Making Black Lives Matter in academia: a Black feminist call for collective action against anti-blackness in the academy

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Abstract

In this article, as have many Black women scholars in the past, we again call for collective action against anti-blackness and White supremacy in the academy. Drawing from black feminist theory, we discuss the long history of Black women academics' activism against anti-black racism and introduce the current movement: Black Lives Matter (BLM). Although BLM is often construed as resisting anti-black violence outside the academy, it is also relevant for within the academy wherein anti-blackness is likely to be manifested as disdain, disregard, and disgust for Black faculty and students. We discuss some ways in which anti-blackness and liberal White supremacy are manifested in the lives of Black faculty and students, and propose that non-Black allies have key roles to play in resisting them. Like second-hand cigarette smoke that harms everyone in proximity, anti-blackness and White supremacy harm us all, and a shared movement is needed to dismantle them.

Keywords: allies; anti-blackness; Black Lives Matter; discrimination; social movements

> Some problems we share as women, some we do not. You fear your children will grow up to join the patriarchy and testify against you, we fear our children will be dragged from a car and shot down in the street, and you will turn your backs upon the reasons they are dying. (Lorde, 2007, p. 119, citing 1980 speech)

Describing profound differences in feminist standpoints of Black and White women, scholar activist Audre Lorde presented the sobering words in the opening quote at a colloquium at Amherst College in 1980. More than forty years later, Black mothers in the United States still have this fear. Significant differences in perspectives and experiences of Black and White women have been discussed for generations (e.g., Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Breines, 2006; Collins, 2000; Cooper, 2000; hooks, 1994; Hurtado, 1989; May, 2020; Sholock, 2012; Terrell, 1940) and we will not rehash this literature here. Instead, we call for White women to be aware of these differences and, beyond awareness, to reject complicity and the spoils of anti-blackness and White supremacy (hooks, 1994). In her work on White anti-racist feminism, Sholock (2012) argues that for effective coalition building, White women must acknowledge their privilege and admit ignorance and epistemic uncertainty in some situations. Because social injustice is a collective problem that harms us all, we call for collective action in the war against it, as have many others (Collins, 2000; Cooper, 2000; Dar, Liu, Dy, & Brewis, 2020; Meikle, 2020).

In their article "The B-School is Racist: Act Up!", Dar et al. (2020, p.2) make an "urgent call for scholars of colour to collectively act up to radically challenge the white supremacist nature of business schools, even as it plays out differently in local contexts." Although such activism may be particularly hard in B-schools (Contu, 2020), many Black B-school scholars are indeed acting up, writing and publishing about activism, anti-blackness, discrimination, and

racism a great deal (e.g., Bell, Leopold, Berry, & Hall, 2018; Bell & Nkomo, 1999; Holmes, 2019; Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014; Roberts, Mayo, & Thomas, 2019). As Black and non-Black people are now participating in the Black Lives Matter movement, we propose that this collective resistance to anti-blackness and White supremacy is also needed in B-schools and other academic spaces.

We begin with a brief history of Black women academics' activism in the United States, drawing from Black feminist theory and noting the long and continued history of such scholar activism. Next, we describe the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and its mission. We then discuss the meanings of "anti-blackness," "liberal White supremacy," and their presence in and suggestions for addressing them in academia. We conclude with a call to action for allies to more collectively, actively participate in the struggle to eradicate anti-blackness and White supremacy in the academy "even when the struggles are not their own" and even in the face of individual and institutional resistance to change (Contu, 2020; Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019; Holmes, 2019; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2019; Weatherall, 2019).

BLACK WOMEN'S STANDPOINT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LEGACY

A premise of standpoint theory is that people in certain groups who share experiences based on their location in a hierarchical social order will encounter similar constraints and opportunities. Longstanding institutional power relations which oppress these groups will engender knowledge borne of shared experiences (Collins, 1997). Empirical research supports common perspectives among Black women and often Black men in the United States (Harnois, 2010) regarding impacts of many shared anti-black, dehumanizing, at times life-threatening experiences. However, Black women's location within the intersection of race and gender provides a unique angle from which to not only understand anti-blackness but to also to work for

social change (Collins, 2000). Black women have a long history of what Drake and Clayton (1970) refer to as being "race women"—forceful and outspoken about the conditions of Black people. Black women in the United States have been publicly working for deep social change since before the end of legalized slavery in 1863 (James, 2002). Not surprisingly, as soon as Black women had access to higher education in the late 19th century, they also began working from within educational institutions.

Anna Julia Cooper, whose mother was enslaved by Cooper's male relative, earned a PhD in the early 20th century. She was a teacher, writer, political and social activist, public speaker, and strong advocate for Black women's access to education (Keller, 1999). Another late 19th century teacher and activist, Mary Church Terrell was the child of parents who were fathered by slave owners and who had been enslaved in the early years of their lives. Terrell earned undergraduate and master's degrees, taught at the high school and university levels, and used her education and financial privilege to advocate against lynching, for all women's right to vote, and for inclusion of Blacks in professional organizations such as the American Association of University Women (Chittenden, 1975). Alice Dunbar Nelson's life work was writing fiction, columns for news outlets, and scholarly papers; teaching; and advocating for fairness. As did Cooper and Terrell, in her profession, Dunbar Nelson confronted issues that faced Black Americans, including in education, voting rights, religious organizations, health care, and women's place in society (Adams, Zagarell, & Gebhard, 2016; Dagbovie, 2004; Emery, 2016). Cooper, Terrell, Dunbar Nelson, and countless other Black women understood the need to fight for institutional change in educational, social, economic, and political systems. They also understood the power of allies and implored White women and men to use their resources to help in the pursuit of change.

In this article, four Black women scholars continue the work of our foremothers through our teaching, research, and activism and also continue calling on anti-racist allies to participate in this work. In this societal inflection point, where there appears to be a possibility of change in the centuries-old oppression of Black people in the United States, we focus on needed change in academic institutions. We use as lenses our backgrounds and journeys as assistant, associate, and full professors working in a large public "minority-majority institution," mid-sized private institutions in the United States, and a public university in post-apartheid South Africa. We are from two different generations and are first, second, or third generations of Black female professors, in different disciplines. Our collective standpoint in writing about this topic is drawn from decades of formal schooling, including university degrees in communication and journalism, engineering, entrepreneurship, finance, and management from diverse U.S. institutions. Our experiences as solo or one of two Black women (and no Black men) in each doctoral student cohort or faculty, in predominantly White or "diverse" (but few Blacks) private, public, large, and medium-sized universities in the United States and South Africa, informed our perspectives. We apply these perspectives and our resulting ways of viewing academia, scholarship, and anti-blackness in academia, to the ideas in this article. We call for collective actions to challenge anti-blackness and liberal white supremacy as they manifest in academia, in support of the true mission of BLM. Like second-hand cigarette smoke (Chrobot-Mason, Ragins, & Linnehan, 2013) that sends toxins to everyone in proximity, anti-blackness and White supremacy harm *us all*, and we need a shared movement to dismantle them (e.g., Gibson et al., 2020).

ABOUT THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT, FROM BLACK LIVES MATTER

Although the Black Lives Matter[1] movement is relatively new, as mentioned, Black Americans have long protested against systemic inequity and disenfranchisement in the United States (Nkomo, 2020). Importantly, social media helps the BLM movement spread and better helps organizers control narratives around it, as the movement is not solely dependent on the mass media for its success (Leopold & Bell, 2017). Nonetheless, BLM is a "central target of disinformation" (Black Lives Matter, About, Help Us Fight Disinformation, n.d.) via ignorance and deliberate misconstruals. Thus, we quote the movement's own descriptions of its founding and purposes:

> #BlackLivesMatterwas founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.
>
> (Black Lives Matter, About, n.d.).

[1] The Black Lives Matter movement uses "Black Lives Matter," "BLM," and associated social media hashtags such as "#BLM," "#BlackLivesMatter," and "#blacklivesmatter" interchangeably to refer to the movement.

Trayvon Martin was 17 years old, walking home on a Sunday night after buying candy at a neighborhood store in Sanford, Florida, USA. He was stalked, assaulted, and shot to death by a self-appointed neighborhood watchman who had decided Trayvon, because he was Black, was up to no good and did not belong in the neighborhood. As Black people expected given U.S. history, Martin's murderer was acquitted, and BLM was born (BLM, n.d.).

BLM has grown into a strong and powerful social movement. With 3.5 million followers on Instagram, and nearly 900,000 on Twitter, BLM is connected with at least 3.5 million followers around the world, and likely more because of different demographic and usage tracking patterns across social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2019). BLM is a global organization, in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, with "BLM" in various forms also being a visible presence on social media platforms and accounts based in numerous places around the world (e.g., BLM Denmark).

Since Trayvon Martin's murder, numerous other unarmed Black Americans have been killed by police and racist vigilantes. The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, in rapid succession, during a health crisis that disproportionately affected Blacks (and Hispanics) led to diverse constituents' increased attention to and engagement with BLM and its goals (Bell, 2020). The horrific violence against Blacks perpetrated by the state and racist vigilantes helps create the perception that BLM is only focused on curbing that type of violence. BLM is also concerned with eradicating White supremacy and violence perpetrated in other settings, including in academic settings.

BLACK LIVES MATTER, ANTI-BLACKNESS, AND (LIBERAL) WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE ACADEMY

The ideas for the 2019 special issue in the *Academy of Management Review* entitled "Diversity at a Critical Juncture," began four years earlier, with a prescient title. A critical juncture is a "'moment or certain window in time where there is a significant possibility of a decisive transition' from one state to another" (Liu, Onar, & Woodward, 2014: 6, cited in Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, & Thatcher, [2019: 498]). The term certainly describes both the state of diversity scholarship and the societal diversity climate in the United States and many countries, including the commission of anti-black violence and oppression, the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment, and the normalization of White supremacy. Although BLM protests in 2020 were strengthened by the appalling murders of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd in the United States, murder, oppression, and violence against Black people perpetrated elsewhere contributed to protests and solidarity across the globe for the statement "Black Lives Matter" (Joseph-Salisbury, Connelly, & Wangari-Jones, 2020; Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021; Uniglobalunion.org, 2020). The protestors and their supporters are a diverse coalition, which provides some level of hope that *this time* things will change more substantively than after countless other police and racist vigilante murders in the United States (e.g., Tanisha Anderson, Botham Jean, Sean Bell, Philando Castile, Jordan Edwards, Atatiana Jefferson, Emmitt Till, and innumerable others).

In the editorial for the aforementioned special issue, Nkomo et al. (2019) predicted that White supremacy and Black Lives Matter would be two of the macro factors driving diversity scholarship from 2019 into the future. White supremacy is an institutional system of power that normalizes, privileges, and maintains whiteness and white advantages in all spheres of life,

including higher education (Dar et al., 2020; Doharty, 2020; Gillborn, 2006). In her *New York Times* article, kihana ross (2020), a professor at Northwestern University, describes *anti-blackness* as "a theoretical framework that illuminates society's inability to recognize our humanity — the disdain, disregard and disgust for our existence." Of course, as members of the same society, academics are subject to the same anti-black stereotypes, biases, hatred, and White supremacy that exist in that society. Media reports of faculty who have made overtly bigoted comments in class or posts on social media provide evidence of anti-blackness and White supremacy and question those professors' previous grading practices and fitness for the professoriate (Associated Press, 2020; Fieldstadt, 2020; Francis, 2019). As just one example, the authors know a Black woman who was given a "B" as the final grade in one of her doctoral classes when she had clearly earned an A. When challenged, the professor said she "just didn't like Black people." The administration forced the professor to change the student's grade, yet the professor, a White woman, remained on faculty, continuing to teach.

Clearly, people with such anti-black sentiments exist in academia; however, anti-blackness in academia is more likely to manifest through actions that convey "disdain, disregard and disgust" (ross, 2020) for Black students, faculty, and our work, microaggressions, and denial of our racialized and gendered experiences in the academy (e.g., Bell & Nkomo, 1999; Dar, et al., 2020; Diep, 2020; Johnson & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009; Smith, et al., (2011); Shockley & Holloway, 2019; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Vega, 2014; Williams, 2019). These actions are sometimes also perpetrated by those who likely believe themselves to be liberal, progressive, and inclusive (Back, 2004; Cassese, Barnes, & Branton, 2015; Melaku & Beeman, 2020). Melaku and Beeman (2020) use the term "liberal white supremacy," in describing ways in which supposedly progressive Whites create hostile,

silencing environments for Blacks and others of color in academia. This silencing may be virtually invisible. As an example, in their responses to 6,500 email queries from prospective student applicants, academics from both private and public schools and all disciplines were more responsive to White male prospective students than to all other groups (Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2015). Preferences for White men were stronger in private schools and in certain fields, including business. In fact, business was the most discriminatory discipline in the study, with queries from women and minorities being ignored nearly three times more than those from White men. As in other audit studies, those whose queries were ignored would have no way of knowing specifically of such discrepancies. However, repeated instances of being overlooked, as much as we might self-protectively attribute them in our minds to other causes, belie such excuses.

In another virtually invisible example, in tracing the trajectory of diversity scholarship in the Academy of Management, the premier organization of management scholars, Nkomo et al. (2019) contrasted the now permanence of the "Gender and Diversity in Organizations" division with the complete demise of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Minorities, and the intermittent existence of other committees and task forces that focused on racial and ethnic minorities. They noted that in the initial voting process to decide whether to change the name of the "Women in Management" division to a more representative name, "Diversity in Organizations" received the largest percentage of votes, yet the name "*Gender and* Diversity in Organizations," (emphasis ours) was instead sent to the membership for the final confirmatory vote. This foregrounding of gender over all aspects of diversity, and over the will of the membership, while race was virtually disappearing from management research, is notable. Ironically, the outcome echoes the same complaint registered by our early 20th century

foremothers discussed earlier: prioritizing gender equality ignores racism (Carby, 1985). In an attempted explanation for this decision to send "*Gender and* Diversity in Organizations" for the final vote, Nkomo, et al. (2019) offered, "We believe this can be explained by the longer history of research on women in management and a relatively higher critical mass of scholars (i.e., White women) who led professionalization of the field" (p. 504). Inadequate for explaining the experiences and outcomes of Black women, gender research continues to occupy a prominent position in the diversity field, as does "Work and Family" research, with the latter focusing on married White, managerial and professional women, while neglecting others, whose experiences may be very different (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007).

Anti-blackness as "disdain, disregard, and disgust" for Black students and faculty

While we acknowledge that White supremacy affects many people, in the United States, enslavement of Black people and subsequent deliberate, entrenched efforts to ensure Black subordination despite the end of slavery makes anti-blackness unique when compared to the racism that affects others (ross, 2020). In an example with face validity, many American academic institutions' claims of being "diverse" are valid because of Asian faculty (who also experience discrimination, devaluation, and othering—see Võ, 2012), and few to no Blacks (or Latinx). Other institutions that acknowledge that their faculty are overwhelmingly White still have some faculty of color, but few or no Blacks. Black people's absence in certain schools or departments is not always justified by lack of PhDs (e.g., business; phdproject.org) or interest in a particular school or location. In some departments there has *never* been a Black faculty member. In others, there is a revolving door wherein Black professors come and go, year after year (Bell, 2020). In still other departments, when the solo Black person leaves, many years pass before another Black person is hired. Many institutions profess their desire to increase racial and

ethnic diversity of students and faculty without acknowledging and changing factors within the institutions that are hostile to some groups and that contribute to a "leaky pipeline" (Cropsey, et al., 2008; Johnson & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Minefee, Rabelo, Stewart, & Young, 2018).

Some faculty openly express "disdain, disregard, and disgust" for Black students and faculty; however, in our experience these actions are usually more covert. These covert actions are consistent with aversive racism, in which people who (ostensibly) hold egalitarian values and believe they are unprejudiced, still harbor negative feelings and beliefs about racial issues and minority group members. Aversive racists may discriminate without it being obvious to themselves or others (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Isolation, inability to find doctoral advisors and mentors in one's department, being warned about pursuing diversity and discrimination scholarship, having journal targets devalued, having external mentors questioned, and being held to higher standards than others are a few of the many common experiences of Black people in the academy.

Tables 1 and 2 present some of our own personal experiences or those of Black doctoral students or faculty whom we personally know that we believe indicate disdain, disregard, and disgust. To protect anonymity, the words "I" and "my" are used as first person voice in each statement.

In the absence of other factors, disparities in treatment or outcomes may be attributed to discrimination (Cajner, Radler, Ratner, & Vidangos (2017); Daly, Hobijn, & Pedtke, 2017) and White supremacy. In the experiences described in Tables 1 and 2 it is difficult to discern with certainty why what happened occurred; relatively few faculty are publicly using racial slurs in academia. However, in attempts to be allies and pursue social justice, it is important for White people to listen to and *believe* what Blacks' say about their experiences (Roberson, 2020; Swan,

2017). Along with the specific instances described in Tables 1 and 2, the following sections further discuss anti-blackness in research, promotion and tenure, and teaching processes.

Anti-blackness in the research process

Anti-blackness exists throughout the research process (Dar et al., 2020; see King, Avery, Hebl, & Cortina, 2018; Scheurich & Young, 1997, for ways in which subtle and overt biases in research processes can appear). The dated perception that research should be completely "objective" is a fallacy that can particularly disadvantage academics who are not members of the controlling power group, including Black academics (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1996; Doharty, 2020). As they should be, scholars are interested in what they study, and their ideas about what happens and relationships between constructs should and do shape their hypotheses (Bell, 2009; Collins, 2000; Newton, 1988). Self-relevant research (Amabile & Hall, in press), is legitimate scholarship that "can enhance the richness, validity, and methodological diversity of management research". As such, scholars who do such research should be encouraged and rewarded, rather than penalized and encouraged to expand their scholarly interests. Given the uniqueness and pervasiveness of anti-blackness, it is no wonder that many Black scholars are interested in topics particularly relevant to discrimination and oppression. Others who experience discrimination (e.g., Latinx, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, White women) also often study topics relevant to their experiences (Bell, 2020; Marable, 1997; Sholock, 2012). In addition, as pointed out by Thomas and Ashburn-Nardo (2020), "many White male scholars have taken advantage of their unearned privilege by freely pursuing research on CEOs" which is characterized as "leadership scholarship" rather than scholarship on White male CEOs. No one seems to notice or find it problematic when White men's scholarship focuses on other White men. Those in decision-making positions should encourage and value self-relevant, social

justice, and activist research (Suzuki & Mayoraga, 2014) and ensure that Black academics' personal interest in their topic areas is not held against them in performance evaluation and promotion and tenure decisions, while others' self-relevant and self-interested research is lauded.

Editorial decisions and reviewers' assessments sometimes exhibit bias against certain diversity-related scholarship, language, and methods, and this may particularly negatively affect Black scholars. Similar to ways in which having a "Black-sounding" name negatively affects the probability that applicants will receive a call from an employer (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), being identified as Black by the editor or assumed Black by reviewers due to the content may be detrimental to authors' chances. Clearly, editors know authors' names, as well as their affiliations. This knowledge may affect editors' propensity to even send manuscripts for review. Along with searching websites, as mentioned in Table 1, reviewers may also know who authors are without searching. In one study of the review process, nearly half of those surveyed were able to accurately guess authors (Fisher, Friedman, & Strauss, 1994), which may disadvantage Black scholars.

Editors must acknowledge that they and reviewers might critique work on certain topics, such as racism, more harshly than other topics or more closely scrutinize submissions from or presumed to be from Black authors. For one of us, a submission on "Sounding Black," exploring the effects of being identifiable as Black through one's speech on the phone, had to become "Sounding Different" (Cocchiara, Bell, & Casper, 2016) to get through the editorial process. The research findings in a submitted paper by another one of us was repeatedly questioned by an editor because they made the White respondents "look bad." Yet, scholarship using completely White samples, undergraduate students, or sports teams is commonly published and used to make inferences about other populations and to define norms. In all, the onus is on editors to be

aware of the fallacies of neutrality and objectivity in the review process (Özbilgin, 2009) and vigilant in pursuing equity in assessments of submitted manuscripts (Resnik & Elmore, 2016).

In their research investigating subtle biases in the scholarship process, King et al. (2018) found that in parts of the review process, diversity scholarship of marginal quality was rated differently than non-diversity scholarship of similar quality. The importance of publications to promotion and tenure means even subtle biases in the publication process have career- and thus life-changing implications (King et al., 2018). As a diversity scholar knowledgeable about subtle bias, and a widely respected, well-known proponent of diversity, equity, and inclusion, King noted that she had likely served as the action editor on many of the submitted manuscripts later included in her analyses. She noted that "this is a unique moment in time wherein independent movements…(e.g., #blacklivesmatter) loom large in public discourse. Thus, we have to opportunity and responsibility to strengthen our scientific process, particularly as it pertains to diversity scholarship" (King et al., 2018, p. 852). We propose that other editors and reviewers take heed and action. As did King et al. (2018), editors should analyze their journal's data for any evidence of subtle or not-so-subtle bias and be vigilant about educating reviewers and monitoring for bias in decision-making about submissions.

To signal inclusiveness and receptivity, editors should check the language used in the journal description and "Aims and Scope" to ensure that race, racism, and anti-blackness are included as desirable topics. They should also ensure there are reviewers qualified to review such topics on the editorial team; if there are none, see their absence as problematic and change this. What "key words" populate the list of topics for the journal? Editors might also authorize special issues focusing on topics central to race, racism, and anti-blackness. This would signal that the topic is important and would provide an outlet for scholars who may have difficulty

placing their scholarship in "mainstream" journals. Inclusion of these topics in the aims and scope along with calls for special issues would signal that the journal welcomes such submissions all the time, not just on an infrequent, special issue basis.

Editors might engage Black academics to serve as associate editors, join editorial boards, or serve as ad-hoc reviewers, leading to editorial board membership. In doing so, editors should purposely engage Black doctoral students and junior faculty, to expand the numbers of Black scholars in gatekeeping roles, avoiding unduly burdening a small group of scholars. Blacks in those gate-keeping roles may view submissions that others might view with disdain or disgust as valuable and worthy of publication. The presence or absence of Blacks on the editorial team sends signals to authors.

Anti-blackness in Promotion and Tenure

As Blacks are underrepresented in faculty positions and are generally newer entrants to predominantly White institutions, standards for promotion and tenure were created without their participation (Menges & Exum, 1983; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). These standards might include valuation of some journals and not others, some types of publications and not others (e.g., journal articles, but not book chapters) and some types of authorship, but not others (e.g., sole-authored v. collaborative). While these "standards" might be ostensibly objective and evenly applied, they are instead raced and gendered (Özbilgin, 2009).

Other racial bias in the promotion and tenure process, from multiple sources, can keep Blacks from being promoted and tenured (Astin, Antonio, Cress, & Astin, 1997; Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). As with gender research, in seeking external evaluators to assess candidates' promotion and tenure files, allies can insist that particular care be taken to identify reviewers with knowledge of the field and who appear to be

supportive of the kind of research being evaluated. For example, a largely meta-analytical researcher is likely not a good candidate to review the scholarship of one who does largely ethnographic work. From the other evaluation side, allies who have positions of stature should seek out and get to know Black junior faculty and doctoral students, proactively expressing willingness to serve as external evaluators or recommendations for those seeking promotion or jobs. Letters from highly regarded allies can be priceless in employment or promotion and tenure processes.

Allies in decision-making positions should work to broaden journals viewed as "valuable" in promotion and tenure, and call out racist exclusions when observed. We must all resist accepting the idea that journals that were formed by White men and published for most of their history with few to no editors, reviewers, and authors who were not White men, are better than those created in and built on more diverse foundations (Roberts, Bareket-Shavit, Dollins, Goldie, & Mortenson, 2020). As with certain journals that are receptive to gender and feminist work (Bell, Meriläinen, Taylor, & Tienari, 2019), certain journals are more receptive to race work. Allies should lobby for inclusion of these journals in departmental lists of "valuable" journals, terminology which in itself is fraught with problems (Özbilgin, 2009). They should also read those journals and cite the work in them, given the emphasis on citations in our field and to introduce others to works they might not otherwise see. Allies should assess their own scholarship and intentionally include and cite Black scholars' work, given the ways that citation normalizes certain scholarship and scholars while delegitimizing and ignoring others (Bell, et al., 2019). Intentionality in anti-racist behaviors matters and can help negate and reduce biased behaviors, practices, and structures (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018).

Lastly relevant to promotion and tenure, feminist allies must also remember that "We have all built into us, old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2000 citing 1980 speech). Thus, we must also work to *change* criteria that advantage some while disadvantaging others. Why are citations, journal rankings, and "impact" so valued and vaunted in our field (e.g., Adler & Harzing, 2009; Bell, 2010; Nkomo 2009)? In what other ways might the "impact" of our scholarship be assessed (Nkomo, 2009)?

Anti-blackness in students' evaluations of Blacks' teaching

Considerable research has investigated demographic biases in student evaluations of professors' teaching (Reid, 2010). Although some experimental studies have found no race or sex bias in teaching evaluations, many studies using actual data have found that minority faculty are often rated more negatively than White professors (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009; Smith, 2007). Reid (2010) analyzed data from thousands of faculty reviews on "Rate My Professor" for faculty at the top 25 liberal arts colleges in the United States to assess evidence of racial bias. He found that Black faculty were rated more negatively than White faculty and Black male faculty were rated most negatively of all. These results should be no surprise. Students have lived and learned from that society from which the police officer who killed George Floyd, the officers who facilitated the murder, and the armed vigilantes who killed Ahmaud Arbery have lived and learned. When teaching about racism (and sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of bigotry), which many Black faculty do, teaching evaluations are even more negatively impacted (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009; Lazos, 2012; Nast, 1999). Further, many Black faculty are

conscripted to teach diversity, without sufficient education or training, which is also quite problematic.

Because they are often used in hiring, compensation, and promotion and tenure decisions, it is critical that biased evaluations not be used to affect people's careers. Although it is unlikely that student evaluations will be abandoned, it is important that care be taken in interpreting and using them (Linse, 2017). Other ways of assessing teaching quality and close analysis of data (e.g., all negative ratings, racist written commentary) may be helpful. Given many academics' propensity to quantify many things, there is no excuse for ignorance about possible bias in teaching evaluations at one's school. Where evidence suggests bias played a role, allies must speak up and stand up (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018).

WHAT ARE ALLIES TO DO?

Like Tables 1 and 2, Table 3 presents our personal experiences or those reported to us by other Black students and faculty, but in this case, reports are when allies worked against anti-blackness in subtle and overt ways. As Table 3 shows, allies addressed anti-blackness they observed, listened and acted when told of anti-blackness, or were proactive in helping in multiple situations. Although imperfect, these examples can be used and modeled by others not knowing "what to do" (Swan, 2017; see also Contu, 2018)—do *something*.

White allies must do their personal work on issues of power and privilege, while also working to dismantle racism in the academy (Shockley & Holloway, 2019, p. 265). We particularly encourage White female academics to begin to react to and resist anti-blackness as strongly as they resist gender discrimination. Research suggests that Whites confronting bias are viewed as more credible than Blacks (Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Indeed, as also mentioned earlier, the existence of Whites protesting George Floyd's murder and more widely supporting

BLM is proving helpful in facilitating some of the current changes we are seeing. Although public protests against anti-blackness specific to academia are currently not as widespread as other BLM protests, social media posts (#BlackInTheIvory, Diep, 2020; #NotagainSU, Alsharif & Setty, 2020; Kolodner, 2020) provide ample evidence of Black resistance. Despite decades of evidence of anti-black police brutality and murder, some of which were filmed and widely protested, many non-Black people still claimed to be unaware of pervasive anti-blackness in America. For many, George Floyd's murder made any chance of complicity through silence or real or feigned lack of knowledge (hooks, 2002; Sholock, 2012) no longer tenable, if it ever was. As anti-blackness and White supremacy pervade U.S. society so much that the homicidal police officer felt certain his actions would go unpunished, and such that his colleagues failed to intervene, academic allies should assume that anti-blackness and White supremacy pervade academia (Dar, et al., 2020; Johnson, 2018). Indeed, until anti-blackness and White supremacy are treated as 'defining, constitutive features of academia,' attempts to remedy them will be woefully limited and inadequate (Allen, 1996, p. 257). Perpetrators and bystanders, including those who hope to be liberal and inclusive, do so because they have been socialized in a system in which anti-blackness and White supremacy are the norm (Nishi, Matias, Montoya, & Sarcedo, 2016). As elsewhere in society, in too many situations, colleagues fail to intervene, although they have the opportunity to stop anti-blackness and reject White supremacy.

As educators and scholars, academic allies are in a unique position to change their own behaviors and academic institutions, while also helping educate and positively impact the beliefs and behaviors of their students. Through students, we have the opportunity to influence countless others through their convictions as they work, manage, and lead, in organizations and society around the world (Bell, 2020). Thus, along with the concerns we have raised about and pleas for

help resisting anti-blackness in academia, we more importantly call for allies to intentionally learn about societal anti-blackness that is manifested in discrimination in banking, customer service, education, employment, healthcare, housing, policing, and the criminal "justice" system (see Reskin, 2012 for a discussion of the societal race discrimination system) and then *teach* about these concepts (Bell, 2020). Allies should teach the need to fight anti-black racism in human resources, organizational behavior, media literacy, psychology, history, law, education (e.g., teach the teachers), science, and countless other courses. Allies should also address representation throughout curricula (Thomas & Ashburn-Nardo, 2020). We do students a grave disservice by failing to educate them on anti-blackness and sending them into the world ill-equipped to resist and change its manifestations in their lives, organizations, and society (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009).

CONCLUSION

We have discussed some of our and other Black people's experiences with anti-blackness in academia. We have touched upon how and why these and other life experiences in a racist society have informed our research, and that of many who came before us. We have offered suggestions for all non-Black allies to act in solidarity with Black faculty and students in resisting anti-blackness, which we hope will be heeded. Anti-racist allies must work from the position that anti-blackness and White supremacy are omnipresent in academia, assuming that, like air, they exist in some form in every criterion, classroom, editorial decision, interaction, and space, and people are standing by doing nothing to intervene. Allies must be vigilant and on alert, knowing they are built into the foundations of everything we do, having become normalized and invisible, and will thus take concerted, collective actions to make visible and break down. Only with this assumption can we all begin to study, identify, and dismantle anti-

blackness and White supremacy in academia, creating safer, more inclusive, more equitable spaces for the benefit all. Here we echo the words of Anna Julia Cooper (1988:120-121), "*The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or a class-it is the cause of human kind, the very birthright of humanity.*" (emphasis ours).

Lastly, although we are Black American women living in the United States and South Africa, our perspectives are also informed by research from and perspectives of other Black academics around the world (e.g., Dar, et al., 2020; Doharty, 2020; Joseph-Salisbury, et al., 2020). We focused in this article on Black Americans due to widespread societal, organizational, and individual anti-black discrimination (Reskin, 2012; ross, 2020); to Black people's positionality at the bottom of a multi-racial hierarchy in the United States (Bell, Marquardt, & Berry, 2014; Hurtado, 1989); and because the United States is the primary site of our own lived experiences as Black women academics. Importantly, although we have focused on Black Americans, many of our ideas are also relevant to Black people in other parts of the world who have been negatively impacted by White supremacy e. (e.g., Ahmed, 2004; Arday & Mirza, 2018; Bhopal, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Dar et al., 2020; Liu & Pechenkina, 2016; Mabokela, 2000). We acknowledge, decry, and resist the oppression they experience in academia and elsewhere in society (e.g., Dar et al., 2020; Johnson, 2018; Joseph–Salisbury, Connelly, & Wangari-Jones, 2020; Krishnan, 2020; Weatherall, 2020). We hope the ideas we have presented are relevant and helpful in dismantling White supremacy and anti-blackness worldwide and that non-Black allies will stand with us in doing so.

Returning to the opening quote, although we have focused on the academy in this paper, academic woes pale in comparison to the fear of racist killing of Black people in the street

(Lorde, 2007). Our more earnest hope is that academic allies will join in the battle for our very lives.

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Table 1: Personal experiences perceived as anti-black by Black doctoral students.[2]

• I was treated terribly by some faculty, for no reason, and had to steer clear of them for the remainder of my doctoral studies.
• Although I had good grades and publications, I had tremendous difficulty obtaining a dissertation chair, while other cohort members did not. This delayed my graduation.
• I was counseled for not being up to par as a doctoral student using racialized language that I recognized, at the same time my work was winning external awards.
• I was counseled for having a "bad attitude," which is racialized language (e.g., angry Black woman).
• I was told early in my doctoral program that certain well-known Black female scholars were not "good" scholars so to avoid referencing their work.
• When I received a conditional accept on a first-round submission at a well-regarded journal, rather than offering congratulations, the department head said this never happened and maybe my paper was accepted because the journal must have been having a lull in submissions.
• I received an international grant that no other students received, yet no announcement was made about this to the department or college. Others' awards were always announced.
• I was continually ignored when attempting to speak in class, but other students were not.
• I did a considerable amount of work on a research project for which the professor did not give me authorship credit. She did not do this to other students.
• A contingent faculty member pulled me aside to say that I shouldn't wear certain clothing and colors and to ask why Black male students dressed in "baggy pants."
• After graduation, I was discouraged from writing with my dissertation chair in order to prove my ability to "stand on my own" as a scholar, as though my chair had carried me through my doctoral program. Other students in my cohort were not "advised" to do this.
• When I interviewed for a job, professor at my presentation put his feet on the table where I was presenting at the front and kept them there throughout my presentation. I was not offered the job.[3]

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all oppressors and allies were White, and the Black faculty or student was the only or one of two other Black people in the department.

[3] This experience and the immediately following one were reported by two different individuals and represented two different jobs that were not offered after anti-black experiences during the interview process.

• When I interviewed for a job, the interviewer told me that students at this university were not accustomed to Black people and therefore I would not want to be there. I was not offered the job.[4]
• I was repeatedly told that I would have no trouble finding a job because of my race and sex, while I was having trouble finding a job because of my race and sex.
• An editor searched for me on ResearchGate, which displays my photo, before desk-rejecting my paper.
• Prior to qualifying (comprehensive) exams, other doctoral students received specific guidance about the questions, but I did not.
• On the day I graduated with my doctorate, I learned from a professor that I had been a high risk acceptance and that the selection committee didn't believe I would complete the degree.
• At the end of our first conversation, a faculty member told me that she had heard from another faculty member that I was "difficult," but she was pleasantly surprised that she had enjoyed talking with me.
• I wrote an email to a professor for whom I was working as a research assistant apologizing for the late delivery of a research assignment and she responded with a lengthy criticism of my lateness and questioned my work ethic. Later, a White student drafted a similar letter to that professor, also apologizing for late work. The professor responded "no worries."

[4] This experience and the immediately following one were reported by the same person.

Table 2: Personal experiences perceived as anti-black by Black faculty. [2]

• I was targeted, for no apparent reason, by hostile "colleagues," who challenged my competence, supported racialized student disrespect, and actively worked to discredit me.
• I was conscripted to teach a diversity class, despite research interests and teaching experience in other areas.
• Once, in the write-in comments of my teaching evaluation, students called me "racist" for teaching about racism and White privilege. Those ratings were used in my performance evaluation for that year.
• A student asked how I knew a word I used in teaching.
• A student asked if Black people don't succeed because most of them grow up in the "inner city," where the schools are bad.
• After I received a favorable performance evaluation by the department chair, the dean wrote on my evaluation that the department chair had been "too generous" with his evaluation, and attempted to downgrade the rating. The department chair did not tell me this was in my file, and I learned about it several months later. The Provost made the dean remove hi comments.
• Prior to going up for promotion, I was encouraged to pursue a "sole-authored" publication, although others in my department solely collaborate with others.
• I was rejected for promotion at the department level by my colleagues, the chair, college, and dean although my record exceeded those of candidates promoted in previous years in the college. At the university level, the promotion was granted. I continued to work in the department, under the chair and dean and with colleagues who had voted against my promotion.[5]
• During my attempt to be promoted, my (all male) "colleagues" in the department tried to convince me to withdraw the promotion materials "to avoid further humiliation."
• Rather than commending me for having renowned international external evaluators, the department questioned why I had to use evaluators from outside the country—"why couldn't you find any Americans?"
• My colleagues disparage some journals with higher external ratings than journals that are more highly regarded by other faculty and reject their inclusion in our performance criteria. Thus, some years I am rated poorly despite having multiple publications in journals valued at peer or higher universities.
• Journals where I publish are referred to as "niche" and "not mainstream," even though publications in other "niche" journals, such as entrepreneurship, are valued (and rewarded).

[5] One of the oppressors in this example was a non-Black person of color.

• After I had been made a conditional job offer by the department head, who was normally the final decision-maker, the department faculty went to the Provost to complain about my selection, and the Provost made the chair rescind the offer. I left academia after that happened.
• In front of my students, a campus police officer questioned me for being in a place that I had used my badge to enter and forced me to show my badge. My Black students were unsurprised; non-Black students were shocked and appalled.
• A colleague refused to acknowledge me when he entered a meeting room, although he spoke to every other person there.
• A colleague told my students they did not have to follow my instructions for an assignment.
• A colleague told at least one of my students that I was a new professor and to watch me in the classroom and report back to him. The colleague then informed me of this.
• A department chair told me during my first few weeks of on the job that students did not like my teaching, and that I should be more worried (than I appeared to be) about being immediately fired.
• Although my qualifications exceeded those of previous hires, a colleague wanted me to know that he felt I had gotten my job because of my race and sex.
• Although known to be biased and of no relation to student learning, teaching evaluations continue to be used in my performance evaluations and promotion and tenure decisions.
• When I was an associate editor, a well-known author challenged my rejection decision. With apologies, the editor sent the paper out for review again; it received similar comments and recommendations for rejection. Later, at a national meeting, the author sought me out, introduced himself, and apologized to me.
• I was one of two Black women in the department, and we were physically very different. Yet, our colleagues constantly called us by the incorrect names. Eventually, we didn't even bother to correct them.
• When I was chair of my department, my colleagues, including junior ones, questioned and tried to undermine decisions they never challenged when the chair was a White male.

Table 3: Supportive behaviors exhibited by allies toward Black students and faculty. [2]

• When I was a doctoral student, unsupportive faculty in my department made me have to ask a professor external to my department for a letter recommending me for me for an external grant. She agreed, and I was awarded the grant, which has shaped my career.
• When I was a doctoral student, a well-connected member of my department asked me to collaborate on multiple articles which helped me build my curriculum vitae.[6]
• A senior leader in the field introduced herself to me at my first academic conference, where I was one of few Black people. She shared her contact information and informally mentored me throughout my doctoral program and early faculty career.
• An internationally renowned scholar who did not know me agreed to serve as an external evaluator of my research.
• Before I submitted my promotion files, an administrator encouraged me to ask previously promoted faculty for their dossiers, knowing that this would be helpful to me should any disparities in treatment arise, which did.
• The most senior faculty member in my department, a world-renowned scholar, stopped anti-black actions of other department members.
• A high-level administrator took my salary concerns seriously, and the investigation revealed large, unwarranted salary disparities, which were rectified.
• At the recommendation of my informal mentor, a journal editor appointed me as associate editor—the first Black person to serve in that manner for that journal.
• A renowned scholar in a related field invited me to collaborate with her on an article. This article helped me gain credibility as a scholar in my field.[7]
• An administrator removed my dean after multiple pointed racist attacks directed at me and acknowledged this is why the dean was removed. He asked what other restorative justice would help.[8]
• A senior scholar at a university of higher stature than mine invited me to present my research at her university.
• A recognized scholar in the field intentionally cited and discussed my research in one of her publications in a prestigious journal.
• My Dean defended and supported a tenure and promotion decision I had made as the first Black woman chair of my department when the department committee

[6] Although as pointed out by Contu (2017), these invitations and collaborations by insiders can continue to keep "others" as "guests," they were still perceived as being helpful.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Opie, T. & Roberts, L. M. (2017). Do black lives really matter in the workplace? Restorative justice as a means to reclaim humanity. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 36, 8, pp.707-719, https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-07-2017-0149

urged him to override it because they said I was too inexperienced, although I had as much and often more than previous White male chairs.
• After I was promoted despite overtly racist actions of my dean, the provost removed the dean from the job and told me why.
• At a largely White conference, a session attendee invited me to lunch and sightsee in the city, which lessened my feelings of isolation.
• After stopping racist treatment by leaders in my department and college, a university administrator told me their behavior was “so stupid” that stopping it “was easy.”
• When a new assistant professor came into the department’s coffee break room and asked if I, a middle-aged long-tenured Black woman professor, was a student worker, a colleague who overheard came in and accosted the new professor about her assumption.
• A colleague mentored me through the first-year evaluation process and what was expected such that my first-year file shone. Without this guidance, I would not otherwise have known to name all the things I had done.
• Colleagues repeatedly shielded me from attempted covert negative actions by a known racist and sexist colleague in my department.
• I was asked to engage in excessive service roles because of being the only Black woman in my area, and colleagues protected me from having to do so.