bodies out of Place: Investigating Black Experiences in the Marketplace

Introduction

My name is Tlholohelo (TK) Lekoro, and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Strathclyde. I am conducting this research project as part of my PhD dissertation at the Strathclyde Business School. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the research or would like additional details about my background and qualifications related to this research topic. I am happy to provide more information about myself and my role here at the university. My goal is to ensure you are fully informed about me as the researcher and the purpose behind this research before deciding whether to participate. I want to be transparent about my position and objectives as the researcher investigating Black experiences in the marketplace. Please let me know if you need any clarification or have additional questions!

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to examine how Black women experience market spaces and how discrimination and unequal treatment affect their interactions in the marketplace. The research will explore the real-life experiences of Black women in various market contexts, such as retail, workplaces, and academia. It will also investigate how the combination of race and gender shapes consumer behaviour, shopping habits, purchasing decisions, and the economic empowerment of Black women. The research seeks to analyse the impact of racially targeted marketing practices and consumer culture on the well-being, identity formation, and social integration of Black women. The goal is to propose strategies that promote fairness, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity in marketing. By gaining a deeper understanding of these complex dynamics, this research aims to support initiatives that aim to create more equitable and inclusive marketplaces, not only for Black women but also for other marginalised communities. Additionally, this research aims to shed light on the experiences of Black consumers in the marketplace, specifically highlighting the discriminatory treatment and microaggressions that contribute to their marginalisation. By including personal stories that focus on real-life experiences, this research will reveal how modern consumer spaces may perpetuate historical social hierarchies and dynamics that position Blackness as inferior.

Do you have to take part?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose whether you wish to participate. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. Withdrawing will not affect any other aspects of how you are treated or have access to

services. There are no negative consequences for refusing to participate or for dropping out of the research at any point. Your decision to participate, not participate, or withdraw will not impact your relationship with the researchers or the university. Please let me know if you have any questions about voluntary participation or your rights as a participant. I want to ensure you understand that you are free to join or leave the research based on your judgment without any pressure.

What will you do in the project?

If you decide to take part in this research, you will be asked to participate in an interview with me lasting 60-90 minutes. We can schedule the interview at a time and location that is convenient for you. This could be at the university, a private meeting room at a public library, or another place where you feel comfortable. During the interview, I will ask you open-ended questions about your experiences in the marketplace concerning your race. The goal is to understand your experiences and perspectives related to my research objectives (listed above). With your permission, I will audio-record the interview for transcription purposes. You are free to skip any questions or stop the interview at any time. Beyond the interview, there are no other tasks or requirements for participating in this research. We will work together to find an interview date and location that fits both of our schedules.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You were invited to participate because you identify as Black and have moved to the UK from another country, residing here for 1-20 years. For this research, I am seeking to interview Black immigrants who have experience living as racial minorities and navigating multicultural marketplaces.

Participants need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Self-identify as a Black woman or of African descent.
- Born outside the UK and immigrated here within the past 20 years.
- Currently live in the UK and have done so for at least 1 year.
- Is aged 18+ years old?
- Can participate in an interview conducted in English.

I believe your perspective as a Black immigrant who has experienced acculturation and racialisation processes in the UK will make a valuable contribution to this research.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

The risks involved in participating are minimal. However, discussing experiences of discrimination may be uncomfortable. You may feel uncomfortable recounting examples of racism and prejudice. We can pause or stop the interview at any time if you feel unable to continue. There are no other anticipated risks. You will not be asked to perform any dangerous or illegal activities. Participation involves a time commitment of 1-1.5 hours for the interview. There are no other burdens or requirements for taking part.

What information is being collected in the project?

The information collected for this research includes:

- *Audio recordings of the interviews, which will later be transcribed.*
- *Transcripts of the interviews containing your responses to questions about your experiences as a Black immigrant in the UK. These may contain some indirect personal information you choose to share about your background and life experiences relevant to the research topic.*
- *Basic demographic data like your age, gender, country of origin, and length of time in the UK. This is collected directly from you.*
- *I may also take handwritten notes during the interview. These may include observational insights but will not contain direct identifiers.*

All information is being collected directly from you through your participation in a voluntary interview.

No personal data about you will be obtained from any other sources.

Who will have access to the information?

Everything you share in this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone outside the university research team, including external transcription services. Data will be pseudo-anonymised using codes instead of your real name. Any excerpts from the interviews published in the dissertation will have identifying details removed. There are legal limits to confidentiality. Data will be stored securely with password protection and encryption. Only the supervisors and I will have access. After the mandated retention period, your data will be permanently deleted.

Please note that direct quotes from your interview may be published, but these will never contain identifiers that could connect them back to you. Your participation will remain anonymous in any study results. Let me know if you have any other questions about how your privacy is protected in this research!

Where will the information be stored, and how long will it be kept for?

Information about data storage, retention and destruction should be provided here. Personal information should only be retained for as long as it is necessary. Anonymous research data can be retained indefinitely by depositing it in a suitable data repository. Funder policy and guidelines on retention periods should be adhered to.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

All personal data will be processed by data protection legislation. Please read our [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#) for more information about your rights under the legislation. *[Provide a paper*

copy if PIS is provided in paper format. Remove if you are not collecting any personal data – i.e. only collecting anonymous data with no consent form.

What happens next?

If you would like more information about this research or are interested in participating, please contact me, Tlholohelo (TK) Lekoro, Tlholohelo.lekoro@strath.ac.uk. I would be happy to provide details, answer any questions, and send you a consent form to review. The consent form explains the research and will need to be signed before we can proceed with data collection.

If you decide you do not want to participate, that is perfectly all right. Thank you for taking the time to learn about my research. Once the research is complete, I am happy to provide a summary of key findings and results. Just let me know if you would like to receive a copy once the data is analysed and finalised.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need any clarification or have additional questions! I appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in this research project.

Researchers' contact details:

Tlholohelo (TK) Lekoro: Tlholohelo.lekoro@strath.ac.uk

Chief Investigator details:

Dr. Paul Hewer

0141 548 3282

paul.hewer@strath.ac.uk

Strathclyde Business School

University of Strathclyde

199 Cathedral Street

Glasgow

G4 0QU

sbs-marketing@strath.ac.uk

+44 (0)141 548 4919

This research was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee.

[Change to Department/School Ethics Committee if required and amend the contact details below.]

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought, please contact:

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee
Research and Knowledge Exchange Services
University of Strathclyde
Graham Hills Building
50 George Street
Glasgow
G1 1QE.

Telephone: 0141 548 3707

Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

Consent Form

Name of department: Strathclyde Business School

Title of the research: Bodies Out of Place: Investigating Black Experiences in the Marketplace

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above project, and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice for Participants in Research Projects and understand how my personal information will be used and what will happen to it (i.e. how it will be stored and for how long).
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of completion, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I can request the withdrawal from the research of some personal information and that whenever researchers comply with my request. This includes the following personal data:
 - video recordings of physical tests that identify me.
 - audio recordings of interviews that identify me.
 - my personal information from transcripts.
- I understand that anonymised data (i.e. data that do not identify me personally) cannot be withdrawn once they have been included in the research.
- I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential, and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to be audio and/or video recorded as part of the project.

(PRINT NAME)	
Signature of Participant:	Date:

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

Introduction

- Could you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your background?
 - How would you describe your typical shopping or consumer experiences in general?
-

Consumer experiences

- When seeking assistance in stores, what has been your typical experience?
 - Have you ever felt watched or monitored while shopping? If so, could you describe that experience?
 - Are there spaces where you need to be more conscious of your behaviour or presence? Why?
 - How do you determine which consumer spaces feel welcoming versus those that do not?
 - Have you noticed differences in how you are treated based on how you're dressed or other aspects of your appearance?
 - Have you changed where or how you shop based on past experiences?
-

Identity

- Do you feel you need to present yourself differently in certain consumer spaces? If so, how?
 - How does your cultural identity influence your consumer choices or behaviours?
 - How do your purchasing choices reflect aspects of your identity?
 - Has shopping ever served as a form of emotional compensation or therapy for you?
-

Emotions

- What emotions typically arise for you in consumer spaces where you feel unwelcome or watched?

- How have your experiences in consumer spaces affected you over time?
 - How do you process or cope with negative experiences in consumer spaces?
-

Strategies

- What precautions do you take before or during shopping experiences to protect yourself?
 - How do you assess whether a consumer space will be safe or welcoming?
 - Have you ever modified your speech, behaviour, or appearance when entering certain spaces? If so, how?
 - Do you find yourself being extra careful about how you conduct yourself in stores? In what ways?
 - Have you ever spoken up or challenged treatment you felt was unfair? What happened?
 - Are there ways you actively resist unfair treatment in consumer spaces?
 - Have you changed your consumption patterns to support businesses that treat you with respect?
 - Do you discuss these experiences with others from your community?
-

Closing Questions:

1. What changes would you like to see in the marketplace to improve the experiences of Black women?
2. How do you think research like this can contribute to better understanding and improving marketplace experiences for Black women?