



## **Racialized Joy in Academia**

Zehra Çolak & Onur Şahin

24 April, 9:00 – 10:30, Tinbergen Zaal

This contribution examines joy as an emancipatory affect through which racialized academics enact alternative forms of belonging within and against predominantly white university institutions. Drawing on Black feminist thought, decolonial theory, and empirical material from the Joy in Academia podcast and fieldwork in Dutch and Belgian academia, we argue that joy operates as a relational, collective, and politically generative practice. We first trace genealogies of joy in Black emancipatory struggles to show how joy has historically functioned as a condition for imagining and living freedom under racial domination. We then distinguish joy from adjacent concepts such as pride to clarify its distinctive capacity to reorganize relations rather than stabilize identity or reward conformity. Finally, we conceptualize three modalities through which joy reconfigures academic belonging: subordinate, fugitive, and generative belonging. Together, these practices reveal how racialized scholars cultivate spaces of care, solidarity, and world-making that refuse conditional inclusion and expand what academic life can be.