

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. On how racism is embedded in platforms, see Buolamwini and Gebru 2018; Benjamin 2019; Noble 2018; Simonite 2018. For the ways in which transphobia is also coded into digital platforms, see Keyes 2018; Spiel et al. 2019. Finally, for more on how sexual harassment and other violations of consent become part of the algorithmic business model, see Carrigan, Green, and Rahman-Davis 2021.

2. For more perspectives on how the concept of “magic” operates as an emic term in computer science communities, see Rosner 2018b; Benjamin 2019; Sadowski 2020; Carrigan, Green, and Rahman-Davis 2021; Thomas, Nafus, and Sherman 2018.

3. Others have developed theories on technocracy (e.g., Broussard 2018; Sadowski 2020; Dean 2002; Davis-Floyd 1992), and I am indebted to their work in theorizing the Bro Code. Through this book, I will use the term technocracy with a theoretical sensitivity to Robbie Davis-Floyd’s frame because the spirit of her work regarding the sociotechnical politics of birth in the US pivots on feminist theories of reproduction and therefore fruitfully applies to my approach in analyzing the digital economy.

4. I use Scott Frickel and Neil Gross’s analytic frame for scientific and intellectual movements that describe “a collective effort to pursue research programs or projects for thought in the face of resistance from others in the scientific and intellectual community . . . for scientific and intellectual change” (Frickel and Gross 2005, 206).

CHAPTER 2

1. I use the term “underrepresented group members” to include women of all ethnicities as well as African American, Latino, and Native American men.

2. My inclusion criteria for delineating between gender equity and sexual harassment literature is whether the authors identify the deeper, more pervasive problems

that emerged out of remedial efforts to interrupt bias in STEM as harassment or not. This is not to say that research describing and theorizing exclusionary practices in technical fields could not qualify as gender and sexual harassment research (e.g., Margolis and Fisher 2003). Nor am I saying that gender equity scholarship is not produced by feminists.

CHAPTER 3

1. Steven Pinker (2005), in a book supporting “the Larry Summers Hypothesis,” makes the case that women lack the innate capability for abstract reasoning. The basis for this claim is studies that purportedly demonstrate that there are a higher proportion of men at the high end of the scale of math, logic, and spatial tests. To buttress his hypothesis, Pinker relies on outdated and disproven data from 1985 on the gendered math achievement gap. He ignored data gathered since 1985 that shows the math achievement gap is nearly bridged (Barres 2006). The quality of Pinker’s contributions to gender theory is also being questioned by scholars who have brought attention to his ties to convicted human trafficker Jeffrey Epstein (Flaherty 2019) and his dubious claims about rape and feminism (Manne 2020).
2. For a more in-depth discussion of this point, see Carrigan 2017.

CHAPTER 4

1. Following Mary Daly’s example, “I have no need to capitalize christianity. This is obviously a matter not only of taste but of evaluation” (Daly 1990, 26).
2. The field note that opens the book’s prologue depicted men who roamed the workplace campus in packs and women alone (and visibly distraught). What I failed to observe was the absence of men of color in groups. Thanks to Emmanuel, I see it now and better understand the racial dimensions of the worksite.

CHAPTER 6

1. For a nonexhaustive list of such formal organization, please see the appendix.
2. Tara’s metaphor is reminiscent of Sara Ahmed’s (2012) metaphor of diversity work being a brick wall.
3. To Big Tech bosses, workforce fairness and diversity are meaningless unless they increase “innovation” and profit. Jennifer Siebel Newsom and Jean Kilbourne (2017) captured this sentiment perfectly when they imagined these leaders’ rationale for doing little to combat harassment and segregation in technical fields: “We’ve made billions of dollars while paying women less and with barely any women on our corporate boards, right? No one can deny that we’ve been leading the world in

innovation . . . while often *ignoring* women completely.” The pursuit of diversity is as much a cipher in computing as is innovation—hype trumps reality. Terms like “innovation” and “revolution” are geek mystique speak for clickbait, human behavior data capture, and nudging people to buy more gadgets more often.

4. The Level Playing Field Institute (2011) produced an excellent report on how women and people of color in the IT workforce are forced into the margins. They make four recommendations for improving participation by underrepresented group members:

1. Develop a homegrown pool of diverse talent.
2. Address hidden biases and barriers within workplaces that disadvantage underrepresented groups.
3. Conduct research to both uncover hidden biases within the sector, and examine efforts taken by companies to increase diversity.
4. Get the word out within your company, networks, and communities.

The first recommendation is excellent. Two senior-level participants in this study learned programming on the job, and both lamented how the trend of companies growing their talent has faded. As discussed at length in chapter 2, unexamined bias is an important factor in labor segregation in computer science and engineering. However, on its own, bias decoupled from interventions combating racism and sexual harassment is inadequate.

5. Eight years after the Level Playing Field recommendations, the AI Now Institute (West, Whittaker, and Crawford 2019) also suggested ways that Big Tech could desegregate its workforce and retain women and practitioners of color:

1. Publish compensation levels, including bonuses and equity, across all roles and job categories, broken down by race and gender.
2. End pay and opportunity inequality, and set pay and benefit equity goals that include contract workers, temps, and vendors.
3. Publish harassment and discrimination transparency reports, including the number of claims over time, the types of claims submitted, and actions taken.
4. Change hiring practices to maximize diversity; include targeted recruitment beyond elite universities; ensure more equitable focus on underrepresented groups; and create more pathways for contractors, temps, and vendors to become full-time employees.

6. The National Academies (2022, 147–149) states the following:

1. To enhance the accuracy of data reporting, tech companies should disaggregate employment data by tech and non-tech positions, job titles, gender, and race/ethnicity—with particular attention to the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender—and make those data publicly available. Reports should include information about trends in recruitment, retention, and advancement of women of color.

2. Companies and organizations working within the tech sector should create pathways for women of color into leadership positions and create positions for diversity, equity, and inclusion professionals that are part of executive leadership.
3. Tech companies, with the assistance of a neutral central organization, should initiate an ongoing cross-sector coalition with each other as well as other stakeholders such as academic institutions—especially minority-serving institutions (e.g., historically Black colleges or universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities)—and professional societies. This collective would allow member organizations and institutions to connect with each other with the goal of supporting current and future women of color in tech and promoting effective recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies for women of color in tech across all entities.
4. Tech companies should expand employment options that promote work-life balance such as remote work, flexible work hours, parental and other family leave, and career counseling as a strategy to improve retention and advancement and expand recruitment of women of color.

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