Not a token! A discussion on racial capitalism and its impact on academic librarians and libraries

Silvia Vong
John M. Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Received 28 June 2021
Revised 30 September 2021
26 October 2021
22 November 2021
Accepted 23 November 2021

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this article is to introduce the concept of racial capitalism in the context of academic libraries.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper draws on Leong's (2013) extended theory of racial capitalism and identifies how neoliberalism and racial capitalism are tied as well as how it is manifested in academic libraries through tokenism, racialized tasks, consuming racial trauma, cultural performance demands, workload demands and pay inequity.

Findings – The article ends with some suggestions in how to address these problematic practices though dismantling meritocratic systems, critical race theory in LIS education and training, and funding EDI work.

Originality/value – The article explores a concept in the academic library context and points to practices and structures that may commodify racialized identities.

Keywords Academic libraries, Work, Social justice, Neoliberalism, Anti-racism, Racial capitalism

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

A newly hired information technology (IT) librarian who identifies as Chinese Canadian is tasked with managing a small team in a library. They are taken on a meet-and-greet tour of the library in a predominantly white institution (PWIs). The communications team meets with the newly hired librarian and enthusiastically shares: "we would love to do an article about you to show our community how our diversity hiring initiative has been successful!" The IT librarian responds, "Sure, will there be anyone else?" The communication lead responds, "No . . . but it'll show alumni, donors, and potential students that we're moving in the right direction!" The IT librarian meets the reference services team and one of the references services librarians asks, "In your interview, you mentioned you speak Chinese. We have lots of international students from China, they mostly speak Mandarin and if we could list that information on our website, you could translate questions if needed and they would feel more welcome!" The IT librarian hesitates and explains, "Yes . . . I mentioned that I speak Cantonese but it's a dialect and not Mandarin, I would not be able to speak to Chinese students in Mandarin though . . . Am I working with international students? I thought the job was managing an IT team?" The reference librarian replies, "I'm just going to put Chinese on the website, they'll feel more welcome knowing a librarian speaks Chinese." Finally, the IT librarian meets with the liaison librarians and one of them asks, "By the way, we're re-doing our brochures, are you available to pose in front of the library for the cover photo?"

Though the intention of the communication team in this scenario seems harmless and the interactions appear positive despite the mistake with understanding the complexity of languages in China, racial capitalism can be observed in the requests and conversations by the other librarians. Racial capitalism refers to "the process of deriving social or economic value from the racial identity of another person" (Leong, 2013, p. 2153). In this scenario, the three conversations are examples of how racialized [1] people are objectified and commodified by universities.

Reference Services Review
Vol. 50 No. 1, 2022
pp. 127-147

0090-7324
DOI 10.1108/RSR-06-2021-0024

The intentions of the librarians are driven by a desire to address exclusion and diversity in the library, and it has unintentionally inflicted harm on the racialized librarian. Leong (2013) explains that the harm caused by racial capitalism results in a fractured identity, performance demands and an economic disadvantage. The IT librarian's Chinese identity and body are commodified and assigned a value, used to promote the university and library's diversity narrative in the scenario. There is an emphasis on numerical diversity rather than retention and work culture issues. Second, performance demands can be observed in the way the IT librarian is asked about the language they speak. The IT librarian tries to explain and signal that their spoken language is not relevant to the role, yet the (incorrect) information will be posted on the website. Furthermore, the IT librarian is not in a public facing role, yet their language ability is utilized to appeal to Chinese international students. Leong (2013) explains that racial capitalism:

> . . . pressures nonwhite people to do identity work. Because part of their value in a particular setting is tied to their nonwhiteness, they are subtly – or not so subtly – encouraged both to perform their nonwhiteness and to do so in a way that meets with the approval of the dominant culture. (p. 2210)

Finally, economic disadvantage refers to the problematic nature of commodifying and assigning value to racialized people whereby in an economic downturn, racialized people are less likely to be hired by organizations. In PWIs, diversity becomes a "nonessential item . . . to sacrifice in times of economic hardship" (Leong, 2013, p. 2211). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of high unemployment rates of racialized people were and continue to be observed in Canada (Subramaniam, 2020) and the US (Long *et al.*, 2020). Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg (2021) reported in a recent S+R US Library Survey that during the pandemic "job types with relatively greater percentages of employees of color were more impacted by recent furloughs and role eliminations. Black directors and those at doctoral universities and public institutions shared relatively greater concerns about the potential for this happening" (p. 2). Furthermore, studies on racial discrimination during economic downturns by King *et al.* (2010) and Krosch *et al.* (2017) found through experiments with staff involved with hiring decisions that they were less likely to choose a racialized person when presented with the scenario of scarcity in resources or a recession.

Leong (2013) observes that in an effort to diversify faculty and librarians in PWIs, universities ". . . have contributed to a state of affairs that degrades nonwhiteness by commodifying it and that relegates nonwhite individuals to the status of 'trophies' or 'passive emblems'" (p. 2156). It is important to address these issues as diversity, equity and inclusion statements and initiatives have increased significantly in Canadian and US academic libraries (Kung *et al.*, 2020). Though these statements are important, more action is needed in dismantling racist and exclusionary practices and structures that have been rendered invisible. The article will begin with a review of key scholars that have used the theory. In addition, a discussion on neoliberalism, colonialism and whiteness in the higher education field and academic libraries will help provide context for the issue of racial capitalism. The article will also provide details and examples of racial capitalism in academic libraries and provide suggestions for restorative practices.

Literature review

Before contextualizing Leong's (2013) theory of racial capitalism, it is important to acknowledge the various scholars that have explored and extended the theory of racial capitalism as there have been some tensions around its meaning and significance. The theory was originally developed by Robinson (2000) in his seminal text, *Black Marxism: A Making of Black Radical Tradition*. Robinson observes the emphasis on class in Marxism rather than racialization and capitalism. Furthermore, he explores the socio-historical rise of capitalism in Europe and its effect on racialized groups through the process of racialization. Robinson

(2000) explains that domination of marginalized groups in feudal society merely evolved into a capitalist society and much of that domination of marginalized and racialized groups continues to be enacted in taken-for-granted social practices and structures. Robinson (2000) states that:

> The bourgeoisie that led the development of capitalism were drawn from particular ethnic and cultural groups; the European proletariats and the mercenaries of the leading states from others; its peasants from still other cultures; and its slaves from entirely different worlds. The tendency of European civilization through capitalism was thus not to homogenize but to differentiate-to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into "racial" ones. (p. 26)

Scholars have examined, extended and critiqued Robinson's (2000) theory of racial capitalism through different perspectives. For scholars that continue to examine the theory of racial capitalism, focus shifts from historical connection between capitalism and slavery to Indigenous dispossession. LeRoy and Jenkins (2021) edited a book that includes important historical analyses on the ties between capitalism and white supremacy, identifying that white supremacy did not just benefit from capitalism, rather it is rooted in white supremacy and colonialism through "dispossession, extraction, accumulation, and exploitation that are central to today's capitalism" (Harris, 2021, p. vii). Some scholars have examined the meanings behind race and capitalism by revisiting Marxism (Melamed, 2015), or explored the impact of capitalism on the process of racialization (Bhattacharyya, 2018). A critique of the theory on racial capitalism identified that both race and capitalism are not clearly defined among various critical race scholars and critical legal scholars and thus pose challenges in logic (Go, 2021), and the deficit narrative of Black communities in treating racialized people as the dominated (Ralph and Singhal, 2019).

Though these scholars identify important points, many scholars have extended Robinson's (2000) work on racial capitalism in an attempt to understand how racial capitalism is defined in different contexts. For example, Cheng (2013) examines the racial-economic narratives of Asians through other studies and recent anti-Asian hate events in the US Issar (2021) draws on racial capitalism to examine the recent events related to the Black Lives Matter movement and neoliberalism, and McClure *et al.* (2020) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was evidence through worker compensation data in the US of racial capitalism directed at racialized workers in relation to public health and worker safety. Moreover, there has been an emerging interest in racial capitalism from geographers who have been using the theory to examine urban spaces. For example, different geographers have applied racial capitalism in relation to the Grenfell Tower Fire (Danewid, 2020), explored settler colonial urbanism in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Dorries *et al.*, 2019), applied racial capitalism to examine environmental racism and water safety in Flint, Michigan (Pulido, 2016), and urban agriculture in cities (McClintock, 2018). In media, McMillan Cottom (2020) strongly argues that sociologists need to turn their attention to digital technologies, work precarity and race, writing that "digital technologies abet that risk shift through the sociopolitical regime of platform capture. That platform capture effectively transforms workers into independent contractors" (p. 445). In the LIS field, Hudson (2017) unpacks the language used by institutions related to diversity, identifying the complexity of racism and how bound to LIS spaces librarians are when trying to address racism. More recently, Hudson (2020) examined how institutions such as libraries employ neoliberal anti-racism that focuses heavily on racism at the individual level that allows racial capitalism to persist.

Though Leong (2013) uses the term racial capitalism, she mostly draws on the work of Harris (1993) who provides a critical analysis of how the law protects whiteness and the status quo created by dominant groups that also preserve racial hierarchies that oppress marginalized and racialized groups. Whiteness is not commodified like racialized people, rather whiteness becomes a form of capital or advantage for those that embody or strive for

whiteness (Harris, 2020). In a recent publication, Leong (2021) uses the term identity capitalism to further explore ways in which other identities (e.g. gender, sexuality, disability status) are capitalized in different settings. It is important to explore how racial capitalism is enacted in different contexts as Bhattacharyya (2018) aptly observes that "we cannot sustain an understanding of capitalism as complex and evolving alongside an account of racial capitalism as monolithic and frozen across time and space" (p. 120). Academic libraries are uniquely positioned in that tensions between neoliberal pressures and professional ethics related to equity and inclusion manifest into forms of racial capitalism that may seem harmless at first glance but require a critical examination into taken-for-granted social norms and practices and structures.

Neoliberalism and the higher education context

It is important to explore how neoliberalism contributes to market-driven behaviours that reproduce practices that commodify and racialize people. The term neoliberal or neoliberalism is often used in the higher education field to describe the structures and practices that impact students, faculty, librarians and staff. However, some scholars have pointed to the vagueness of the term and often critique other scholars for using neoliberalism as a catchall term as well as a scapegoat for the current ails of society (Barnett, 2005, Dunn, 2017; Rowlands and Rawolle, 2013; Venugopal, 2015). However, a closer reading of the literature that discusses its meaning in the social sciences field identifies neoliberalism as an economic theory (Harvey, 2005). Harvey (2005) explains that "neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). Some values that signal neoliberalism in the academic field are competitiveness, self-interest, individualism that employs corporate culture tools such as strategic plans, cost-benefit analyses, cost-efficiency, "measurable" or quantified targets, outcomes driven and performance-based evaluations (Steger and Roy, 2010). It is a polysemic term (Ganti, 2014) when contextualized manifests as ideology, policies, a mode of governance (England and Ward, 2016) and a statecraft (Ong, 2006). Though it may seem like a catchall, it demonstrates the pervasiveness and evolution of neoliberalism as an economic theory in society. It is important to note that neoliberalism in all four forms does not completely define the higher education context. Dei (2019) explains that:

> Western ideas and the regulatory capacities of capital have the power to dominate, control and script global lives beyond the formal physical occupation of colonies and Indigenous communities by imperial colonial powers. Neoliberalism continues to shape a global colonial world order and is a conduit for Euro-colonial modernity. The inhumane and oppressive nature of neoliberalism continues to be felt through the function of dominant/hegemonic ideas and paradigms representing the only truths about how communities should be organized and socio-political affairs conducted. (p. 47)

Government policies and strategies help to illustrate how neoliberalism and racialization trickles down from the government to higher education institutions. For example, the Canadian government (Government of Canada, 2019) produced an International Education Strategy, emphasizing the importance of international students in contributing to export and trade, and diversification. This document and government interest has further prompted senior leaders in higher education to focus on recruiting international students. This in turn, has increased interest in addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to appeal to the international students (Tamtik and Guenter, 2019). However, Tamtik and Guenter (2019) also observe that ironically international students are largely unsupported in relation to EDI services and programs, and at times, they are not considered stakeholders in EDI plans.

This is an example of neoliberalism enacted through policy and mode of governance, also known as multicultural neoliberalism, which refers to the practice of:

> . . . enact[ing] a structure of public recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance of multicultural subjects, based on an ethos of self-reliance, individualism, and competition, while simultaneously (and conveniently) undermining discourses and social practices that call for collective social action and fundamental structural change. (Darder, 2012, p. 415)

Multicultural neoliberalism can also be observed in the US with immigrant faculty (Lawless and Chen, 2017) where interviews revealed that racialized women faculty were being recruited to diversify departments. However, as Lawless and Chen (2017) discovered through interviews, they were often not provided with resources or support when they arrived at universities/colleges outside of their home country.

Neoliberalism in Canadian academic libraries

Neoliberalism Canadian academic libraries has also been explored via policy, mode of governance, and ideology. For example, Soutter (2016) identifies through content analysis that the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Competencies provides an in-depth analysis of the language and discourse that is rife with neoliberal ideology through the descriptions that maintain the status quo, while promoting individualism. In teaching, academic librarians in Canada have also been using The Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (American Library Association, 2015) to guide information literacy practices and as Seale (2016) observes, liberalism is embedded in The Framework and ". . . does not challenge neoliberalism but is rather contiguous with it" (p. 86). In management practice, the use of consultants is a neoliberal practice as Dymarz and Harrington (2019) explain that ". . . the interaction between corporate solutions and work in public institutions can be incongruent. For example, using corporate solutions for strategic planning, staff restructuring, and other organizational change may create conflict between the values of the profession . . . and the consultant's work and recommendations for the library" (para. 7). For assessment, some academic libraries use LibQUAL+, a standardized service quality survey that instils a neoliberal ideology through audit culture. Lilburn (2017) describes audit culture as accountability and assessment as set out by managers. This approach focuses heavily on measuring performance based on broad standards set out or selected by managers that may not necessarily apply to every academic library and discourages diverse ways of library practice (e.g. storytelling in the classroom) (Lilburn, 2017). In scholarship, Nicholson (2019) explores "neoliberal timescapes" through new public management policies and practices and found that librarians interviewed in the study had adjusted their scholarship to suit the neoliberal pressures of timely scholarly production, resulting in practice-based projects and use of personal time in the evenings and weekends to do their scholarship work. Waugh's (2015) critical discourse analysis of strategic planning documents of three Canadian universities found heavy use of neoliberal language related to marketization. Finally, Ellenwood (2020) outlines ways to educate students on information capitalism in today's society and engage students in critical examinations of consumer/producer roles in relation to capitalism. Neoliberalism in Canadian libraries in language and practice is entrenched so deeply, it is rarely questioned in our day-to-day work. Unfortunately, this sets the stage for other forms of practice and structures in academic libraries that impact equity, diversity, and inclusion work.

Colonialism, whiteness and the patriarchy in the library profession

Issar (2021) suggests that ". . . by locating capitalism in relation to other structures of oppression, the platform unsettles the often rigid boundary between the theorization of capitalism and that of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and

Indigenous dispossession" (p. 56). To avoid reducing academic libraries to institutions that only reproduce market-driven ideologies, colonialism and whiteness should be explored to identify how these ideologies intersect within academic institutions. Some LIS researchers have examined ways to decolonize academic libraries in the practice of cataloguing (Duarte and Belarde-Lewis, 2015), classification (Dudley, 2017), teaching in LIS education and curricula (Edwards, 2019). Lee (2017) and Edwards (2019) also explore Indigenous librarianship through interviews to help bring attention to ways the profession needs to advocate and address pay inequity on reserve libraries. Andrews (2017) provides a powerful perspective on the devaluing of Indigenous knowledge in libraries from a historical trauma theory lens and identifies the need for libraries to acknowledge and make more visible Indigenous knowledge. In reference to whiteness in library spaces, Brook *et al.* (2015) points to spaces that draw on Western and European dominant architectural styles and art as well as social practices in hiring and retention that favour racialized people that embody whiteness. In hiring and retention, Galvan (2015) aptly observes that "the interview and academic job talk conceal institutional bias under the guise of 'organizational fit' or a candidate's 'acceptability', while the act of recruiting presents an aspirational version of the library to candidates" (para. 3). At the association level, Espinal *et al.* (2018) provides an excellent description of actions that library associations and schools should take to decentre whiteness, identifying the need to move beyond statements and fund equity, diversity, and inclusion programs, education and initiatives. Warner (2001) observes how whiteness is embedded in the cataloguing process and collections, identifying many decisions in categories and labels are chosen and constructed by white librarians rather than racialized communities. In research on diversity work and libraries, Hathcock (2015) observes through content analyses the inherent issues with diversity statements and initiatives in LIS that aim to reproduce whiteness in racialized people. In addition, Chiu *et al.* (2021) provide an insightful discussion on the professional attitudes that impede on recognizing problematic practices. They write that "both neutrality and vocational awe have been codified as values of librarianship, and rarely have these values been challenged in trade and professional literature, nor their ties to White Supremacy examined" (Chiu *et al.*, 2021, p. 49). Vocational awe "refers to the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique" (Ettarh, 2018, para. 3). Moral superiority is problematic in that it rationalizes current library practices as socially just when there is attention needed in examining how institutional structures can harm racialized and marginalized people and groups.

Method

Conceptual research is described as "studies that do not directly collect 'first-hand data,' but rather synthesize, summarize or propose ideas based on existing literature … includes systematic, scoping reviews, scholarly essays, and articles that propose new theories, methods, topics of inquiry" (Ma and Lund, 2020, p. 1064). In addition, conceptual research can expand and contextual existing theories and concepts to add insight into a specific field. This article engages with theory adaptation, a type of conceptual paper where "changing the scope or perspective of an existing theory by informing with other theories or perspectives" (Jaakkola, 2020, p. 22). For example, Leong's (2013) conceptualization of racial capitalism is extended using critical race theories such as Wingfield and Alston's (2014) theory of racialized tasks. This approach revises and identifies new ways of applying the concept through contextualization and discussion (Jaakkola, 2020).

Though some may argue that the data is not original, the synthesis of the research produced in relevant fields can generate new insights and point to areas that need further development. Schermer (2009) argues that in the field of interventions for neurological

conditions, concepts and theories around self and identity are underdeveloped. Unfortunately, this gap, as observed by Schermer, impacts the effectiveness of neurological assessment instruments. In addition, conceptual research helps to unpack and clarify meanings in a field, allowing future researchers to explore themes and gaps identified in a conceptual paper. Mora *et al.* (2008) found in their content analysis of the information systems field that the lack of conceptual papers in past journals resulted in current studies designed without conceptual frameworks. Conceptual research helps to re-examine existing concepts and theories in relation to modern society and current events that have had a great impact. In the behavioural sciences, Dreher (2003) explains that:

> . . . the relationships between theory and reality, between a concept and the empirical phenomena, cannot only be seen as a two-digit relation: one should reasonably see them, according to the old semiotic tradition, within the framework of a triangle. What is added here is the person of the user of the concept, and thus the dependence of the meaning on historically grown, socially shared language games embedded in various human life forms. (p. 122)

In a recent study, Ma and Lund (2021) found that there have been considerable decreases in conceptual research while empirical in the form of questionnaires have become the dominant approach in the library and information science (LIS) field. Though this is understandable, given the emphasis on evidence-based practices, conceptual articles help to unpack terms and ideas by using existing literature and data driven studies. Furthermore, it is vital that theories and concepts that impact marginalized groups are fleshed out and discussed at length. This prevents theories or concepts such as racial capitalism from being misunderstood and applied in harmful ways.

Racial capitalism in academic libraries

Neoliberal and predominantly white institutions help to maintain practices of domination and racism in academic libraries and create conditions that encourage harmful capitalist practices. Eagleton-Pierce (2016) explores how neoliberalism as an economic theory draws on three themes of individualism and individualistic pursuits of capital gain, universalism of the global market and meliorism or capitalistic aspirations. These conditions help to reproduce racial capitalism through deficit narratives of racialized people, commodification of racialized people, and centring whiteness. Deficit narratives refers to the narratives that blame the marginalization and exclusion of people and groups on lack of ability or resources rather than pointing to systems of oppression. Leong (2013) outlines three types of harm that emerge from racial capitalism: fractured identities, performance demands, and economic disadvantages. To further contextualize these forms of harms, discussion on specific practices will be identified to better illustrate how racial capitalism in practice may manifest in an academic library.

Fractured identities

Leong (2013) explains that racial capitalism ". . . results in alienation of racial identity in the sense that identity may be bought and sold on the market. It also results in alienation of racial identity in the sense that individuals are distanced from that aspect of their personhood" (p. 2205). To illustrate this, let us revisit the scenario of the IT librarian whose (1) ability to speak "Chinese" is posted on the website and (2) their ethno-racial features and body are used to promote diversity on a brochure. Rather than asking questions related to their work, the IT librarian's racialized identity is considered their asset, not their skills or knowledge. Further that, when the IT librarian tries to clarify that they do not speak Mandarin and will be managing a library team, not working with students, the librarians ignore this comment and decide what parts of the IT librarian's identity is worth "advertising" and to whom.

Tokenism. Racial tokenism is a form of covert racism (Niemann, 1999) that utilizes targeted recruitment of only a "small number of members of an under-represented group . . .. as ritualistic political correctness or strategic public impression management" (Chandler and Munday, 2020). Establishing goals and quotas for diversity works towards numerical diversity but avoids real change in racist practices, structures and work cultures. In a neoliberal setting, numbers and quotas set a standard for what is considered "diversity." What these numbers often do not report are types of positions, level of position, and turnover rates that may provide a clearer picture of what diversity actually looks like within an organization. Belluigi and Thondhlana (2020) found through questionnaires, focus groups and arts-based methods that Black faculty that had been hired through an affirmative action program in a South African university still experienced microaggressions and racism from colleagues. Moreover, they found that qualitative data was excluded from diversity reports and many of the fellows from the affirmative action program had indicated problems in the work culture. Another example is Leong's (2021) examination of a legal case where a Black student's face was photoshopped into promotional and recruitment material at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. No permission was sought from the students and despite being sued and settling with the student, the university continued to defend its actions. In the LIS literature, Ossom-Williamson *et al.* (2021) share and unpack the experiences of Black librarians being tokenized in predominantly white settings and the power dynamics that uses racialized bodies "to quiet dissenters" (p. 145). Reducing racialized people to numbers is a form of racial capitalism that yet again re-asserts that their bodies matter rather than their experiences, skills and knowledge. Furthermore, it does little to address problematic institutional practices that causes harm to racialized students.

Racialized tasks. Wingfield and Alston (2014) developed the term racial tasks in PWIs to identify "the work minorities do that is associated with their position in the organizational hierarchy and reinforces Whites' position of power within the workplace" (p. 276). They identify three levels (elites, middle level workers and low-level workers) of work that range from ideological, interactional, to physical (Wingfield and Alston, 2014). Low level workers are likely engaged with physical work such as maintenance of a building while an elite worker is likely creating and reinforcing ideologies through work policy and procedures using middle-level workers that are mostly in interactional (social) settings reinforcing ideologies and work culture established by the elites (Wingfield and Alston, 2014). The elite and middle level structure and practices can be observed in academic libraries as Do and Nuth (2020) found in their interviews, with middle managers in academic libraries that most of the work involved social interactions with employees, implementing change, and enforcing new work culture norms. While Jantz (2012) found in interviews with senior level administrators such as university librarians that they were much more interested in enacting their visions or innovative ideas in the library rather than discussing staff issues. Unfortunately, racialized librarians are underrepresented in those management positions, indicating that much of the ideological and enforcement of work culture norms are by white librarians. Schonfeld and Sweeney (2017) found in their EDI study that 81% of middle management libraries identified as white non-Hispanic and 87% of senior managers identified as white non-Hispanic (p. 12). Wingfield and Alston (2014) explain the heavy presence of racialized groups in positions with the least decision-making power reinforces the idea that racialized bodies rather than perspectives are of value in PWIs. In academic libraries, security, pages, facilities staff, transportation staff or clerical type positions (assistants and technicians) are considered "low-level" type work by managers where people in these positions are often not included in larger institutional decisions and planning. The overrepresentation of white librarians in management roles reinforces the idealization of whiteness and helps to maintain exclusionary work cultures and racial hierarchies that maintain the status quo. The kind of harm that occurs is that the lack of representation from

racialized groups in decision-making positions reinforces a deficit narrative such as an inability to lead.

Performance demands

Performance demands refers to the identity performances of racialized people that stem from pressures ". . . to perform their nonwhiteness and to perform it in a way palatable to the white majority" (Leong, 2013, p. 2207). The librarians expressed great interest in the IT librarian's language ability rather than expertise and knowledge in their area of work in the scenario. Though the IT librarian's position is not related to any public-facing work, it is suggested that the librarian's language capability could be used if needed by the other librarians. The pressures to perform one's racialized identity/identities is a form of commodification that is selective as well. Leong (2013) explains that often dominant groups will determine what parts of a person's racialized identity is acceptable to perform, and in the case of the IT librarian, speaking "Chinese" is deemed acceptable if needed when working with Chinese students, however, this is likely confined to that task. Racial capitalism commodifies the performance of one's racialized identity in specific settings identified by the dominant group. Leong (2013) explains that selected identity performances take "time, money, and psychological resources" (p. 2209) referencing cases where people change their names, hair, and clothing to reflect dominant social norms.

Consuming trauma stories. The consumption of racial trauma stories can be observed in the media and literature. Racial trauma can come in many forms from discrimination to physical violence and has a serious mental and emotional impact on racialized groups. Helms *et al.* (2010) explain that "racist incidents are, at minimum, a form of emotional abuse and, therefore, can be traumatic. Moreover, ethnoviolence, regardless of form, is physical or emotional abuse whose cultural focus may not be immediately apparent to the opposing ethnic groups and thus may go unrecognized as an ethnoviolent event" (p. 55). Racial trauma can cause anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Hong (2020) explains through personal accounts that racial trauma narratives are often used in stories of individual growth of racialized people, ignoring the larger societal structures (e.g. law, education) including "the racist capitalist system that keeps the individual in place" (p. 47). The commodification and consumption of trauma stories uses suffering of racialized people particularly when these trauma stories are created and consumed for and by dominant groups. While some may argue that these trauma stories are necessary to understand and empathize with one's pain and suffering, this is at the expense of racialized groups that are pushing against the hegemonic narrative of "oppressive logics" (Mueller and Issa, 2016, p. 132). In anti-racism training, stories of racial trauma (e.g. examples of racist incidents) are often used in group sessions to help participants "understand" racism and the impact of microaggressions to overt forms of racism. This group consumption of racial trauma stories imposes further damage on racialized staff and librarians who must re-visit traumatic experiences in the presence of those who may have perpetrated acts of racism and discrimination. Consumption of racist incidents does little to address internalized racist practices in the institution that reinforce racist practices in overt and covert ways. Further that, it does little to address more inherent problematic ideologies such as white supremacy, neoliberalism, and capitalism that help to perpetuate oppressive structures and practice.

Cultural performance demands. Some libraries may have outreach programming and events aimed at racialized groups for holidays or educating the larger community through awareness campaigns. Often this type of work is delegated or assigned to racialized librarians, adding more work and pressures to perform identity work. This form of performance demand draws on the assumption of the monolithic racialized experience, that one racialized person represents an entire group. When racialized librarians are asked to perform identity work, they are tasked with cultural education or anti-racism and EDI

committee work. Anantachai and Chelsey (2018) found in their study of librarians that identify as racialized women that they experienced heavier workloads and challenges also known as cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994). The librarians interviewed in the study shared experiences of being support for racialized students and faculty along with the emotional labour needed for the day-to-day work. They found that "the intersections between the burden of care and cultural taxation faced by women of color in higher education are already apparent. For women of color librarians, the burdens they face as a result of their intersectional identities are further exacerbated by their professional characterization as care workers" (Padilla, 1994, p. 303). It is important to check one's assumptions about racialized colleagues and understand that their experiences as racialized people will vary, including cultural knowledge and practices. For example, Chinese New Year celebrations vary in each household and region. There may also have evolved into different practices for first generation, second generation, and immigrant families in North America. Furthermore, some Chinese Americans/Canadians may not celebrate the tradition. Racial capitalism places value on racialized librarians or staff members' cultural knowledge when there is some capitalistic benefit (e.g. appearing multicultural).

Economic disadvantage

Leong (2013) identifies that the labour market and economy impact hiring and retention of racialized people. In addition, the added time and workload of taking on anti-racism and EDI work are typically not financially compensated. As discussed previously, cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994) means that most racialized people take on research, practice and/or service along with EDI and anti-racism responsibilities in institutions where there are few racialized staff, they are added to various committees, positions, and expected to mentor in addition to meeting the goals and objectives in their annual work plans. Invariably, this impacts annual evaluations that in turn, creates challenges in promotion and retention. The IT librarian is expected to promote diversity as well as take on the added role of supporting Chinese students in the scenario. Leong (2013) points to how the market-driven attitudes combined with identity work results in this inequity of workloads and pay.

Invisible workloads. In interviews with racialized faculty, Gewin (2020) shares that the "cultural tax" or a "time tax" can impact work-life balance, workloads, and research output. Andrews (2017), a Māori student at the University of Washington Information School at the time, shared the experience of having to write thank you notes, letters, reports, and attend events when scholarships, fellowships, or grants were awarded to them. Andrews (2017) aptly observed that "the institutions offering them have also benefitted from my participation in outreach efforts and committees, inclusion in marketing collateral, and a general example of the presence and success of diversity initiatives" (p. 186). Andrews (2017) referenced the term "conditional hospitality" which refers to "when [racialized people] are welcomed on condition that [they] give something back in return" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 43). A lot of extra time and emotional labour goes into performing identity work, that adds to workloads that are typically uncompensated and expected from racialized library employees with the assumption that they are all willing and able to work on EDI and anti-racism initiatives and committees. Rodríguez *et al.* (2015) found in their study of faculty in the medical field that racialized faculty were promoted at slower rates due to the time committed to various EDI and anti-racism committees, projects and initiatives rather than research. This often affected the chances for promotion for racialized researchers as committees value research outputs more than they do service. It is interesting to note that racialized faculty are also burdened with juggling their time and resources in addressing racist incidents. Dhamoon (2020) identifies from a labour union perspective that dealing and navigating around racist structures, practices and incidents take up time, emotional labour and resources for racialized academics. Dhamoon (2020) suggests this type of work should be acknowledged by faculty associations

and university administrators through more opportunities for leaves and financial compensation.

Pay inequity. Leong (2013) observes that "the racial commodification that racial capitalism renders racial minorities particularly vulnerable to broad fluctuations in market conditions" (p. 2211). Galbraith *et al.* (2018) found in a study that the racial pay gap had improved by examining 35 years of raw Association of Research Libraries (ARL) data of salaries, though it is important to note that it still exists. They also noted that the data are limited since there is a low number of racialized librarians within their study population. However, Li (2021) found in a Canadian study that "37 percent of the salary gap between visible minority and nonvisible minority library practitioners can be explained by their differences in the controlled variables [education and experience, job type, and labour market]. Yet a large portion of the gap, 63 percent, remains unexplained" (p. 450). In addition, during a crisis or economic downturn, racialized staff are in vulnerable positions. In an S+R Ithaka report, it was reported that most furloughs and cuts to positions impacted racialized library staff during the pandemic (Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg, 2021). While gender pay equity is important, racialized librarians face their own and varying challenges in negotiating salary and merit pay. In addition, under financial restraints and pressure, racialized librarians and staff in precarious positions become more vulnerable.

Addressing racial capitalism in the academic library profession

Racial capitalism manifests in different forms within the academic library and the harm it causes to racialized librarians and staff range from mental to emotional. It further legitimizes oppressive structures that discriminate and exclude. To address racial capitalism, it is important to explore how structures and systems influence practices and attitudes. Black feminist scholar, Audre Lorde (1984) wrote:

> For we have, built into all of 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 with are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. (p. 123)

Rather than offer specific approaches to dealing with each issue, discussions will focus on systems and structures such as meritocracy, LIS education and funding.

Dismantling meritocratic systems

Tokenism and racialized tasks are rooted in ideas that racialized bodies are more valued than their perspectives, skills, and knowledge. It draws on stereotypes that racialized people are incapable of taking on positions and tasks with decision-making responsibilities, categorizing different racialized groups as passive (Mukkamala and Suyemoto, 2018), or emotional (McDowell and Carter-Francique, 2017) to name a few. Systems and processes that assign merit or judgement reinforce dominant standards of being and practice. Littler (2018) explains that merit is racialized because "merit is both a value judgement and a term that affects who is permitted to act and how. Contemporary narratives of meritocracy often work with the assumption that talent and intelligence are primarily inborn abilities that are either given the chance to succeed or not" (Littler, 2018. p. 155). The assumption of "inborn or natural talent" draws on individualism and capital gains of a person. Neoliberal meritocracy employs competition and individualism through evaluative structures developed by dominant groups under the standards developed by a dominant group.

In some academic institutions, annual reviews and tenure/permanent status reviews in academic libraries operate through a meritocratic system. It is often legitimized and emphasized as a neutral process despite longstanding issues around racial bias in student evaluations (Anderson and Smith, 2005; Chávez and Mitchell, 2020; Fan *et al.*, 2019; Reid, 2010;

Subtirelu, 2015) and the review process (Evans, 2007; Frazier, 2011; Jayakumar *et al.*, 2009; Kelly and McCann, 2014; Turner, 2003). In evaluations related to teaching, it can be rife with bias by evaluators that may have unconscious biases. Though it can be argued that rubrics can help to increase objectivity in review processes, often these rubrics are prescriptive and hierarchical, identifying dominant forms of publications, research, service and teaching as "best" practice. It gives little way for alternative forms of epistemologies, empiricism, scholarship, research subjects and practices that contribute to marginalized groups and communities. For example, more artistic endeavours are typically valued less in the list of publications such as poetry, short stories or writings unique to the librarian's experience. Artistic works may offer perspectives on a unique experience and contribute to artistic and creative communities. In addition, student evaluations do not help to identify pedagogical knowledge and practice. Rather, sharing lesson plans and teaching statements with teaching librarians, faculty, instructors and staff allow for the exploration of practices and build on their experiences through peer discussions. By focusing on collaborative and peer learning and shifting away from annual evaluations that act as surveillance, institutions encourage the development and acknowledgement of different practices.

In promotion and tenure/permanent status evaluations, committees may form to evaluate materials outlined in collective agreements or by administration and in merit pay processes, it may only include library administrators. These evaluative processes allow for bias and, although it can be argued that rubrics of evaluation help to curb bias, they are typically constructed and draw on institutional and/or organizational goals and objectives that mould librarians into the image or vision of the organization. Thus, it is important to provide anti-racist training and education for committee members on a continual basis. Often one-time training/workshops are provided by universities to staff and managers. This kind of approach assumes that one can undo racist ways of thinking in one shot and as teaching librarians know, one-shot information literacy instruction barely scratches the surface of important concepts.

Critical race theory in LIS education and management/leadership training

To address the performance demands, it is important to emphasize that racialized groups are not monolithic. Though multicultural education is important, some are designed as cultural competence workshops that do not address the experiences of people with intersecting identities (e.g. sexuality, gender, disabilities) within a cultural group. Further, the term competence implies that one can "master" or become an expert on another person's culture(s). The term "competence" translates to performance indicators, drawing on the neoliberal practice of measuring, in this case, competency in someone's culture. Pon (2009) argues that cultural competence is another form of racism and explains that "cultural competency assumes . . . that culture is a collection of absolute, stable, fixed objective traits and values. This absolutist view of culture recalls anthropology's modernist theories of culture" (p. 63).

Critical race theory (CRT) instead offers a more constructive approach in addressing racism by educating people on structural and social practices that oppress, as well as identify ways to create environments of belonging. CRT has been garnering some attention in the United States news as some journalists, and politicians have been spreading inaccurate information and interpretation of the theory. CRT is a scholarly approach that examines societal structures (e.g. law, education, health care) that continually oppress marginalized groups through various critical lenses (e.g. socio-historical). More importantly, in terms of methodology, it helps us recognize marginalized voices. Crenshaw *et al.* (1995) explain that the beginnings of CRT began in legal studies where the research of scholars of colours "challenge[d] the ways in which race and racial power are constructed and represented in American legal culture and, more generally, in American society as a whole" (p. xiii). These scholars have developed CRT based on data, case law and legislation, and historical

documentation to name a few. Its application in different settings challenges dominant ideologies and narratives that silence racialized experiences and voices and thus it is rooted in social justice.

LIS education and training particularly on topics around management and leadership draw on business and organizational studies literature. Rooted within these studies are neoliberal ideologies that are legitimized as neutral and best practice. Matthijs Bal and Dóci (2018) found in their content analysis of work and organizational psychology research that neoliberal ideology was prevalent in concepts and studies that focused on individualism and performance in the workplace. In addition, Ray (2019) examines how organizations are sites for racial oppression and identifies how ". . . mainstream organizational theory typically sees organizational formation, hierarchies, and processes as race-neutral and operationalizes race as a personal identity" (p. 26). Through the neutrality narrative, organizational studies have legitimized their research methodologies and concepts as neutral and free from influence despite underlying ideologies of white supremacy, racial capitalism, and neoliberalism.

Criticism of the neutrality narrative can also be found in information literacy where Saunders (2017) shares the history of information as social justice in the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Saunders (2017) provides a proposal on how the Framework can and should include social justice. Some students have also observed that content in LIS schools lack discussions around racial and social justice. Recently at the University of Toronto, the Diversity Working Group for the Faculty of Information released a report identifying a "culture of white supremacy" (Anielska, 2020, para. 2) where there were little content, resources, and action in following through with commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion. It is absolutely necessary to include CRT in LIS education and leadership training in order to provide alternative perspectives in how organizations such as libraries should be structured and led by through a social justice lens. Moreover, CRT also introduces ideas of critical reflective practice. This is important as it ensures that librarians reflect on their work and environment using questions rooted in critical theory and social justice. For example, Lawless (2021) provides insight into an activity with prompts in exploring multicultural neoliberalism at their university campus to build awareness of neoliberal influence and orient conversations around diversity towards a social justice mandate.

Funding commitments to anti-racism

In the US academic job market, requests for diversity statements and forms in job postings have increased (Rybarczyk and Jeffers, 2021). In Canada, EDI positions, committees and initiatives are growing in universities (Universities Canada, 2019). It is important to acknowledge the time and effort of turning EDI and anti-racism statements into action by funding the work. This can be done by paying for an expert to conduct a pay equity investigation, paying for racialized people that take on extra EDI work, or expanding EDI offices to provide support and education to the academic community. Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg (2021) reported in a recent Ithaka S+R US Library Survey that library directors reported that little action has been taken beyond anti-racism statements. While these statements and letters in support of anti-racism signal to the community that there is interest, for some institutions, it stops there and little funding or financial support is given to expand and run offices and programming effectively. To ensure that EDI and anti-racism statements turn into action, it is important to compensate racialized librarians and staff for their time on EDI committees and working groups. In addition, academic libraries need to invest resources in identifying inequity in pay as well as identifying and addressing barriers in hiring and promoting racialized librarians to management positions. EDI and anti-racism practitioners along with faculty associations can help to begin to address these issues and this time should be financially compensated.

Rather than funding a one-time training session for a large group, academic libraries should fund anti-racism educators that understands the diverse needs of the academic community, who can teach key theoretical and core concepts that are important in understanding structural oppression (e.g. whiteness, intersectionality, etc.). Diverse needs in this respect refers to various programs such as spaces for racialized staff to share and heal from shared trauma while also offering year-round support in mediating conversations and educational programming focused on introducing critical race theory to library professionals.

Conclusion

To engage with systemic and structural changes, librarians and libraries need to dismantle meritocracy, introduce CRT in leadership and training as well as properly fund EDI work. The newly hired IT librarian from the earlier scenario would likely be valued for their skills and knowledge rather than their racial identity. They would be introduced as the IT expert and the priority would be to introduce this person to managers and stakeholders in the library and the university. The extra identity work from the initial scenario would have never taken place because their racial identity would not be used as a way to promote the image of diversity. If institutions are committed to anti-racism, action should be taken to change systems and structures such as how librarians and faculty are evaluated in higher education, re-designing program curricula to include diverse perspectives and critical race theory, and investing financial resources in identifying racial pay gaps and other issues as identified by racialized librarians and faculty at the institution.

Leong (2013) explains that "commodifying race causes us to think of it as just another thing — like bread or furniture — that we can take, use, consume, exploit, enjoy, and discard as we wish. This way of thinking is fundamentally at odds with an attitude of respect for racial identity. Rather than inculcating an attitude of respect, commodification precludes it" (pp. 2213–2214). In academic libraries, various forms of racial capitalism that fracture the identities of racialized librarians and staff can include tokenism; expectations of contributing to or completing racialized tasks; performance demands in the form of identity work related to cultural events; as well as experiencing racial trauma in training and workshops. Finally, racial capitalism results in economic disadvantages experienced by racialized librarians through cultural taxation and pay inequity. In order to push back, librarians need to respond to capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, whiteness and patriarchy by dismantling systems such as the meritocracy, remove neutrality in LIS education and introduce CRT, and finally, financially invest in EDI and anti-racism workers and racialized librarians that contribute to EDI and anti-racism committees and initiatives.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Michelle Bissessarsingh for her feedback on the writing, as well as the editors and reviewers for their insightful notes and patience during the editing process.

In addition, it is important to identify my positionality in relation to this topic for transparency so there is an understanding of how my social position informs my view. Positionality "refers to a set of processes, rather than a possessive characteristic of individuals; it describes a power relationship, rather than an identity" (Tien, 2019, p. 530). It is also important to note that one's positionality can shift as privileges also change in different contexts. One's positionality is not solely related to identity, rather it includes ways of thinking informed by our lived experiences and privileges that can be altered or changed as new experiences arise. Thus, my positionality for this paper is specific to this topic and discussion at this point in time. My doctoral research related to Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990) in

the context of equity and racialized women has influenced this article. In addition, Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars such as Crenshaw (1990), Bell (1991), Harris (1993) and Lorde (1984) have also provided me with hermeneutical resources to better understand my own experiences. As a result, my current research focuses on critiquing structures and systems.

Research Funding: The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Note

1. Racialized or racialization is a term used to refer to the process whereby ethno-racial groups are categorized, marginalized and "other-ed" by dominant groups (Henry *et al.*, 2017). By using this term, this paper acknowledges that race is a social construction that impacts the way people experience the effects of hierarchies and categories constructed by dominant groups. The paper will be using racialized people, and racialized groups rather than Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC). Though it is important to note that individuals in the racialized or BIPOC community should identify as how they choose as our individual identities are complex and ours to construct and name.

References

Ahmed, S. (2012), *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

American Library Association. (2015), "Framework for information literacy for higher education", available at: https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework (accessed 21 June 2021).

Anantachai, T. and Chesley, C. (2018), "The burden of care: cultural taxation of women of color librarians on the tenure-track", in Chou, R.L. and Pho, A. (Eds), *Pushing the Margins: Women of Color and Intersectionality in LIS*, Library Juice Press, Sacramento, CA, pp. 301-327.

Anderson, K.J. and Smith, G. (2005), "Students' preconceptions of professors: benefits and barriers according to ethnicity and gender", *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 184-201, doi: 10.1177/0739986304273707.

Andrews, N. (2017), "Reflections on resistance, decolonization, and the historical trauma of libraries and academia", in Nicholson, K.P. and Seale, M. (Eds), *The Politics of Theory and the Practice of Critical Librarianship*, Library Juice Press, Sacramento, CA, pp. 181-192.

Anielksa, M. (2020), "Faculty of information students release report calling for diversity in course content, mandatory equity training", *The Varsity*, available at: https://thevarsity.ca/2020/10/25/faculty-of-information-students-release-report-calling-for-diversity-in-course-content-mandatory-equity-training/ (accessed 25 June 2021).

Barnett, C. (2005), "The consolations of 'neoliberalism'", *Geoforum*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 7-12, doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.08.006.

Bell, D. (1991), "Racial realism", *Connecticut Law Review*, Vol. 24, pp. 363-380.

Belluigi, D.Z. and Thondhlana, G. (2020), "'Your skin has to be elastic': the politics of belonging as a selected black academic at a 'transforming' South African university", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Taylor and Francis, pp. 1-22, doi: 10.1080/09518398.2020.1783469.

Bhattacharyya, G. (2018), *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*, Rowman & Littlefield, London.

Bourdieu, P. (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (R. Nice, Trans.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bourdieu, P. (1984), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Bourdieu, P. (1990), *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Brook, F., Ellenwood, D. and Lazzaro, A.E. (2015), "In pursuit of antiracist social justice: denaturalizing whiteness in the academic library", *Library Trends*, Vol. 64 No. 2, pp. 246-284.

Chandler, D. and Munday, R. (2020), "Tokenism", *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Chávez, K. and Mitchell, K.M. (2020), "Exploring bias in student evaluations: gender, race, and ethnicity", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 270-274, doi: 10.1017/S1049096519001744.

Cheng, W. (2013), "Strategic orientalism: racial capitalism and the problem of 'Asianness'", *African Identities*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 148-158.

Chiu, A., Ettarh, F.M. and Ferretti, J.A. (2021), "Not the shark, but the water: how neutrality and vocational awe intertwine to uphold white supremacy", in Leung, S. and López-Knight, J.R. (Eds), *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 49-71.

Crenshaw, K. (1990), "Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color", *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, pp. 1241-1300.

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G. and Thomas, K. (Eds) (1995), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, The New Press, New York, NY.

Danewid, I. (2020), "The fire this time: grenfell, racial capitalism and the urbanisation of empire", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 289-313.

Darder, A. (2012), "Neoliberalism in the academic borderlands: an on-going struggle for equality and human rights", *Educational Studies*, Vol. 48 No. 5, pp. 412-426, doi: 10.1080/00131946.2012.714334.

Dei, G.J.S. (2019), "Noeliberalism as a new form of colonialism in education", in Chitpin, S. and Portelli, J.P. (Eds), *Confronting Educational Policy in Neoliberal Times: International Perspectives*, 1st ed., Routledge, New York, pp. 40-58.

Dhamoon, R.K. (2020), "Racism as a workload and bargaining issue", *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 1-22, doi: 10.18740/ss27273.

Do, D.T. and Nuth, A. (2020), "Academic library middle managers as leaders: in their own words", *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 60 No. 1, pp. 41-70, doi: 10.1080/01930826.2019.1671036.

Dorries, H., Hugill, D. and Tomiak, J. (2019), "Racial capitalism and the production of settler colonial cities", *Geoforum*, pp. 1-8, doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.07.016.

Dreher, A.U. (2003), "What does conceptual research have to offer?", in Leuzinger-Bohleber, M., Dreher, A.U., Canestri, J. and Widlöcher, D.H. (Eds), *Pluralism and Unity?*, Routledge, New York NY, pp. 109-124.

Duarte, M.E. and Belarde-Lewis, M. (2015), "Imaging: creating spaces for indigenous ontologies", *Cataloguing and Classification Quarterly*, Vol. 55 Nos 5-6, pp. 677-702, doi: 10.1080/01639374.2015.1018396.

Dudley, M.Q. (2017), "A library matter of genocide: the library of congress and the historiography of the Native American Holocaust", *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 1-32, doi: 10.18584/iipj.2017.8.2.9.

Dunn, B. (2017), "Against neoliberalism as a concept", *Capital and Class*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 435-454, doi: 10.1177/0309816816678583.

Dymarz, A. and Harrington, M. (2019), "Consultants in Canadian academic libraries: adding new voices to the story", *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, available at: http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2019/consultants/ (accessed 17 June 2021).

Eagleton-Pierce, M. (2016), "Historicizing the neoliberal spirit of capitalism", in Springer, S., Birch, K. and MacLeavy, J. (Eds), *Handbook of Neoliberalism*, Routledge, New York, pp. 17-26.

Edwards, A. (2019), "Unsettling the future by uncovering the past: decolonizing academic libraries and librarianship", *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 1-12, doi: 10.21083/partnership.v14i1.5161.

Ellenwood, D. (2020), "'Information has value': the political economy of information capitalism", *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, available at: https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2020/information-has-value-the-political-economy-of-information-capitalism/ (accessed 7 September 2021).

England, K. and Ward, K. (2016). "Theorizing neoliberalization", in Springer, S., Birch, K. and MacLeavy, J. (Eds), *Handbook of Neoliberalism*, Routledge, New York, pp. 50-60.

Espinal, I., Sutherland, T. and Roh, C. (2018), "A holistic approach for inclusive librarianship: decentering whiteness in our profession", *Library Trends*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 147-162, doi: 10.1353/lib.2018.0030.

Ettarh, F. (2018), "Vocational awe and librarianship: the lies we tell ourselves", *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, available at: https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/ (accessed 30 September 2021).

Evans, S.Y. (2007), "Women of color in American higher education", *Thought and Action*, Vol. 131, pp. 131-138.

Fan, Y., Shepherd, L.J., Slavich, E., Waters, D., Stone, M., Abel, R. and Johnston, E.L. (2019), "Gender and cultural bias in student evaluations: why representation matters", *PLoS One*, Vol. 14 No. 2, e0209749, doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0209749.

Frazier, K.N. (2011), "Academic bullying: a barrier to tenure and promotion for African-American faculty", *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 1-13.

Frederick, J.K. and Wolff-Eisenberg, C. (2021), "National movements for racial justice and academic library leadership: results from the Ithaka S+R US library survey 2020", Ithaka S+R, doi: 10.18665/sr.314931 (accessed 18 June 2021).

Galbraith, Q., Kelley, H. and Groesbeck, M. (2018), "Is there a racial wage gap in research libraries? An analysis of ARL libraries", *College and Research Libraries*, Vol. 79 No. 7, pp. 863-875, doi: 10.5860/crl.79.7.863.

Galvan, A. (2015), "Soliciting performance, hiding bias: whiteness and librarianship", *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, available at: http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/soliciting-performance-hiding-bias-whiteness-and-librarianship/ (accessed 17 June 2021).

Ganti, T. (2014), "Neoliberalism", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 43, pp. 89-104, doi: 10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155528.

Gewin, V. (2020), "The time tax put on scientists of color", *Nature*, Vol. 583, pp. 479-481.

Go, J. (2021), "Three tensions in the theory of racial capitalism", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 38-47.

Government of Canada (2019), "Building on success: international education strategy, 2019-2024", available at: https://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies-sei/Building-on-Success-International-Education-Strategy-2019-2024.pdf (accessed 28 June 2021).

Harris, C.I. (1993), "Whiteness as property", *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 106 No. 8, pp. 1707-1791.

Harris, C.I. (2020), "Reflections on whiteness as property", *Harvard Law Review Forum*, Vol. 134 No. 1, pp. 1-10.

Harris, C.I. (2021), "Foreword: racial capitalism and law", in Leroy, J. and Jenkins, D. (Eds), *Histories of Racial Capitalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. vii-xx.

Harvey, D. (2005), *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Hathcock, A. (2015), "White librarianship in blackface: diversity initiatives in LIS", *In The Library with the Lead Pipe*, available at: https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/ (accessed 18 June 2021).

Helms, J.E., Nicolas, G. and Green, C.E. (2010), "Racism and ethnoviolence as trauma: enhancing professional training", *Traumatology: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 53-62, doi: 10.1177/1534765610389595.

Henry, F., Dua, E., James, C.E., Kobayashi, A., Li, P., Ramos, H. and Smith, M.S. (2017), *Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities*, UBC Press, Vancouver, BC.

Hong, C. (2020), *Minor Feelings: an Asian American Reckoning*, One World, New York, NY.

Hudson, D.J. (2017), "On 'diversity' as anti-racism in library and information studies: a critique", *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 1-36, doi: 10.24242/jclis.v1i1.6.

Hudson, D.J. (2020), "The displays: on anti-racist study and institutional enclosure", available at: https://www.uproot.space/features/hudson-the-displays (accessed 7 September 2021).

Issar, S. (2021), "Listening to Black lives matter: racial capitalism and the critique of neoliberalism", *Contemporary Political Theory*, Vol. 20, pp. 48-71.

Jaakkola, E. (2020), "Designing conceptual articles: four approaches", *AMS Review*, Vol. 10, pp. 18-26, doi: 10.1007/s13162-020-00161-0.

Jantz, R.C. (2012), "Innovation in academic libraries: an analysis of university librarians' perspectives", *Library and Information Science Research*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 3-12, doi: 10.1016/j.lisr.2011.07.008.

Jayakumar, U.M., Howard, T.C., Allen, W.R. and Han, J.C. (2009), "Racial privilege in the professoriate: an exploration of campus climate, retention, and satisfaction", *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 80 No. 5, pp. 538-563, doi: 10.1080/00221546.2009.11779031.

Kelly, B.T. and McCann, K.I. (2014), "Women faculty of color: stories behind the statistics", *The Urban Review*, Vol. 46 No. 4, pp. 681-702, doi: 10.1007/s11256-014-0275-8.

King, E.B., Knight, J.L. and Hebl, M.R. (2010), "The influence of economic conditions on aspects of stigmatization", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 66 No. 3, pp. 446-460.

Krosch, A.R., Tyler, T.R. and Amodio, D.M. (2017), "Race and recession: effects of economic scarcity on racial discrimination", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 113 No. 6, pp. 892-909.

Kung, J.Y., Fraser, K.L. and Winn, D. (2020), "Diversity initiatives to recruit and retain academic librarians: a systematic review", *College and Research Libraries*, Vol. 81 No. 1, pp. 96-108.

Lawless, B. (2021), "Neoliberal multiculturalism on college campuses: fostering a critical understanding of diversity", *Communication Teacher*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 178-182, doi: 10.1080/17404622.2021.1923768.

Lawless, B. and Chen, Y.W. (2017), "Multicultural neoliberalism and academic labor: experiences of female immigrant faculty in the US academy", *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 236-243, doi: 10.1177/1532708616672688.

Lee, D. (2017), "Discussion section: indigenous librarians: knowledge keepers in the 21st century", *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 175-199.

Leong, N. (2013), "Racial capitalism", *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 126 No. 8, pp. 2151-2226.

Leong, N. (2021), *Identity Capitalists: The Powerful Insiders Who Exploit Diversity to Maintain Inequality*, Stanford University Press, Redwood City.

LeRoy, J. and Jenkins, D. (Eds) (2021), *Histories of Racial Capitalism*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Li, Y. (2021), "Racial pay gap: an analysis of CARL libraries", *College and Research Libraries*, Vol. 82 No. 3, pp. 436-454, doi: 10.5860/crl.82.3.43.

Lilburn, J. (2017), "Ideology and audit culture: standardized service quality surveys in academic libraries", *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 91-110, doi: 10.1353/pla.2017.0006.

Littler, J. (2018), *Against Meritocracy: Culture, Power and Myths of Mobility*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Long, H., Van Dam, A., Fowers, A. and Shapiro, L. (2020), "The covid-19 recession is the most unequl in modern US history", *The Washington Post*, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/business/coronavirus-recession-equality/ (accessed 12 June 2021).

Lorde, A. (1984), *Sister Outsider : Essays and Speeches*, Crossing Press, Trumansburg, NY.

Ma, J. and Lund, B. (2020), "The evolution of LIS research topics and methods from 2006 to 2018: a content analysis", *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 57 No. 1, p. e241, doi: 10.1002/pra2.241.

Ma, J. and Lund, B. (2021), "The evolution and shift of research topics and methods in library and information science", *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 72 No. 8, pp. 1059-1074.

Matthijs Bal, P. and Dóci, E. (2018), "Neoliberal ideology in work and organizational psychology", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 536-548, doi: 10.1080/1359432X.2018.1449108.

McClintock, N. (2018), "Urban agriculture, racial capitalism, and resistance in the settler-colonial city", *Geography Compass*, Vol. 12 No. 6, pp. 1-16, doi: 10.1111/gec3.12373.

McClure, E.S., Vasudevan, P., Bailey, Z., Patel, S. and Robinson, W.R. (2020), "Racial capitalism within public health—how occupational settings drive COVID-19 disparities", *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 189 No. 11, pp. 1244-1253.

McDowell, J. and Carter-Francique, A. (2017), "An intersectional analysis of the workplace experiences of African American female athletic directors", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 77 No. 5, pp. 393-408, doi: 10.1007/s11199-016-0730-y.

McMillan Cottom, T. (2020), "Where platform capitalism and racial capitalism meet: the sociology of race and racism in the digital society", *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, Vol. 6 No. 4, pp. 441-449, doi: 10.1177/2332649220949473.

Melamed, J. (2015), "Racial capitalism", *Critical Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 76-85.

Mora, M., Gelman, O., Paradice, D. and Cervantes, F. (2008), "The case for conceptual research in information systems", *CONF-IRM 2008 Proceedings*, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, pp. 52-61.

Mueller, J.C. and Issa, I. (2016), "Consuming black pain: reading racial ideology in cultural appetite for 12 Years a Slave", in Thakore, B.K. and Smith, J.A. (Eds), *Race and Contention in Twenty-First Century US Media*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 131-147.

Mukkamala, S. and Suyemoto, K.L. (2018), "Racialized sexism/sexualized racism: a multimethod study of intersectional experiences of discrimination for Asian American women", *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 32-46, doi: 10.1037/aap0000104.

Nicholson, K.P. (2019), "Time, new public management, and Canadian academic librarians' scholarship and service", *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 50, pp. 1-29, doi: 10.33137/cjal-rcbu.v5.29888.

Niemann, Y.F. (1999), "The making of a token: a case study of stereotype threat, stigma, racism, and tokenism in academe", *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 111-134.

Ong, A. (2006), *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Ossom-Williamson, P., Williams, J., Goodman, X., Minter, C.I.J. and Logan, A. (2021), "Starting with I: combating anti-Blackness in libraries, medical", *Reference Services Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 139-150, doi: 10.1080/02763869.2021.1903276.

Padilla, A.M. (1994), "Ethnic minority scholars, research, and mentoring: current and future issues", *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 24-27, doi: 10.2307/1176259.

Pon, G. (2009), "Cultural competency as new racism: an ontology of forgetting", *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 59-71, doi: 10.1080/10428230902871173.

Pulido, L. (2016), "Flint, environmental racism, and racial capitalism", *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 1-16, doi: 10.1080/10455752.2016.1213013.

Ralph, M. and Singhal, M. (2019), "Racial capitalism", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 48, pp. 851-881.

Ray, V. (2019), "A theory of racialized organizations", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 26-53, doi: 10.1177/0003122418822335.

Reid, L.D. (2010), "The role of perceived race and gender in the evaluation of college teaching on RateMyProfessors.Com", *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 137-152, doi: 10.1037/a0019865.

Robinson, C. J. (2000), *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC.

Rodríguez, J.E., Campbell, K.M. and Pololi, L.H. (2015), "Addressing disparities in academic medicine: what of the minority tax?", *BMC Medical Education*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 1-5.

Rowlands, J. and Rawolle, S. (2013), "Neoliberalism is not a theory of everything: a Bourdieuian analysis of illusio in educational research", *Critical Studies in Education*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 260-272, doi: 10.1080/17508487.2013.830631.

Rybarczyk, B.J. and Jeffers, M. (2021). "Preparing for trends in the academic job market", *Inside Higher Education*, available at: https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/09/13/how-past-year-has-changed-academic-job-market-opinion (accessed 7 September 2021).

Saunders, L. (2017), "Information literacy and social justice: why and how", *Communications in Information Literacy*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 55-75, doi: 10.15760/comminfolit.2017.11.1.47.

Schermer, M. (2009), "Changes in the self: the need for conceptual research next to empirical research", *The American Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 9 No. 5, pp. 45-47, doi: 10.1080/15265160902788744.

Schonfeld, R.C. and Sweeney, L. (2017), "Inclusion, diversity, and equity: members of the association of research libraries: employee demographics and director perspectives", Ithaka S+R, doi: 10.18665/sr.304524 (accessed 18 June 2021).

Seale, M. (2016), "Enlightenment, neoliberalism, and information literacy", *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 1, pp. 80-91.

Soutter, J. (2016), "The core competencies for 21st century CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) librarians: through a neoliberal lens", *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, Vol. 2, pp. 35-67, available at: https://journal.radicallibrarianship.org/index.php/journal/article/view/10.

Steger, M.B. and Roy, R.K. (2010), *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Subramianiam, V. (2020), "New race-based data shows visible miniorities in canada disproportionately impacted by COVID recession", *Financial Post*, available at: https://financialpost.com/news/economy/new-race-based-data-shows-visible-minorities-in-canada-disproportionately-impacted-by-covid-recession (accessed 12 June 2021).

Subtirelu, N.C. (2015), "'She does have an accent but…': race and language ideology in students' evaluations of mathematics instructors on RateMyProfessors.com", *Language in Society*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 35-62, doi: 10.1017/S0047404514000736.

Tamtik, M. and Guenter, M. (2019), "Policy analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion strategies in Canadian universities–how far have we come?", *Canadian Journal of Higher Education/Revue Canadienne D'enseignement Supérieur*, Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 41-56.

Tien, J. (2019), "Teaching identity vs positionality: dilemmas in social justice education", *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 49 No. 5, pp. 526-550.

Turner, C.S. (2003), "Incorporation and marginalization in the academy: from border toward center for faculty of color?", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 112-125, available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3180861.

Universities Canada (2019), "Equity, diversity and inclusion at Canadian universities: report on the 2019 survey", available at: https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/publications/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-at-canadian-universities-report-on-the-2019-survey/ (accessed 13 September 2021).

Venugopal, R. (2015), "Neoliberalism as concept", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 165-187, doi: 10.1080/03085147.2015.1013356.

Warner, J.N. (2001), "Moving beyond whiteness in North American academic libraries", *Libri: International Journal of Libraries and Information Studies*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 167-172, doi: 10.1515/LIBR.2001.167.

Waugh, C.L. (2015), "Balancing visions and values: an exploration of market rhetoric in Canadian academic library strategic plans", *Progressive Librarian*, Vol. 43, pp. 47-56, available at: http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL_Jnl/contents43.shtml.

Wingfield, A.H. and Alston, R.S. (2014), "Maintaining hierarchies in predominantly White organizations: a theory of racial tasks", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 274-287, doi: 10.1177/0002764213503329.

Corresponding author
Silvia Vong can be contacted at: silvia.vong@utoronto.ca