RESEARCH OPINION

WILEY

Black Lives Matter: A perspective from three Black information systems scholars

Fay Cobb Payton[1] [ID] | Lynette Yarger[2] | Victor Mbarika[3]

[1]Poole College of Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

[2]College of Information Sciences and Technology, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA

[3]College of Business, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA

Correspondence
Fay Cobb Payton, Poole College of Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA.
Email: fcpayton@ncsu.edu

Abstract

Professional computing organisations, including the ACM, IEEE and INFORMS published statements supporting Black Lives Matter during the 2020 racial unrest in the United States. While the voices of these professional organisations are echoed from positions of power, the concerns of Black IS professors are silenced. In this opinion piece, we centre on the voices of Black professors who seek to thrive in an IS field where they are woefully underrepresented, tokenized, isolated, marginalised and excluded from positions of power. Building on the Black Lives Matter movement's momentum, we offer critical insights about our lived experiences and examine pertinent issues. These issues include systemic racism in the ivory tower and the performative nature of diversity work in the academy. In direct response to the *Help the Association of Information Systems (AIS) Build a System that Provides Equality for All*, we offer an inclusive framework for promoting transparency, justification, compliance and enforcement of the AIS's action plan for widening participation in IS.

KEYWORDS
anti-racism, Black professors, equity, inclusive excellence, information systems, racism

All authors contributed equally to this Research Opinion.

Words are necessary and helpful, but actions speak louder. Please take a moment and think about two things: what advice do you have for us and what can you do to make a part of the Information Systems field more diverse, inclusive, tolerant, respectful and just?

- Help the AIS Build a System that Provides Equality for All

1 | MOTIVATION

Black Lives Matter is a global movement that centres the lived experiences of Black people while affirming our humanity, contributions to the society and our resilience in the face of deadly violence. We use the term "Black" to signify the shared racial identity and rich cultural backgrounds of the people of African ancestry worldwide. Black Lives Matters offers a space for Black imagination and innovation to improve our existence in a world where we are systemically targeted for oppression (About BLM, 2020). While our paper focuses on our personal and collective Black experiences in the academy, we cannot separate our professional experiences from our identities as Black people. Black Lives Matters captures the contributions that Black professors can and do make, while also giving voice to the racism, marginalisation and hostility that we face in the academy.

Black IS professors face significant race-based challenges that cannot be ignored. Through our individual careers and our collective relationships with other Black professors, we bear witness to lived experiences with racism. As IS researchers with careers that span two decades, we have repeatedly seen, heard and experienced systemic barriers where Black professors are forced to seek legal advisement and are bogged down by litigation during promotions and tenure applications. Moreover, an "extra eye" is placed on Black professors, especially in the case of those that are highly productive, by non-Black colleagues who question how the Black professor can be effective in a space reserved for White academics. In the following, we highlight the areas of grant writing, promotion and tenure evaluations and onerous service to illustrate just a few of the areas where covert or oblivious discrimination has been personally experienced.

Grant writing is challenging and rarely encouraged in US business schools. Yet, highly productive Black IS professors who have received research grants are finding that promotion and tenure committees do not sufficiently weigh these fundraising activities. Rather, grant recipients face bureaucratic red tape and delays in the annual evaluation process, which is critical to faculty development, promotion and tenure and career advancement. One author earned federal grants but was criticised for not getting grants in "mainstream IS". The reason? Educational technologies were not considered mainstream. Another author secured federal grants for research on Black technology workers' career pathways, but the achievement was dismissed as lacking intellectual merit, even though the granting agency used this specific research context as the primary criterion for evaluating and awarding funding. In another instance, one author was informed that her/his college would not sign off on a grant submission because "you have never managed a grant of this amount though I am not trying to discourage you". In addition, the same author was informed by her/his academic department that grants do not count toward tenure and promotion, as "we look for the publications that results from the funding". We note that grantsmanship is difficult, time-consuming and rigorous. Grants also provide financial benefits to the university, the college and the researcher. Federal research grants in the United States, for instance, include indirect costs which can exceed 50% to 60% of the award. The funds associated with these rates are used by the university to cover administrative salaries, facilities, utilities and equipment depreciation and by the college for facility improvements and equipment and software purchases. Indirect and direct funds allocated to the faculty support their research projects, including undergraduate and graduate research assistants, as well as postdoctoral fellows.

Normally penetrating promotion and tenure evaluations are further compounded for Black professors by deans and department chairs over skepticism concerning the contribution and quality of the Black professor's scholarship, a skepticism to which White counterparts are not subjected. For example, one author had a dean who spent 6 months reading their published journal articles before being allowed to apply for promotion to full professor.

Another Black professor going up for tenure had her/his department chair call co-authors to find out the level of contribution made by the professor. As a result of distrust of our scholarship, many Black professors receive tenure and promotion to associate professor, but they rarely advance to the Full Professor ranks, despite having scholarly productivity and professional accomplishments that meet or exceed the threshold.

In our departments, we are often isolated as the only Black person on the faculty and overburdened with service work ("We need 'diversity' on the committee") that is devalued and takes away from research productivity. The superficial appropriation of Black professors by IS departments, colleges and institutional media, such as university magazines and news stories, portrays mere tokenism and a false sense of diversity. It is highly performative and does little to communicate inclusive excellence, especially when scholarly designations, leadership roles and endowed professorships are void of Black professors (Johnson & Bryan, 2017). This sense of tokenism even occurs for the very few Black professors who have earned full professorships, despite the scrutiny and structural barriers they have experienced. Furthermore, even in the AIS, there is an acute lack of Black professors in leadership roles and on the editorial boards of the "Basket of 8" journals.

The "Report to the College of Senior Scholars" (Beath, Chan, Davison, Dennis, & Recker, 2021) offers additional insights into the AIS's current state relative to the editorial board diversity at the "Basket of 8" journals and concluded:

There are no Academic members who are Black or of African descent on the board of ISR; the addition of one member of Black or African descent would enable the journal to fall within the five standard deviations range. There are also no Academic members who are Black or of African descent on the board of JSIS. However, because of the size of their editorial board, this falls within the range of what can be reasonably expected. EJIS has one more Black board member than reasonably expected. The other five journals have either 1 or 2 board members who are Black or of African descent. These numbers are within the five standard deviations range for those journals.

At the *Information Systems Journal*, among the 63 Senior and Associate Editors, the following ethnic groups/numbers can be identified: Black (2); Chinese (21); Indigenous (1); Indian Sub-continent (6); Middle East (2); Latin American (3); Asian (not Chinese or Indian sub-continent) (1); White (27). While IS journal editors are acutely aware of and seeking to redress this underrepresentation, Black professors' research manuscripts, especially work that examines technology in the Black Diaspora, are reviewed by non-Black peers who often lack the cultural competency to fairly assess our scholarship.

The plight of Black professors is not unique to the IS field and is well-documented in the higher education literature. Despite evidence that Black professors offer unique perspectives to the academy that benefit all students (Smith, 2013), Black professors are vastly outnumbered, both in raw numbers and the relative percentage of faculty of our same ethnic groups, in the classroom, at the ranks of full, endowed or chaired professorships (Johnson & Bryan, 2017). Black and other demographically underrepresented researchers outperform their majority peers in terms of research novelty, but our fresh perspectives and contributions to knowledge are devalued and discounted by the majority (Hofstra et al., 2020). As previously noted, we face biases in faculty hiring, grant writing and research evaluation. We are largely absent from the editorial boards of prestigious journals, overlooked as keynote speakers and excluded from the professional networks that pave the way to leadership roles. Further, Black professors tend to have heavier service loads and spend more time mentoring other faculty and students than our racial and ethnic majority counterparts (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017).

For some AIS members reading this paper, the snap reaction may be that Black professors should step up and do what it takes to "make it" in the discipline. While many of us have and continue to "step up", the fact remains that these racialized experiences, which have often been met with conscious or unconscious dismissals or attempts to silence our critical voices, are commonplace in the IS world and are our lived experiences. Dismissals and silencing tactics determine who shall speak and is an assumed power of institutional privilege by those in the majority (Mills, 2000). American novelist, Ellison (1952) put it best in his famous book, *Invisible Man*:

I was never more hated than when I tried to be honest. Or when, even as just now, I've tried to articulate exactly what I felt to be the truth. No one was satisfied.

We, the authors, are encouraging the AIS and its leadership to move beyond the underrepresentation of Black professors and actively work to address the equity and inclusion of Black professors. Not only is diversifying the field a moral and ethical imperative, but reducing disparities in organisational settings also leads to institutional benefits such as improvements in creativity and problem-solving capabilities, financial outcomes and innovation. In *Closing the Racial Inequality Gaps: Global Perspectives & Solutions Report* (2020), Citi GPS reported that if wages, education, housing and investment disparities were closed 20 years ago, $16 trillion could have been added to the US economy. This report also cites a Boston Consulting Group international survey that revealed a strong and statistically significant correlation between the diversity of management teams and overall innovation. "Firms reporting above-average diversity on their management teams also reported innovation revenue that was 19 percentage points higher than that of companies with below-average leadership diversity — 45% of total revenue versus just 26%" (Citi GPS, 2020, p. 80).

We expect that this opinion piece will, at the very least, inspire a conversation that results in meaningful actions that go beyond written statements condemning racism. In 2020 and 2021, collective movements for racial justice have occupied the US media almost as much as the COVID-19 pandemic. Institutions of higher learning have unequivocally condemned bigotry of all forms and begun enacting new policies to address racism on their campuses. The question is what will be the efficacy of these talking points and calls for action and how will accountability be measured and enforced? As one academic administrator opined, we must not only talk about this, but we must also do something about it (Schwager, 2020).

2 | SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE IVORY TOWER

Although academia is assumed to be a dynamic, untarnished and neutral tower of racial change in society, there is a long history of racial disparity, oppression and dominance in universities and colleges in the United States. Race, as a communally created classification of identity-based on physical manifestation (ie, Black, Brown, White), has significantly determined the social fabric of contemporary society (Fleras & Elliott, 1996; Harman, 1984). According to Fleras and Elliott (1996, p. 81), "systemic racism is the name given to this subtle yet powerful form of discrimination within the institutional framework of society". Systemic racism is deeply entrenched in the United States and in global contexts. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, for example, the International Monetary Fund (2020) reported the negative economic impacts of racism to Black people in France, Brazil, Australia and China and concluded that Black persons are confronted with income and career inequality in each of these countries.

Although there is a growing appearance of support for racial and ethnic diversity within universities across the United States, there is concern among Black professors about the lack of practical attention given to longstanding systemic disparities, including racial bias in hiring decisions and opportunities for advancement. Racism is entrenched within the structure (rules, organisation), function (norms, goals) and process (procedures) of our academic institutions. The standards and expectations inherent within colleges and universities may be universal and ostensibly colour-blind, yet they have unintended but real effects that exclude those outside the mainstream (Fleras & Elliott, 1996). According to Garbee (2017), for example, the increase in demand for IS/IT career opportunities has not translated into equal opportunity for minorities, which points to inequities in the pre-college educational system as an explanatory factor for low representation of minorities in computing (information systems, information sciences and computer science) (Zweben & Bizot, 2018).

According to AACSB data, as reported in Payton, White, and Mbarika (2005), Blacks compromised 3.2% of all full-time business school faculty. The number of Black, Hispanic and Native American IS professors was less than 3%. As of October 2019, just 4% of US business school professors are Black, Hispanic or Native Americans. That

equates to, on average, less than one underrepresented professor at each of the 1500 AACSB member institutions in the United States (Milano, 2019). Future trends are not likely to show a substantial increase in Black, Hispanic or Native American professors. This especially is the case as IS merges with other business school departments and experiences enrolment declines, while computer science and information science enrolments experience growth.

In addition to these trends, Payton, Yarger, and Pinter (2018a, 2018b) found that Black professors and students were adversely impacted by the prevalence of US media coverage associated with racial unrest following the murders of numerous Black citizens by the police. In 2020, US police killed 1127 people (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). Although half of the people shot and killed by police are White, Black Americans are shot at a disproportionate rate (The Washington Post, 2021). Black people were 28% of those killed despite being only 13% of the population (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). Black people in the United States are three times more likely to be killed by police than White people and 1.3 times more likely to be killed while unarmed compared to White people (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). In terms of accountability, 98.3% of killings by police since 2013 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime (Mapping Police Violence, 2020).

In 2020, there were only 18 days where no one in the United States was killed by a police officer (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). Not only are we traumatised by the persistent state violence inflicted on Black communities, we are coping with the compounded impacts of everyday microaggressions that lead to racial battle fatigue that can prevent or prolong career progression (Arnold, Crawford, & Khalifa, 2016). The normalisation of racism in the academy and in the society is severely detrimental to human growth and is psychologically damaging to Black people (Black, 2004; Carr & Klassen, 1996; Fleras & Elliott, 1996; Harman, 1984).

Although the authors are writing from their lived experiences as Black professors in the United States, our peers throughout the African Diaspora also recount experiences with systemic racism in universities. For example, a Black colleague in the UK laments that although (s)he has a degree in pharmacy, two master's degrees and a doctorate, (s)he is still working as a lecturer in a university partnership institution. "There is no doubt that I would have done better career-wise, if I was a member of the dominant ethnic group in the UK!" Another describes how racist beliefs about intelligence shape students' decision making when selecting a research advisor. "Many students prefer to be supervised by White supervisors. A Black academic could be more qualified on the topic, even better published, but given the choice, students go for the White colleague. Of course, these issues tend to reduce the career progression opportunities for the Black professor".

Black faculty working in South African universities also shared their experiences with racism. An IS professor, for example, described how White colleagues make repeated claims that the Computer Science and Information Systems disciplines are a preserve for whiteness because computers are not the technology for Black people. Another Black South African professor in the IS department describes how (s)he entered academia in 2016, 22 years into the so-called post-Apartheid South Africa. While the departmental environment was collegial, her/his arrival coincided with the #RhodesMustFall student protests for institutional transformation including the hiring of more Black university staff and the decolonization of the curriculum. The professor's support of the #RhodesMustFall movement and his/her blackness, therefore, became a psychological burden to grapple with constantly.

> *The first aspect of this burden was the persistent thought about whether I had been employed merely to tick the "transformation box" or whether I was hired for my wealth of tech industry experience (12 years) and the two Masters degrees I had obtained while working. This thought hounded me despite my realisation that there were White colleagues already in the employ of the department who were far less qualified than I was and were now senior in rank. The results of carrying this burden resulted in, firstly, a need to constantly prove myself and secondly, the feeling of being under constant surveillance - knowing that it was possible for my contract not to be renewed should I fail to meet the artificial expectations set by my superiors. I call the expectations artificial because in retrospect, they seemed to only apply to me as a new Black "othered" body in the space. The second debilitating aspect of my burden of blackness was the idea that the students at my current university, a historically White university in a majority Black country, did not necessarily and naturally*

view Black locals like myself, who have historically bore the brunt of the dehumanizing and inferiorizing system of apartheid, as worthy of the authority of "Lecturer". Even the Black local students, who are mostly admitted to the university from former White private schools, which are currently still inaccessible to the majority of local Blacks for a variety of socio-economic reasons, also identify the role of "Lecturer" with whiteness. The final aspect of the burden was the triple weight of the moral, political and historical responsibility to survive and help other fellow Blacks (particularly Black students) to survive the isolating, discriminating and historically racist culture embedded in the hidden curriculum of the institution.

Racial inequality, discrimination and racism are not, unfortunately, facts of the past but are recurrent phenomena requiring critical attention. As Diep (2020) stated when asked about the motivation for starting #BlackInTheIvory, higher learning institutions are not an exception to the scourge of racism. Moreover, racism in higher learning institutions cannot be camouflaged by a false sense of security enshrined in universities' nondiscrimination values and solidarity policies. Anti-racist theorists Fleras and Elliott (1996, p. 382) expressed that racism in the ivory tower has elicited institutional responses ranging from denial to joining the bandwagon to acceptance. We further posit that the responses to combating racism are not merely about what happens but also about what does not occur. Many anti-racist concessions have been seen by Black professors as devices for calming troublesome constituents through conflict management and damage control. However, effective solutions depend heavily upon the collective efforts of the media, public institutions, governments and professional and academic associations, including the AIS.

Our work calls for equitable inclusion beyond the gender lens as the AIS attempts to (re)examine itself, along with the issuance of diversity statements. As noted in Payton et al. (2018a) and reported in Misra and Lundquist (2015), Black professors can experience negative impacts on their careers due to institutional racism, psychological departure and isolation. Furthermore, repeated microaggressions can have macro-impacts such as implicit bias, which can be characterised as unconscious assumptions that Black professors are less qualified to advance through the academic ranks and into academic leadership roles (Misra & Lundquist, 2015).

3 | CRITICAL LENS OF BLACK PROFESSORS IN IS

Given the motivation for this opinion piece, we advise that IS, as a discipline, needs to apply a critical lens to examine itself and consider how the exclusionary and racist actions that marginalise its Black professors also limit its ability to innovate. The IS community, specifically its elite "Basket of 8" journals, has demonstrated a myopic lens of scholarship on diversity and representation exploring Black people's experiences as written by Black professors. Often positioned in the social inclusion landscape, this scholarship fails to embrace inclusive excellence, namely equity. Much of the diversity work in IS has centred on gender diversity and takes either a monolithic view of "women" or individual differences. Both views lack a sufficient focus on power relations that exist within gender groups. Embracing the concept of intersectionality as offered by several professors (Andersen, 2001; Crenshaw, 1989; Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019), Black IS scholarly works point to the need to examine phenomena at the intersection of race and gender along with the power structures that influence one's lived experiences (Brock, Kvasny, & Hales, 2010; Kvasny & Payton, 2018; Mbarika, Payton, Kvasny, & Amadi, 2007; Payton et al., 2018a; Payton & Berki, 2019).

We further advise that IS needs to critically examine its use of the "pipeline" framing for the underrepresentation of Black professors. In 1996, the KPMG Foundation started The PhD Project IS Doctoral Student Association, which provided a catalyst to increase Black, Hispanic and Native Americans' representation in the discipline. Payton and Jackson (1999) documented the concerns of then IS doctoral students affiliated with "The PhD Project". Later research noted a continuation of significant racial and ethnic inequities experienced by these former IS doctorates as they moved into faculty roles, which negatively impacts the retention and representation of Black, Hispanic and Native American professors (Payton et al., 2005). Thus, despite the laudable efforts of The PhD Project, actionable and strategic interventions are still needed for addressing the systemic racism that limits inclusive excellence.

Furthermore, the pipeline is a simple metaphor that fails to capture the systemic, structural and exclusive processes associated with career attainment, progression and experiences. As noted in Cannady, Greenwald, and Harris (2014), the pipeline metaphor "misleadingly suggests a universal and lock-step trajectory toward science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers that fails to describe nearly half of all who end up in these careers; second, it obfuscates inquiry into a range of factors that decades of theory and research have established as critical to understanding the long and winding path toward a career" (p. 445). Garbee (2017) offered that the pipeline thinking disregards how individuals with all types of science backgrounds could positively contribute to our economy and to our knowledge. We are advocating for a shift from conceptualising underrepresentation as a pipeline problem solved by adding more people of colour to an unjust system to an equity enigma best addressed by adapting institutional policies and practices to support inclusive excellence.

To achieve inclusive excellence, US institutional and college/school level modus operandi have included the hiring of a few (usually tokenized) Blacks administrative positions such as chief diversity officers (CDOs). CDOs are responsible for leading diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, including responding to racial events impacting the experiences of campus stakeholders. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, nearly two-thirds of all US higher education institutions, particularly predominately white institutions (PWIs), now have a diversity officer on staff with 30% of these positions created in the past 5 years (Jackson-Jolley & Rodriguez-Rentas, 2020). The rate of growth of CDOs in the US higher education context does not mirror that of Black faculty hired though a significant number of CDOs are Black (or persons of colour). Often times, CDO's work is based on fixing people rather than the systems which perpetuate structural and racial barriers noted in this opinion piece (Alex-Assensoh, 2018). In reality, such positions typically hold no administrative clout in department or university decision making, are fraught with limited budgets and staff and are held to an excessive standard, to address all racial, gender, ethnic, generational groups equally and with success (Jackson-Jolley & Rodriguez-Rentas, 2020).

4 | STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS: A CHALLENGE FOR AIS

As global protests against police brutality were broadcast live on Twitter, Instagram and other platforms in the days following the killing of George Floyd, many organisations carefully crafted public responses to the protests. In these responses, historically apolitical organisations like the AIS boldly took a stand to rebuke racism and discrimination. However, these aesthetically pleasing responses follow a standard template that is "nearly identical in their vague phrasing and awkward execution" and uses bland language to associate themselves with the growing anti-racism movement without upsetting anyone (Mull, 2020). In responding with a public statement that "condemn[s] anti-Black racism and all forms of racism, discrimination and human rights injustices that continue to plague our society", the AIS presents core values of "inclusivity, justice and respect for our members" and commits to the following eight actions to fight against racism (Dennis, Fitzgerald, & Chau, 2020):

1. Simplifying the reporting of code of conduct violations
2. Embarking on a major diversity and inclusion study initiative to identify, track and mitigate bias across the IS field
3. Reporting on diversity and inclusion activities for all AIS Communities
4. Diversifying the editorial boards of the "Basket of 8" journals
5. Assessing and improving the diversity and inclusion of AIS conferences
6. Expanding scholarship programs for Black and other underserved groups to join AIS and attend conferences
7. Expanding the number of journals and conferences that are open access
8. Encourage collaborations with SIGs

Absent from this list and perhaps what is most needed from the perspective of Black professors who repeatedly witness public statements with diversity goals and action plans, is a process for managing accountability. To make

these actions more than empty rhetoric, we offer the Dowell and Jackson (2020) framework for producing organisational accountability through data-driven progress reporting and a trust-driven culture of inclusion:

1. **Transparency** regarding the data, details and outcomes of these eight actions to foster the trust of Black professors
2. **Justification** for why the AIS is taking these specific eight steps to address racism and discrimination
3. **Compliance** to the action plan, which includes implementing checks and balances for oversight and monitoring and evaluating progress to ensure accountability
4. **Enforcement** that is prepared to respond to shortfalls and committed to continuous dialogue

While the Black Lives Matter movement dominates our collective consciousness, historically apolitical organisations feel compelled to respond. In their public statement, the AIS acknowledges the racism that inflicts seemingly unending suffering in Black people's lives. However, the AIS public statement is viewed sceptically by the authors because the statement avoids political risk and sets the AIS outside of the racist systems in which it exists, reproduces and legitimises. A study of AIS members' perceptions about inclusion and exclusion, which seeks to provide a baseline for measuring future change, also fails to provide insight into how racialized minorities experience the AIS community (Windeler et al., 2020). Based on our experiences and those of other Black IS professors in our professional networks, the IS discipline has a dismal track record regarding anti-Black racism and discrimination within its ranks. As we recount stories from our long histories of negative experiences with racism, microaggressions and exclusion in the IS community, we necessarily question the current statements of solidarity and action. "Woke-washing", which is superficially aligning with progressive causes while continuing to subjugate Black people, is problematic and will not suffice (Dowell & Jackson, 2020; Todd, 2020). The authors are also skeptical because the AIS statement does not admit that there are aspects of this moment that they cannot personally understand because they benefit from privileges that are not enjoyed by Black professors.

Recognition as AIS Senior Scholars or Fellows can only be achieved through meeting one or more criteria: AIS Leo and Fellow awardees, "Basket of 8" journal editors, AIS Presidents, ICIS conference and program chairs. However, Black IS professors are not widely presented in these leadership positions, which leads us to conclude that our colleagues do not see us as worthy of such recognition. This type of implicit bias is rooted in the false consciousness about the intellectual abilities of Black peoples of postcolonial societies (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Mills, 2000; Prasad & Qureshi, 2017). For the Black person who survives the gauntlet of institutional barriers on the pathway to earning a PhD, they must continue fighting the institutional barriers that stall or halt career progression. The few who reach the full professor rank are still not seen as having accomplishments worthy of senior leadership in the AIS community and the editorial boards of the premiere IS journals. To put it in social theoretic terms, they are invisible (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly, 2006; Sesko & Biernat, 2010): they do not exist in the consciousness of the dominant group entrenched in postcolonial academic societies (Mills, 2000). There is a cultivated ignorance that stereotypes Black people as exceptional in sports and entertainment, while deliberately making them invisible in other professions (Mills, 2007; Smith et al., 2019). The practice of making invisible those whom we do not want to accept is a learned cognitive practice (Doane, 2004; Mills, 2013).

The AIS has taken the first steps of writing a public stance against racism and committing to action. Now, will AIS follow through on these commitments? More importantly, will AIS work to dismantle the structural inequalities that the IS community has perpetuated? Black professors are holding the AIS accountable and pushing the IS community to do better.

We know more work from the AIS leadership and broader IS community is needed. We also know that we can only reflect on the experiences of Black people. We are not ignoring the fact that other minoritized groups may face similar challenges. Instead, we recognise that we are not in a place of authority to talk about their experiences. We are intentionally and unapologetically focused on the lives of Black people. If the IS community supports Black lives, then systemic barriers must be taken seriously, discussed and addressed through collective action.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available and are listed in references: Citi GPS (2020), Milano (2019), Misra and Lundquist (2015), Payton et al. (2018a), Zweben and Bizot (2018), Beath et al. (2021), International Monetary Fund (2020), Mapping Police Violence (2020) and The Washington Post (2021).

ORCID

Fay Cobb Payton https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1154-8488

REFERENCES

About BLM. (2020). *Black Lives Matter*. Retrieved from https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/

Alex-Assensoh, Y. M. (2018, June 5). Hiring a diversity officer is only the first step. Here are the next 7. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Andersen, M. L. (2001). Restructuring for whom: Race, class, gender and the ideology of invisibility. *Sociological Forum*, 16(2), 181–201.

Arnold, N. W., Crawford, E. R., & Khalifa, M. (2016). Psychological heuristics and faculty of color: Racial battle fatigue and tenure/promotion. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87, 890–919.

Beath, C., Chan, Y., Davison, R. Dennis, A., & Recker, J. (2021). *Editorial board diversity at the basket of eight journals: A Report to the College of Senior Scholars*, Communications of the Association for Information Systems (CAIS), 48. Retrieved from https://cdn.ymaws.com/aisnet.org/resource/resmgr/insider/insider_2020/Journal_Board_Diversity_Repo.pdf

Black, L. (2004). Ivory towers? The academy and racism. In I. Law, D. Phillips, & L. Turney (Eds.), *Institutional racism in higher education* (pp. 1–7). Trentham Books.

Brock, A., Kvasny, L., & Hales, K. (2010). Cultural appropriations of technical capital: Black women, weblogs and the digital divide. *Information Communication and Society*, 13(7), 1040–1062.

Cannady, M. A., Greenwald, E., & Harris, K. N. (2014). Problematizing the STEM pipeline metaphor: Is the STEM pipeline metaphor serving our students and the STEM workforce? *Science Education*, 98(3), 443–460. https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.21108

Carr, P. R., & Klassen, T. R. (1996). The role of racial minority teachers in anti-racist education. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 28(2), 126–138.

Citi GPS. (2020). *Closing the Racial Inequality Gaps: Global Perspectives & Solutions Report*. Retrieved from https://www.citivelocity.com/citigps/closing-the-racial-inequality-gaps/

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989*, Article 8.

Dennis, A., Fitzgerald, B., & Chau, P. (2020). *Help AIS build a system that provides equality for all*. Retrieved from https://aisnet.org/news/511553/Help-AIS-Build-a-System-that-Provides-Equality-for-All.htm

Diep, F. (2020, June 9). 'I was fed up': How #BlackInTheIvory got started and what its founders want to see next. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/i-was-fed-up-how-blackintheivory-got-started-and-what-its-founders-want-to-see-next

Doane, A. (2004). White-blindness: The dominant-group experience. In *Privilege: A reader* (pp. 81–95). Routledge Publishing.

Dowell, E., & Jackson, M. (2020, July 27). Woke-washing your company won't cut it. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2020/07/woke-washing-your-company-wont-cut-it

Ellison, R. (1952). *Invisible man*. Random House.

Fleras, A., & Elliott, J. (1996). *Unequal relations: An introduction to race, ethnic and Aboriginal dynamics in Canada*. Prentice Hall.

Franklin, A. J., Boyd-Franklin, N., & Kelly, S. (2006). Racism and invisibility: Race-related stress, emotional abuse and psychological trauma for people of color. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6(2-3), 9–30.

Garbee, E. (2017). *The problem with the pipeline*. Retrieved from https://slate.com/technology/2017/10/the-problem-with-the-pipeline-metaphor-in-stem-education.html

Griffin, K. A., & Reddick, R. J. (2011). Surveillance and sacrifice: Gender differences in the mentoring patterns of Black professors at predominantly White research universities. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(5), 1032–1057.

Harman, G. (1984). Conceptual and theoretical issues. In J. R. Hough (Ed.), *Educational policy: An international survey* (pp. 13–28). Croom Helm.

Hofstra, B., Kulkarni, V., Galvez, S., He, B., Jurafsky, D., & McFarland, D. (2020). The diversity-innovation paradox in science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 117(17), 9284–9291.

International Monetary Fund. (2020). *What Racism Costs Us All*. Retrieved from https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/09/pdf/the-economic-cost-of-racism-losavio.pdf

Jackson-Jolley, A., & Rodriguez-Rentas, J. A. (2020). *Higher education's misguided obsession with diversity officers*. Retrieved from https://blog.shrm.org/executive/blogpost/Higher-Education%E2%80%99s-Misguided-Obsession-with-Diversity-Officers

Johnson, L., & Bryan, N. (2017). Using our voices, losing our bodies: Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and the spirit murders of Black male professors in the academy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(2), 163–177.

Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(1), 1–27.

Kvasny, L., & Payton, F. C. (2018). Managing hypervisibility in the HIV prevention information seeking practices of Black female college students. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 69(6), 798–806.

Mapping Police Violence. (2020). Retrieved from https://mappingpoliceviolence.org

Mbarika, V., Payton, F. C., Kvasny, L., & Amadi, A. (2007). IT education and workforce participation: A new era for women in Kenya? *The Information Society*, 23(1), 1–18.

Milano, B. (2019). *Faculty diversity in business schools: 25 years in the making*. Retrieved from https://www.aacsb.edu/blog/2019/october/faculty-diversity-in-business-schools-25-years-in-the-making

Mills, C. W. (2000). Race and the social contract tradition. *Social Identities*, 6(4), 441–462.

Mills, C. W. (2007). White ignorance. In S. Sullivan & N. Tuana (Eds.), *Race and epistemologies of ignorance* (pp. 11–38). SUNY Press.

Mills, C. W. (2013). White ignorance and hermeneutical injustice: A comment on Medina and Fricker. *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective*, 3(1), 38–43.

Misra, J., & Lundquist, J. (2015, June 26). Diversity and the ivory ceiling. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/06/26/essay-diversity-issues-and-midcareer-faculty-members

Mull, A. (2020, June 3). Brands have nothing real to say about racism, *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/06/brands-racism-protests-amazon-nfl-nike/612613

Payton, F. C., & Berki, E. (2019). Countering the negative image of women in computing. *Communications of the ACM*, 62(5), 56–63.

Payton, F. C., & Jackson, C. (1999). Diversity in IS: What are current Ph.D. Students saying using GDSS? *ACM SIGCPR Computer Personnel*, 20(3), 27–39.

Payton, F. C., White, S., & Mbarika, V. (2005). A re-examination of racioethnic imbalance of IS doctorates: Changing the face of the IS classroom. *Journal of the AIS*, 6(1), 37–51.

Payton, F. C., Yarger, L., & Pinter, A. (2018a). (Text)Mining microaggressions literature: Implications impacting Black computing faculty. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 87(3), 217–229.

Payton, F. C., Yarger, L., & Pinter, A. (2018b). Manifesting its ugly roots: Text mining mental health literature and college students. *Journal of Medical Internet Research – Mental Health*, 5(4), 1–12.

Prasad, A., & Qureshi, T. (2017). Race and racism in an elite postcolonial context: Reflections from investment banking. *Work, Employment and Society*, 31(2), 352–362.

Schwager, P. (2020, June 2). Us or them. *ECUCOB Brief*.

Sesko, A. K., & Biernat, M. (2010). Prototypes of race and gender: The invisibility of Black women. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46(2), 356–360.

Smith, A. (2013). *It's not because you're Black: Addressing issues of racism and underrepresentation of African Americans in academia*. University Press of America.

Smith, A. N., Watkins, M. B., Ladge, J. J., & Carlton, P. (2019). Making the invisible visible: Paradoxical effects of intersectional invisibility on the career experiences of executive Black women. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(6), 1705–1734.

Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group. (2017). The burden of invisible work in academia: Social inequalities and time use in five university departments. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 39, 228–245.

The Washington Post. (2021). *Fatal force. Police shooting database*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/?tid=usw_passupdatepg

Todd, S. (2020, June 3). CEOs are finally talking about racism. Will it change anything? *Quartz at Work*. Retrieved from https://qz.com/work/1864328/ceo-statements-on-race-matter-more-than-you-think/

Windeler, J., Petter, S., Chudoba, K., Coleman, E., Fox, G., & Chapman, T. (2020). In or out? Perceptions of inclusion and exclusion among AIS members. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 46(5), 92–116.

Zweben, S. H., & Bizot, E. B. (2018). 2017 Taulbee survey. *Computing Research News*, 27(5), 2–48. Retrieved from https://cra.org/crn/2018/05/2017-cra-taulbee-survey-another-year-of-record-undergrad-enrollment-doctoral-degree-production-steady-while-masters-production-rises-again

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Fay Cobb Payton is a Professor of Information Technology/Analytics and a named University Faculty Scholar at North Carolina State University. She is an American Council on Education Leadership Fellow. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings and book chapters. Her research examines AI fairness/bias, data curation and analytics, artifact design, healthcare disparities, STEM/tech leadership inclusion, innovation & entrepreneurship. She is also the author of Leveraging Intersectionality: Seeing and Not Seeing. Email: fcpayton@ncsu.edu

Lynette (Kvasny) Yarger holds a joint appointment as Associate Professor at the College of Information Sciences and Technology and Assistant Dean for Equity and Inclusion at the Schreyer Honors College at the Pennsylvania State University. She has published extensively on critical research approaches to computing that explore the intersection of race and gender, with a particular emphasis on the reproduction of inequality. Email: lyarger@ist.psu.edu

Victor Mbarika is the Stallings Distinguished International Scholar and an MIS professor at East Carolina University. He has authored over 250 academic publications in the form of books, peer reviewed journals, conference proceedings and book chapters. Much of his research is on technology transfer in resource-poor settings. Mbarika is President, Board of Trustees, of The Information and Communication Technology University with multiple campuses based in developing countries. He is also a philanthropist and has funded multiple ICT projects and scholarships worldwide. Email: victor@mbarika.com