Seated at the Table

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Dr. Ayanna Rashida Cummings

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To Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas. His mentorship and teachings lead and guide me to this day, and I am ever grateful for having met and learned from him the values of creativity and ubiquity in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space. The reverberations of this work continue to be quantified.

To my mother, my teacher, my friend. You are timeless in beauty and flawless in action. Your leadership transcends even the bounds of the earthly motherhood that cradled and molded me. Thank you for introducing me to what womanhood truly means and for separating me from childhood.

And for Tod Nissle. Thank you for inspiring this work and for sponsoring my DEI+J leadership journey.

Introduction

Having a seat at the table is analogous to having a voice and decision-making authority in organizations and governmental entities. At a larger more structural level, having a seat at the table translates to having an impact on policy and governance. When African Americans and underrepresented ethnic minoritized individuals have such a seat, it is usually deemed a "first" and sometimes the "only" in a sea of whiteness.

Seated at the Table is my reflection on what we are capable of as senior-level leaders in organizations who desire systemic and structural cultural transformation. As an African American woman, I feel it is particularly poignant that I have such a seat and that I accept as a critical aspect of holding such a position the responsibility to pull others along in our journey toward inclusivity and equity for all people, particularly those who are marginalized and have historically been left out of such discussions and decisions. Throughout this book, I provide data and statistics that are shockingly real and that underscore works such as this as exceptionally relevant in today's racialized society.

It is my hope that readers walk away from this book with a sense of urgency and agency as they tackle the malignant isms that permeate society at large and, subsequently, the organizations that have, in sum, profited from the oppression and denigration of racial and ethnically minoritized groups (Brewer, 2021; Thomas, 2019). No system or institution in the United States, including corporations, is free from the impact of such isms on their operations, hiring practices, decision-making, evaluation processes, governance procedures, community

outreach, team performance, and so on. I hope to arm readers with the tools they need to effectively mitigate the impact of such isms at all levels throughout an organization or enterprise. And as one of my dear friends and mentors Judge Shermela Williams so poignantly pointed out, if we do not have a seat at the table yet, we can pull up our own chair.

You will note that this book makes use of the abbreviation DEI+J to capture the concept of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Many people are already familiar with the usage of the DEI aspect of the abbreviation but less so with respect to the J. The justice construct is attributed to the dean of the civil rights movement, Rev. Dr. Joseph Echols Lowery, who is quoted as saying, "We've come too far, marched too long, prayed too hard, wept too bitterly, bled too profusely and died too young, to let anybody turn back the clock on our journey to justice." And without justice, without the struggle of the civil rights movement, the eradication of the institution of slavery, and so many other pivotal movements of our time, where would the field of DEI+J stand? Bound by equal employment opportunity laws and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, both of which are expounded on in my book *Power, Culture, and Race*, DEI+J as a field will be nonexistent without the justice construct embedded into its very fundamental tapestry.

Part I

Purpose

Why are you reading this book? Only you can decide what you hope to get out of such a journey. But my purpose is cemented—to eradicate racial and other forms of injustice that malignantly plague the society in which I live. And by looking the systemic, interpersonal, and personal[1] injustices we face each day in the eye, as David did Goliath, I have taken back what was not meant to be mine—optimism. I take back my hope. I take back all the years that my grandparents and their grandparents lost in the struggle for freedoms and equalities that they were robbed of. And I am better able to face each day knowing that I have at least taken a step toward changing the powers that be. I put my lenses on. And so should you.

The following is an article I published in 2021 regarding methods that effectively mitigate the gendered racial biases and microaggressions we face each day and instead turn such painful experiences into positive and meaningful change both for ourselves and our communities. Its relevance in the 'Purpose' section of *Seated at the Table* stems from the lack of massive ascension in the corporate ladder for Black women and other women of color in a predominantly White landscape of corporate America. Indeed, until structural, systemic, and formal opportunities

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[1]   The systemic, interpersonal, and personal aspects of isms are discussed in the multipronged approach overview.

are provided, documented, and evaluated for their impact on the career trajectories of minoritized women, we will continue to have much work to do and the charge on our own successes that we "lift as we climb."

The Intervention: Mitigating Unconscious Bias and Overt Discrimination, Celebrating Successes, and Transcending the Feedback & Criticism into Positive Change for Ourselves and Our Communities

What can we do to change the prognosis that we must "identity switch" and remain silent and accepting of the status quo, as black women experiencing an intersectionality of cultural identities? How can we better prepare ourselves for encounters with other people with various cultural identities of their own, without disengaging from our own self-concept and downplaying our own worth? How can we be authentic about who we are even in the face of discrimination and prejudice from others towards the groups to which we belong?

Black women are underrepresented in business settings in this country. Moreover, we are represented less and less the higher up we climb on the corporate or executive ladder.

According to Catalyst.org (March 19, 2020):

"In 2019, women of color represented 18% of entry-level positions. Few advanced to leadership positions: managers (12%), senior managers/directors (9%), VPs (7%), SVPs (5%), and C-suite positions (4%). In 2019, Black and Hispanic women made up a smaller percentage of total women employed in management, business, and financial operations occupations than white or Asian women."

To reiterate this unfortunate truth, as of the drafting of this article, only five Black female Presidents or CEO's are located in the United States upon an initial search. The Amazon-acquired tech start-up Zoox,

an autonomous, zero-emissions vehicle company, boasts Black female CEO Aicha Evans at its helm. Warner Brothers also recently appointed Channing Dungey to replace Peter Roth as its CEO. Rashida Jones was appointed in December 2020 as President of MSNBC. Roz Brewer, CEO of Walgreens, recently rose to power on January 26, 2021. Thus, despite these monumental milestones, there is still a dearth of Black female leadership in top echelons of organizational strata across this country.

To identify the barriers that exist which impede the ascension of black women up the corporate ladder, let us evaluate the facts. As noted by Vanessa Loder in a 2014 Forbes.com article featuring an interview with Tara Mohr, author of Playing Big: Find Your Voice, Your Mission, Your Message:

> Tara Mohr [a writer and CEO] believes that "centuries of women's exclusion from political, public, and professional life have had many effects. Some of those effects were external: legislation, formal policies, pay disparities, lack of legal protections, and the denial of women's basic rights." This external creation of inequality has internal effects in women. "Over generations, it shaped how we think of ourselves and what we see as possible for our lives and work. It shaped our fears – fears of speaking up, of rocking the boat, of displeasing others. It caused women to develop a number of [survival] behaviors . . . like conflict avoidance, self-censoring, people-pleasing, tentative speech and action."

These phenomena are magnified by the experiences of Black women in this country. Coupled with women's struggles for equality and human rights was, particularly for the Black woman, slavery and its reverberations, the post-emancipation era and the black codes, Jim Crow laws, the civil rights movement, affirmative action, and present-day racism. As Crenshaw (1989) describes, Black women experience an "intersectionality" of oppressed identities in the United States, and the

profound influence of Blackness and womanhood in one being express themselves inwardly and outwardly as a compound, more complex existence. To overshadow one experience [Blackness over womanhood or vice-versa] over the other is impossible for the Black woman who embraces each aspect of her identity.

Obviously, some intervention is necessary to mitigate the racist, misogynistic, homophobic, able-bodied/sound-mind, monolingual, and related biases which are rampant in our society, and subsequently, our work settings. These biases, left unchecked, lead to disastrous discriminatory practices in hiring, pay, promotion, evaluation, and other work-related consequences which impact marginalized group members' career advancement and professional trajectories.

There are several strategies identified in the empirical literature for mitigating racism and implicit or unconscious biases. A meta-analysis by Bezrukova et al. (2016) revealed that several strategies exist for ameliorating biases through diversity training initiatives. Among these strategies, those which focus heavily on experiential learning (i.e., simulations, scenarios/vignettes, etc.) are more effective than those which focus solely on awareness or cognitive outcomes (i.e., learning) (Bezrukova, et al., 2016). Despite a moderate effect size for cognitive outcomes/learning, and smaller effects for diversity training's impact on behavioral and attitudinal affective outcomes, the effects of such training on attitudinal/affective outcomes attenuated over time, whereas effects of such training on cognitive learning remained stable after a period of time and in some instances even increased upon reexamination one year or more later (Bezrukova, et al., 2016).

These findings indicate that strategies which employ cognitive learning may only be effective at generating awareness of issues surrounding diversity, but these strategies may fall short at targeting attitudes and behaviors which are the real interest in diversity research. That is, discriminatory practices in particular are critical to examine in order to identify how we can prevent them from occurring, consciously or unconsciously.

As such, we propose other methods for implementation which receive partial support in the empirical literature. One such method is immersion training (Senior, 1998; Canfield, Low & Hovestadt, 2009),

in which behavioral observations are recorded while diverse groups interact and have real work-related problems to solve. Feedback would be provided to participants on their encounters with diverse "others," and recommendations will be made to participants on how they can more effectively manage differences that arise in their interactions.

Another proposed intervention strategy would be to celebrate our successes, as cited by Kabir (2018). By cementing into our explicit and episodic memories the successes we have realized, celebrations can serve to buffer the harmful effects of self-defeating and negative thinking processes on our ascension.

Finally, feedback is a critical component in any leader's success. Receiving and being open to getting such feedback from mentors, supervisors, peers, and subordinates will play a vital role in the development of leaders to their full potential. One mechanism by which we can continually self-improve is to be open and receptive to constructive feedback. By transcending such criticism to positively change ourselves and our communities, we are better prepared to lead when our time comes. While any type of feedback is constructive, negative feedback is particularly important to digest and transcend if a leader wants to continue to progress professionally.

Jacquelyn Smith (2013) notes in her Forbes Magazine online article:

> "The very best way to take negative feedback is to ask a few basic questions to show that you are genuinely interested in resolving any perceived problems. 'Try to stay calm and stay focused on the negative feedback [and not your own emotions or reactions]' . . . Listen and actually hear what's being said. 'Do not get defensive and start making excuses. Instead, you might say what you've learned and what you will do differently from now on.' Accept the negative feedback with openness and gratitude . . . Even if you do not agree, you must keep in mind that feedback is intended to relay information. What you choose to do with it is your decision after the meeting."

Further, her article notes that this strategy only applies to well-meant constructive criticism. In fact, "Unfair and overly negative feedback is also used as a tool by bad managers and workplace bullies to demean and control others. Do not put up with this kind of attack. If you do, it will persist."

We must take a proactive stance in furthering our own career development, as no one else will if not for our very own efforts. As black women, this will often mean being the "only" or the "first," or being forthcoming in asking for guidance, feedback, and mentorship. The intersectional identities that black women possess should not hinder our career progression, but often does due to the inequitable ecosystems in which our work is embedded and the implicit biases that often plague the individuals we encounter in our journeys.

With the mentality that we shall lift even as we climb, we will advance not only our own but the careers of those who will proceed us. We must always remember that it is on many giant shoulders that we now stand. Members of our ancestors' generations often did not have the choices and access that we now have to the career opportunities before us. Let us seize them with tenacity and fortitude into what can and should be a bright future ahead.

Part II

Conversity

Troubling. Illegal. Painful. Sorrowful. Mournful. Egregious. Hateful. Indescribable. Unfathomable. Stoppable. Preventable. Unjustifiable. Unjust. Unfair. Wrong. When you think of the impact of racism, what word comes to mind? These are my own conceptualizations of how hurtful it is to be discriminated against or treated badly because of my own race, because of my own sex, because of any number of other idiosyncrasies that make me unique. But what word comes to mind when you conceive of such a thing? Have you ever experienced such treatment, and if so, how did it make you feel? Like an *other*? An *outsider*? *Ostracized*? *Abused*? *Bullied*?

When we conceive of the purpose of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice work, we often think of such perfunctory rationales as affirmative action mandates, corporate governance, or the fact that nowadays it's the law to treat one another fairly and with proper respect and dignity. But what other justifications arise for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice implementations? Is it just the right thing to do morally, or are there deeper concerns of constitutional and inalienable rights afforded on all mankind to which everyone is entitled because of their humanity?

The concerns we face in 2021 are not very different from those our ancestors faced when they fought for the abolition of the institution

of slavery. It is warranted that we consider that historical legacy, as we ponder where we are now, as a long-standing and seemingly irrefutable fact that our history, in many ways, precedes us and repeats itself. When we turn on televisions across the United States and even globally, we are faced with the truth that prejudice and discrimination are ubiquitously plaguing every facet of our lives. And we are left feeling disgusted and frustrated at the mere acknowledgment of such damning realities.

The purpose of this book is to establish convergence on the concept of diversity. *Conversity* is that convergence in its many facets, its holistic and kaleidoscopic layers, such that when you have finished reading this book, you should have a stronger commitment and greater hope for what results lie ahead for your diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice transformations.

Part III

Transforming Cultures through a Multipronged Approach

Simultaneous implementation of multiple prongs of particular focus in a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice framework allows the expert the opportunity to uncover the areas of need within the organization while concurrently ruling out the possibility that one unmet need will potentially undermine the sincere efforts that the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice transformation inspires. By partnering with multiple organizational stakeholders including but not limited to diversity and inclusion (D&I), human resources, finance, learning and development, culinary, operations, and leadership, among others, the multipronged approach gleans insights and gathers input and collaboration among all organizational members. The time frame for the multipronged approach provides for the realization of progress within two to three years of implementation with quarterly results assessed upon establishment of baseline metrics. Such metrics are identified in various sections of *Seated at the Table* and include but are not limited to employee engagement, retention, attrition, and career progression from both quantitative and qualitative data sets.

The multipronged approach was designed with three levels of isms in mind. The first is systemic, referring to the institutionalized, systematic, and oppressive layers of bureaucratic, hegemonic systems of

authority or legal mandates and powers that oppress, marginalize, or unjustly discriminate against Blacks, Indigenous people, people of color, women, immigrants, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, older people, and other underrepresented groups. As an example of such systemic isms, Solomon, Maxwell, and Castro note in their 2019 article "Systematic Inequality and Economic Opportunity" the following:

> The U.S. economy was built on the exploitation and occupational segregation of people of color. While many government policies and institutional practices helped create this system, the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and the New Deal—as well as the limited funding and scope of anti-discrimination agencies—are some of the biggest contributors to inequality in America. Together, these policy decisions concentrated workers of color in chronically undervalued occupations, institutionalized racial disparities in wages and benefits, and perpetuated employment discrimination. As a result, stark and persistent racial disparities exist in jobs, wages, benefits, and almost every other measure of economic well-being.

An example of one such oppressive system is the discriminatory housing systems of the twentieth century that unfairly marginalized people of color by creating little to no access to suitable and affordable housing by defining application, geographic, and financial barriers that essentially barred their housing access or access to neighborhoods of affluence. Such systems were buttressed by the racist, inequitable, and unethical practice of redlining that further systematically oppressed such groups as Black and Latinx/Hispanic people in the United States and that continue to reverberate into systemic economic inequities that perpetuate the racial wealth gap in this country. Yet another distinct but not unsimilar example stems from the health-care system. The medical establishment is wrought with biases, from individually mediated and implicit biases held by medical physicians about their Black, African,

Latinx, Asian, or Indigenous patients to systemic biases that are intertwined with what foods are good for our consumption versus those that we should avoid as well as body weight and body frame biases that tip the scale against people of color and for Caucasians/Whites.

The next level of isms that are addressed in the multipronged approach includes interpersonal systems, through which people must interact with one another and by which conflict might arise, but cooperation is deemed an idealized end goal for the organization's success. An example of such interpersonal isms is that of microaggressions, microassaults, or microinsults, which create discordant and harmful interactional outcomes, particularly in work groups or teams that require collaboration and synergy.

The final level of isms that are addressed is that of personal isms. Through the personal level of isms, we must face our own beasts of unconscious or implicit bias by addressing and then uprooting them through bias mitigation strategies such as the trainings and evaluations in this book identified in the part 2, Multi-Pronged Approach section on Prong II, "Continuous and Responsive Training, Assessment, and Development."
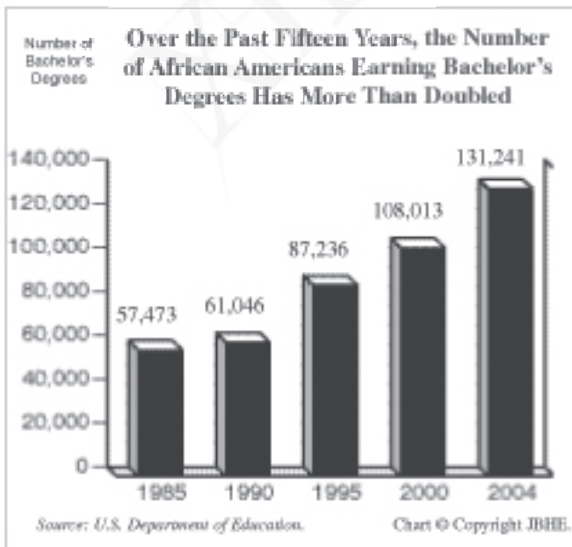
Prong I

Targeted and Structured Recruiting

Targeted and structured recruiting systems serve a twofold purpose during recruitment and selection processes in corporations. The primary purpose is that of targeting specific demographic groups through outreach and database searches, a method through which we enable the entrée of diverse talent into our candidate selection pool. One example of a targeted database tool is that of Handshake, an online résumé database that contains the profiles of millions of students of higher educational institutions in the United States. The database can be used to create targeted searches for students of diverse demographic backgrounds, such as HBCU graduates, Hispanic-serving institution graduates, Asian American students, Indigenous students, and the like.

Another strategy that is useful is the use of the World Wide Web to locate organizations and institutions that serve the demographic of interest to your organization. A common logical fallacy is that of a dearth of qualified Black, Indigenous, and people of color candidates for positions that are mid, upper, and senior level in organizations. Rather, a simple Boolean language search will reveal that there are thousands upon thousands of qualified individuals from these communities whose résumés and professional attainments attest to their qualifications, often overqualifications, for such positions. Many entities are ripe and ready to be plucked of their talented and capable fruit of professionals, including

but not limited to the National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA, Black MBA degree holders), Prospanica (Hispanic MBA degree holders), National Society of Black Engineers (Black engineers), National Bar Association (Black lawyers), National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (Black HR professionals), National Medical Association (Black doctors), Judicial Council of the National Bar Association (Black judges), and so many more culturally diverse and BIPOC-serving organizations; refer to https://jobstars.com/diversity-professional-associations-organizations/ for a more detailed delineation.

Indeed, the National Center for Education Statistics highlights the fact that there is a larger growth spurt in the attainment of postsecondary degrees among communities of color than among their White counterparts. This is true despite hundreds of years of economic and educational disadvantages wrought on the Black/African American communities in the United States due to slavery and subsequent laws that "separate but unequal" was a warranted status quo that precluded our access to quality textbooks, school buildings, educational materials and resources.

Furthermore, here are some trends to consider:

Over the Past Fifteen Years, the Number of African Americans Earning Bachelor's Degrees Has More Than Doubled

Number of Bachelor's Degrees

Year	Number
1985	57,473
1990	61,046
1995	87,236
2000	108,013
2004	131,241

Source: U.S. Department of Education.   Chart © Copyright JBHE.

Over the Past Two Decades, Blacks Have Made Strong Gains in Percentages of All Bachelor's Degrees Earned in the U.S.

9.4%

5.9%

1985   2004

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education.
Chart © Copyright JBHE.

Black Women Now Earn Two Thirds of All Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to African Americans

87,390

2004

43,851

Men   Women

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education.
Chart © Copyright JBHE.

Over the Past Two Decades, Blacks Have Made Strong Gains in Percentages of All Master's Degrees Earned in the U.S.

9.1%

5.0%

1985   2004

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education.
Chart © Copyright JBHE.

Over the Past 20 Years, the Number of African Americans Earning Master's Degrees Has More Than Tripled

Number of Bachelor's Degrees

60,000

50,000

40,000

30,000

20,000

10,000

0

13,939   15,336   24,166   35,874   50,657

1985   1990   1995   2000   2004

Source: U.S. Department of Education.   Chart © Copyright JBHE.

Clearly, demonstrable progress is being achieved by Blacks/ African Americans in educational attainments. Notably, rather than capitalize on such advancements in this community, naysayers who perpetrate fallacious arguments of a paucity of qualified talent among diverse candidates have succeeded at obstructing the selection, hiring, onboarding, retention, and development of these populations within their own corporations and ranks.

Let's consider an example. An August 27, 2019, article by Jhacova Williams and Valerie Wilson published by the Economic Policy Institute noted:
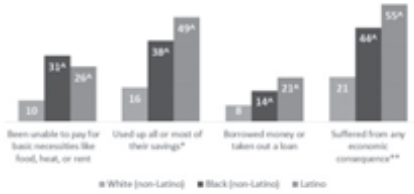
> Black workers are twice as likely to be unemployed as white workers overall (6.4% vs. 3.1%). Even black workers with a college degree are more likely to be unemployed than similarly educated white workers (3.5% vs. 2.2%). When they are employed, black workers with a college or advanced degree are more likely than their white counterparts to be underemployed when it comes to their skill level – almost 40% are in a job that typically does not require a college degree, compared with 31% of white college grads. This relatively high black unemployment and skills-based underemployment suggests that racial discrimination remains a failure of an otherwise tight labor market.

Another June 1, 2021, Economic Policy Institute article by Elise Gould and Valerie Wilson noted that between February and April 2020, "More than one in six black workers lost their jobs." They soberingly stated, "As of April (2020), less than half of the adult Black population was employed."

Further reiterating this notion, to the extent that COVID-19 disproportionately affected underrepresented racial and ethnic (Black and Brown) minority communities of color, it has also left racial and ethnic minorities more jobless and marginalized than other communities. Take a look at these graphs depicting racial disparities post-COVID published by CommonwealthFund.org:

Many Americans are facing substantial economic hardship during the pandemic. Latino and Black people experience these hardships at significantly higher rates than white people.

Percent of respondents who reported the following had happened because of the COVID-19 pandemic
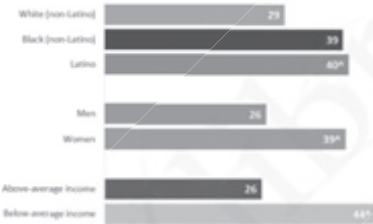

Been unable to pay for basic necessities like food, heat, or rent: White 10, Black 31^, Latino 26^
Used up all or most of their savings^: White 16, Black 38^, Latino 49^
Borrowed money or taken out a loan: White 8, Black 14^, Latino 21^
Suffered from any economic consequence^^: White 21, Black 44^, Latino 55^

■ White (non-Latino)   ■ Black (non-Latino)   ■ Latino

^ Difference is statistically significant compared to White (non-Latino) respondents at p ≤ 0.05.
^ Excludes those who reported never having had savings.
^^ "Suffered from any economic consequence" identifies any respondents who said yes to at least one of the other questions on economic consequences (been unable to pay for necessities like food, heat or rent; used up all or most of savings; borrowed money or taken out a loan).
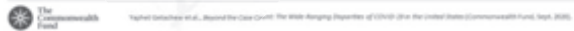Data: Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy COVID-19 Supplement Survey, 2020.

The Commonwealth Fund   Yaphet Getachew et al., *Beyond the Case Count: The Wide-Ranging Disparities of COVID-19 in the United States* (Commonwealth Fund, Sept. 2020).

Latino and Black people, women, and people with lower incomes are most at risk of mental health concerns because of the pandemic.

Percent of respondents who reported experiencing stress, anxiety, or great sadness that they found difficult to cope with on their own since the COVID-19 pandemic began
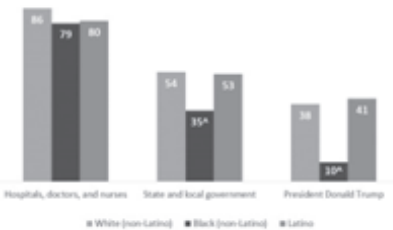

White (non-Latino): 29
Black (non-Latino): 39
Latino: 40^

Men: 26
Women: 39^

Above-average income: 26
Below-average income: 44^

^ Difference is statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05.
Notes: Black (non-Latino) and Latino respondents were compared to white (non-Latino) respondents, female respondents were compared to male respondents. Respondents from households with below-average income were compared to those from households with above-average income. Respondents indicated whether their income was either below or above the annual U.S. household average of $61,000.
Data: Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy COVID-19 Supplement Survey, 2020.

The Commonwealth Fund   Yaphet Getachew et al., *Beyond the Case Count: The Wide-Ranging Disparities of COVID-19 in the United States* (Commonwealth Fund, Sept. 2020).

Fewer than half of white, Black, and Latino Americans have a positive opinion of the president's pandemic response.

Percent of respondents who reported the following leaders have done a "good" or "very good" job of handling the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States

Hospitals, doctors, and nurses: White 86, Black 79, Latino 80
State and local government: White 54, Black 35^, Latino 53
President Donald Trump: White 38, Black 10^, Latino 41

■ White (non-Latino)   ■ Black (non-Latino)   ■ Latino

Note: Other response categories — "acceptable," "poor," and "very poor" — are not shown.
^ Difference is statistically significant compared to white (non-Latino) respondents at p ≤ 0.05.
Data: Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy COVID-19 Supplement Survey, 2020.

The Commonwealth Fund   Yaphet Getachew et al., *Beyond the Case Count: The Wide-Ranging Disparities of COVID-19 in the United States* (Commonwealth Fund, Sept. 2020).

An August 2019 McKinsey article by Nick Noel, Duwain Pinder, Shelley Stewart III, and Jason Wright further delineates the severity of the increasing racial wealth gap between Blacks and Whites in the United States. Whereas the gap in 1992 was $100,000 between Black and White families, in 2016, that gap had grown to $154,000, which the authors attributed partially to increasing wealth among White families in comparison to Black families.

In my first published book, *Power, Culture, and Race* (2020), I documented the oppressive regime that the Trump administration upheld in various mandates, executive orders, and decisions that limited the progressive and equitable advancement of our very racialized society. Notwithstanding that the SCOTUS decisions during that tumultuous four-year period were similarly wrought with setbacks, now the future looks much brighter for our democracy and for its people in myriad ways.

The historic election of the first woman, Black, and South Asian vice president, Kamala Harris, is one aspect of the new Biden/Harris administration that reflects that we are on the right journey toward a brighter future. The commemoration of Juneteenth as a national holiday is another prime and historic example of the significance of the Biden/Harris administration's commitment to inclusion for all people that will perpetually reverberate in the years ahead. The Biden/Harris administration holds more promise as we project the future of these circumstances for our communities, particularly those whose members are socioeconomically disadvantaged and, despite gains in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* school desegregation decision of 1954, have yet to realize equity and equality with respect to materials, books, resources, experiences, and funding that will maximize their life trajectories beyond their borne social and economic statuses.

- In September, President Biden signed an executive order to reestablish the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs and issued a proclamation recognizing National HBCU Week.

- The Higher Education Act sets aside specific funding in the amount of $1.06 billion to fund HBCU initiatives geared toward research, laboratories, workforce development in STEM programs, and much more.
- Many more initiatives aimed at eradicating racial inequities in our country have been addressed and documented by the Biden/Harris administration. Refer to the websites below for additional information. All such initiatives aim to redirect the trajectories of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities toward equitable advancement and economic inclusion.
    - https://joebiden.com/education/
    - https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/28/fact-sheet-the-american-families-plan/
    - https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:dba912e9-494a-476f-b895-baee4afe91a6
    - https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/
    - https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/
    - https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/09/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-administrations-historic-investments-and-support-for-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/

Advisory Committee Partnerships

Likely to be most fruitful within the "targeted and structured recruiting" prong is the creation of advisory committee partnerships.

An advisory committee harnesses the power of a synergistic committee format in the creation, nurturance, and sustenance of relationships with diverse and minority-serving organizations and institutions such as HBCUs, Hispanic-serving institutions, Asian-serving institutions, and Indigenous-serving institutions.

The second and likely less often utilized method in the "targeted and structured recruiting" prong is that of the objective structuring of selection and interview methodologies to create fairness and equity during hiring. The structured manner in which potential job candidates are evaluated renders the selection process toward greater objectivity, thereby reducing the impact of potential biases and prejudices that could erode the fair and equitable selection of candidates from diverse demographic backgrounds. One such structured recruiting mechanism is described below, the weighted criterion scorecard procedure I have registered as a trademark as the CREATE Decision-Making Tool. The section that follows will provide greater detail on this tool and how similar strategies enable fair and equitable selection practices in corporations. It is an excerpt from a working paper highlighting a study that has not yet been published in the empirical literature specifically relevant to the nearly ubiquitous usage of artificial intelligence systems for selection decision-making.

Effacing Bias And Discrimination In Ai Systems

The notion that the artificial intelligence (AI) systems we create are fundamentally biased because of the biases inherent in the humans who develop them is not new in the AI or organizational literatures (Ntoutsi et al., 2019). This *White guy problem* (Hao, 2019) in AI is not perpetually inevitable if professionals in the AI and diversity, equity, and inclusion spaces work harmoniously to tackle it head-on. The present study proposes a solution using between-subjects comparisons among three randomly assigned groups within the employment sector: (1) training course designed to provide two versions of an AI decision-making tool, one of which contains a grounded algorithm for

intercultural competencies for use when adverse impact is detected in the selection process; (2) debiasing training condition; and (3) control condition with no training.

The AI system to be studied is a recruiting system using fictitious applicants. Participants will be obtained through Qualtrics. Participants will evaluate diverse applicants whose race- and gender-stratified names and fictitious résumés will be reviewed and rated for whether the participant will hire them. The résumés differ classically with respect to a Black- or White-sounding name. Results will be evaluated using ANOVA and t-test comparisons between the three groups as well as an adverse impact analysis for race/gender. In addition to the selection decision outcome variable, an explicit racism measure will serve as a dependent variable in this analysis. The findings will be discussed regarding the participants' cognitive justifications for reliance on the affirmative action embedded decision-making tool versus the original weighted criterion scorecard tool and whether the trainings had a main effect on the selection of candidates of diverse race or gender.

Rationale For The Project

Racism, racial bias, gender bias, discrimination based on religion, homophobia, heteronormative ideals, and ableism pervade this country's workplaces as much now as they did hundreds of years ago, despite their currently unlawful and unethical operationality. More attention is being paid to whether the systems we create are fundamentally biased because of the biases inherent in the humans who develop them (Borgesius, 2018). Artificial intelligence is no exception to this unfortunate systematized, ubiquitous bias across racial, gender, and other demographics.

In her April 17, 2019, article published in the *MIT Technology Review*, Karen Hao explicates the problems facing diversity in AI as follows:

> First, there's a heavy emphasis on increasing women in tech and less on improving diversity of race, gender, and

other qualities. Second, there's a disproportionate focus on fixing the pipeline; the idea of increasing the number of candidates from underrepresented groups that flow from schools to industry. This tends to underestimate other systemic disadvantages that prevent women and minorities from staying in the field, such as harassment, unfair compensation, and imbalances of power.

This so-called White guy problem identified by Hao in AI is not perpetually inevitable if professionals in the AI and diversity, equity, and inclusion spaces work harmoniously to tackle it head-on (Lee, Resnicki, and Barton, 2019). Some solutions have been proposed to mitigate such biases across various industries, including enacting laws that govern housing, the prison and criminal justice systems, employment, credit systems, education, and the like. Such public policy development and reform is not the only method for ameliorating adverse impact on historically disadvantaged populations. Other solutions include implementing an embedded affirmative action paradigm into artificial intelligence and machine learning systems to mitigate any potential biases and discriminatory effects.

The rationale for implementing an affirmative action embedment into the machine learning algorithm is explicated next. The actual algorithms are delineated on pages 5 and 6 of this proposal. Specifically, one algorithm is "grounded" or "situated" to include more emphasis on intercultural competencies and less emphasis on attainment of professional certifications and leadership of teams of similar size and structure. The rationale for utilizing this grounded algorithm approach is that White women and men are more likely to hold certifications or licensure than Black, Indigenous, and people of color who are men or who are intersectionally, racially, and gender diverse. Cunningham (2019) states this phenomenon as follows:

A look at the major race and ethnicity groups reveals that employed Whites had the highest prevalence of certification and licensing, at 24.9 percent in 2018,

followed by employed Blacks or African Americans (21.8 percent) and Asians (20.9 percent). Employed people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, at 14.9 percent, were the least likely to hold one of these credentials. These patterns generally held for both those with a certification but no license and those with a license. As with age, employed women were more likely than their male counterparts to hold a certification or license within each major race and ethnicity group. Of all these groups, White women, at 27.9 percent, were the most likely to hold one of these credentials in 2018, while Hispanic men were the least likely (13.2 percent). This may also reflect differences in age, educational attainment, and occupation among employed people in the major race and ethnicity groups. (p. 8)

Furthermore, Blacks, Indigenous, people of color, and women are underrepresented in senior- and upper-level managerial levels in most corporations, a fact that precludes their having prior experience in such leadership roles. Currently, minority women are the least represented of all groups on corporate boards at 5.8 percent, and minority men from all racial/ethnic groups reflect 13.7 percent of corporate board membership. In 2019, women of color represented 18 percent of entry-level positions. Few advanced to leadership positions such as managers (12 percent), senior managers/directors (9 percent), VPs (7 percent), senior vice presidents (5 percent), and C-suite positions (4 percent). In 2019, Black and Hispanic women made up a smaller percentage of total women employed in management, business, and financial operations than White or Asian women (Catalyst.org, March 19, 2020).

To reiterate this unfortunate truth, as of the drafting of this article, only four Black female presidents or CEOs are located in the United States upon an initial search. The Amazon-acquired tech start-up Zoox, an autonomous, zero-emission vehicle company, boasts Black female CEO Aicha Evans at its helm. Warner Brothers also recently appointed Channing Dungey to replace Peter Roth as its CEO. Rashida Jones was

appointed in December 2020 as president of MSNBC. Roz Brewer, CEO of Walgreens, recently rose to power on January 26, 2021. Thus, despite these monumental milestones, there is still a dearth of Black female leadership in top echelons of organizational strata across this country.

Having identified the issue of a dearth of Blacks, Indigenous, people of color, and women, particularly from intersectional identity groups, in senior- and upper-level managerial roles, the present proposal seeks to identify an objective candidate evaluation tool framework that will buttress the goals of any company whose mission is to be more inclusive of diverse racial, gender, or other demographic groups during the candidate selection process.

Project Design

The present study seeks to examine the prevalence of bias and discrimination in artificial intelligence systems and identify a better potential solution among three alternatives within the employment sector. The present study proposes a solution by way of between-subjects comparisons among three randomly assigned groups within the employment sector: (1) training course designed to provide two versions of a decision-making tool, one of which contains a grounded algorithm for intercultural competencies; (2) debiasing training condition; and (3) control condition with no training. The artificial intelligence system to be studied will be a recruiting system in the employment sector using fictitious applicants to reduce harm and risk to potential participants.

Participants will be obtained through a paid survey platform such as Qualtrics. They will evaluate diverse applicants whose names and fictitious résumés will be available for viewing on the online survey platform. Participants in the study will be primed as recruiters whose roles are to hire for the role of HR specialist. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions (i.e., training course designed to provide two versions of a decision-making tool, one of which contains a grounded algorithm for intercultural competencies; debiasing training condition; control condition with no training).

Upon between-groups analyses with ANOVA and t-test comparisons between the three groups, results will be presented regarding whether adverse impact in any of the three groups occurred across the diverse demographic groups for race and gender. Findings will be discussed as they pertain to future research on methods for reducing racial and other biases in artificial intelligence systems.

The approach to be employed will utilize a weighted criterion scorecard for the original algorithm that selects candidates from a fictitiously diverse talent pool. Such weighted criteria are identified as follows:

1. Prior job experience in a similar or related field, role, and industry – 25 percent
2. Education directly related to the field, role, and industry explicated in the job descriptions – 25 percent
3. Management of work teams of similar size and structure as those required in the requisitioned role – 20 percent
4. Professional certification in a field related to this role – 15 percent
5. Technical proficiency as exemplified in a preassessment during the application process – 5 percent
6. Leadership skills as exemplified in a preassessment during the application process – 5 percent
7. Intercultural competencies and skills assessment score -5 percent

In the grounded/situated algorithm for sociocultural relevancy, the following modifications are employed to adjust the weighted criterion scorecard so that it better aligns with a diversity, equity, and inclusion paradigmatic framework:

1. Prior job experience in a similar or related field, role, and industry – 25 percent
2. Education directly related to the field, role, and industry explicated in the job descriptions – 25 percent
3. Management of work teams of similar size and structure as those required in the requisitioned role – 10 percent

4. Professional certification in a field related to this role – 10 percent
5. Technical proficiency as exemplified in a preassessment during the application process – 5 percent
6. Leadership skills as exemplified in a preassessment during the application process – 5 percent
7. Intercultural competencies and skills assessment score -20 percent

Note that the technical proficiency criterion has been weighted as 5 percent in both the initial and the situated algorithmic approaches for constancy across abilities, accessibility levels, and exposures to technical proficiencies that generally preclude the graduated selection of people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and of varying abilities.

The latter, grounded algorithmic weighted criterion scorecard, is referred to as the CREATE Decision-Making Tool. The acronym CREATE was coined by Dr. Ayanna Cummings, author and principal investigator for this project. It stands for Creating Realistic Equitable Access to Employment. Use of this weighted criterion scorecard procedure in the machine's algorithm embeds into the candidate's score a greater emphasis on the candidate's intercultural competencies and places less emphasis on their certification attainment or prior experience leading large teams. A similar tool, the FA*IR system (Zehlike, Bonchi, Castillo, Hajian, Megahed, and Baeza-Yates, 2017), is a ranked group fairness algorithmic model to ensure adequate representation of diverse groups among selection candidates. The CREATE tool emphasizes intercultural competencies by measuring, differentially weighting, and accounting for intercultural competencies in the selection scorecard of weighted criteria when adverse impact is detected in selection.

Anticipated Project Outcomes

I anticipate that the project will reveal a main effect for the CREATE Decision-Making Tool on the selection of racially and

gender-diverse candidates who are Black and female. When this tool is relied on in the evaluator's decision-making process, more Black and female candidates will be selected than when it is not, as is the case in the original weighed criterion scorecard without greater emphasis on intercultural competencies. I anticipate that the second largest main effect will occur in the debiasing training condition, which is not superior to the CREATE Decision-Making Tool because it does not provide a cognitive tool to aid in the decision-making process by creating a more objective candidate evaluation mechanism.

Furthermore, because the CREATE Decision-Making Tool places less emphasis on the attainment of professional certifications, it is anticipated that more Black and female candidates will be selected because, typically, such high costs and time to obtain professional certifications render Blacks and females less likely to obtain them. Finally, CREATE places less emphasis on the management of work teams of similar size and structure as those in the role for which the candidate is being considered. The rationale for this modification from the original weighted criterion scorecard is that, typically, BIPOC and women are less represented in higher organizational echelons such as upper management and senior-level leadership positions. If these groups have never been afforded the opportunity to lead teams of similar size and structure as those in the requisitioned role, they should not be held to such an unrealistic standard in the candidate evaluation process.

Success will be defined as a larger main effect for the group who relied on the CREATE Decision-Making Tool than for the original weighted criterion scorecard, the debiasing training condition, or the control group. Success will be measured using three statistical analysis procedures, including an ANOVA, t-test for between groups comparisons, and adverse impact analysis for effects on candidate selection by race and gender.

Impact Statement

The CREATE Decision-Making Tool effaces bias and discrimination in AI recruiting platforms by providing a logical and objective decision-making framework that reduces implicit and explicit racism and sexism by raters. The tool eases the impact of stress and reduces time consumed in the decision-making process by providing an easy-to-follow weighted criterion scorecard that embeds greater emphasis on intercultural competencies, thereby reducing the likelihood that Blacks, Indigenous people, people of color, women, and people with intersectional identities will be excluded from graduated advancement during the selection process. The CREATE Decision-Making Tool also reduces adverse impact for race and gender by removing such barriers to selection as preemployment certification attainment and prior leadership experience.

Prong II

Continuous and Responsive Training, Assessment, and Development

What constitutes a comprehensive training program in DEI+J?

As of the writing of this book, I am unable to locate data regarding the number of companies specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the United States upon an initial search. Another LinkedIn search revealed 396 results for DEI companies that have a profile on that website.

In my twenty-plus-year tenure as a professional in the DEI+justice (DEI+J) space, I have never witnessed such a rapid growth in professionals similarly situated to tackle the toughest issues of our times. Racism, sexism, and any of the isms heretofore mentioned are among the most critical to address yet most challenging to overcome for us activists, advocates, and teachers.

In my mentoring other professionals and those who aspire to become DEI+J practitioners, I must frequently relay that this field does not warrant a "one size fits all" approach to resolving each company's idiosyncratic DEI+J issues. Instead, a seasoned professional thoroughly examines each entity in various key areas and then establishes a framework by which to begin addressing the issues revealed by such systematic, scientific discovery processes.

Among the most notable and frequently utilized questions to ask through data collection are the following:

1. To what extent are DEI+J constructs, inclusive leadership practices, sense of community, and ethical standards presently known, utilized, and upheld by all organizational members, including the most senior-level leaders? This is a concept referred to by my mentor, Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas (1999), as "diversity maturity." A seasoned DEI+J professional knows their audience and addresses that audience's peculiar and nuanced needs at all times in a DEI+J implementation.

2. To what extent are employee engagement, retention, turnover/attrition, professional development opportunities, promotions, performance appraisal ratings, selection rates, and other relevant HR metrics discordant by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other demographic variables that diversify the company's employee population?

3. To what extent are qualitative and quantitative measures of diversity climate discordant by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other demographic variables that diversify the company's employee population?

4. To what extent are vendor and supplier portfolio partnerships and spend creating business opportunities for diverse businesses, including minority business enterprises (MBEs), women business enterprises (WBEs), disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs), small business enterprises (SBEs), disability-owned businesses, LGBTQIA+ businesses, and so on?

5. To what extent are community outreach and engagement efforts to which the corporation gives time, employee volunteer hours, and in-kind and monetary donations structured to include and to reflect impact on underrepresented and underserved communities, particularly whose members are those with low socioeconomic status, Blacks, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities?

What topics should be covered, and who is the intended audience?

Some examples of DEI+J training topics that benefit a multicultural audience of organizational stakeholders include but are not limited to:

o   Inclusive leadership
o   Diversity recruiting orientation
o   Implicit and unconscious biases
o   Psychological safety
o   Organizational culture and the individual's role in cultural transformation
o   Emotional intelligence
o   Inclusive and ethnical leadership
o   Active allyship and agency
o   Empathy
o   Belonging
o   Respect and compassion
o   Eradicating racial inequities

It is recommended that the training content be delivered via presentation to a live audience to provide the audience members an opportunity to engage in much-needed and often difficult dialogue surrounding the training topics. Though challenging, such an approach reifies that the organizational environment is a safe space within which people can feel the sense that they and their contribution of ideas are vital and integral pieces of the larger puzzle that reflects a mosaic of cultures, backgrounds, ideologies, and beliefs.

What is meant by continuous training, and what is the rationale?

Continuous and responsive training refers to the notion that training does not have a finite end. Rather, it is an ongoing learning

experience that cumulatively builds on prior knowledge gleaned. It is also responsive in the sense that, after assessing the intercultural competencies and inclusive, diversity-friendly attitudes and behaviors of the organizational sample, you create and define training that aims to close the gaps in such assessed competencies, attitudes, and behaviors on an ongoing basis. Such an assessment must also be an ongoing endeavor, and it is recommended that it be conducted in pretest, posttest format with multiple baselines and chart monitoring of progress through visual dashboards and other graphic displays.

What measures and metrics should be included in a valid and comprehensive DEI+J assessment, and how should the results be used to inform and affect the cultural transformation process?

Below, I have provided a sample DEI+J climate assessment that extracts relevant items from a variety of sources to capture some relevant dimensions of the DEI+J climate in an organization.

> Instructions: You are being invited to take part in a survey for us to assess the diversity climate here at Company or Entity along four dimensions: awareness, attitudes, behaviors, and policies/systems/procedures. Company or Entity is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organizational culture that is free from discrimination, tolerates and embraces differences, and demonstrably practices antidiscriminatory efforts in its policies, systems, procedures, and governance at all organizational levels. Your responses are completely voluntary and will be kept anonymous. Please respond to the following questions:

I. Demographic

Please identify whether you are
Male   Female   Nonbinary   Other (please indicate in the space provided):

_____

Please identify your racial/ethnic background:

Black/African   Caucasian/   South Asian   Hawaiian/
American   White   Pacific Islander/
                                                     East Asian

American Indian/   Hispanic/Latino   Other (please specify):
Alaska Native

_____

How old are you?

What is your religious affiliation?

What is your disability status?

II. Awareness

1. How would you define *diversity*, *culture*, and *intersectionality*?

2. How would you define *inclusion*?

III. Policies/Systems/Procedures

Adapted from the following:

Hammer, M. 2007, 2011. "Intercultural Development Inventory v.3 (IDI)." *Individual Intercultural Development Plan (IDP).*

Retrieved from https://idiinventory.com/wp-content/themes/evolution/pdfs/IDP-Exemplar-Jose.pdf.

Hegarty, W. H., and D. R. Dalton. 1995. "Development and Psychometric Properties of the Organizational Diversity Inventory (ODI)." *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 55, no. 6: 1047–52.

McKay, P. F., D. R. Avery, and M. A. Morris. 2008. "Mean Racial-Ethnic Differences in Employee Sales Performance: The Moderating Role of Diversity Climate." *Personnel Psychology* 61: 349–74.

Schaufeli, W. B., A. B. Bakker, and M. Salanova. 2006. "The Measurement of Work Engagement with a Short Questionnaire." *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 66, no. 4: 701–16.

3. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are the Company or Entity's values and priority areas.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

4. Company or Entity appreciates diversity, equity, and inclusion.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

5. How important do you feel it is for Company or Entity to define goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

   1 (Extremely Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely Important) with scale values of extremely unimportant (1), unimportant (2), neutral (3), important (4), and extremely important (5).

6. Company or Entity takes appropriate action to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization.

1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

7. Do you feel it is important for Company or Entity to regularly make available to you information about how diverse the employees and leadership at this firm are?

    1 (Extremely Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely Important) with scale values of extremely unimportant (1), unimportant (2), neutral (3), important (4), and extremely important (5).

8. Company or Entity provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

9. My current manager handles diversity matters appropriately and demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

10. Is there anything else you would like to mention about the current processes (e.g., hiring process, performance evaluation, assignments, training, promotion) at Company or Entity and how they relate to diversity and inclusion?

11. Do you feel that you have equal access to advancement, career growth, informal or formal mentors, and so on?

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

12. Management at Company or Entity demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Does Not Apply) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5), and does not apply (6).

13. Management at Company or Entity provides reasonable accommodations as necessary.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Does Not Apply) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5), and does not apply (6).

14. The performance evaluation process at Company or Entity is fair and provides me reasonable opportunity for feedback and discussions with my supervisor.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

IV. Attitudes

15. I am free to speak my mind about issues that are important to me without fear of negative consequences such as retaliation.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

16. I believe that everyone can achieve their career goals at Company or Entity with hard work regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability status. or other diversifying characteristics they may possess.

1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

17. I feel comfortable talking with my colleagues or supervisors about my personal background and cultural experiences.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

18. I feel supported by my coworkers when I need assistance, have questions, or request something from them.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

19. I feel supported by the leadership at Company or Entity when I need assistance, have questions, or request something from them.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

20. Racial, ethnic, and gender-based jokes are not tolerated at Company or Entity.

    1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

21. In your own words, what changes or additions will you make at Company or Entity to ensure a company culture that is inclusive and supportive of diverse people and ideas?

22. I feel my contributions and my work are valued and respected by my peers, subordinates, and supervisors at Company or Entity.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

V. Behaviors

23. I have never been personally discriminated against while working at Company or Entity.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

24. I have never witnessed discrimination in the workplace of any kind whatsoever while working at Company or Entity.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

25. The teams I work on are diverse.

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

26. I regularly interact with members of diverse groups on nonwork time (e.g., lunch, drinks after work, social gatherings).

   1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with scale values of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

Prong III

Performance Appraisal System Evaluation and Redesign

Stereotyping has a long history as a psychological principle and as a social and historical mechanism for demonstrative, often hateful, actions. Empirical research on the rubric of heuristics stems from Tversky and Kahneman's research in the 1970s that laid a foundational framework for what would become a highly researched and often controversial discussion surrounding the "necessary imperative" for automaticity in everyday human life (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). Predating this discourse on the automaticity or implicit nature of many of our cognitions, the preeminent psychologist Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice*, published in 1954, explored the psychological underpinnings of racial prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. In more contemporary psychological explorations, Dr. Lynne Jackson expounds on racial prejudice and power in her book, *The Psychology of Prejudice* (2011, 2020).

Indeed, it has been demonstrated empirically that cognitive processes in performance appraisals can be carried out through automatic processes in cognition. This can lead to biased attributions on the employee and subsequently biased ratings of performance (Feldman, 1981).

Within the decision-making context, studies have made substantive and impactful theoretical and empirical contributions that translate to

better performance appraisals, greater attention to talent management details, and better procedural justice implementations. The next section will address one such empirical examination that I conducted, which systematically evaluated whether a performance appraisal system employed biased or unfair procedures or practices and what mechanisms, including the use of artificial decision support tools, provided the performance raters with behavioral justifications for their own biases.

The Role of Discrete Emotions in Stereotyping: The Stereotype/Emotion Interaction Correlates with What Degree of Evaluative Accuracy in Decision-Making Contexts?

The present investigation will employ the use of the theoretical underpinnings girding two major theories, including the BIAS (behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes) map (Cuddy, Glick, and Fiske, 2007) and the stereotype content model (SCM) (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002), to be discussed in the sections that follow. Thereafter, a review of other relevant theories will be provided.

Stereotype Content Model

The proposed model for this study is derived from an exploration of two highly relevant theoretical frameworks in the empirical literature pertaining to discrete emotions and stereotyping. The present research will propose a model with the following characteristics:

1. Competence and warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002) form the basis of stereotypes (i.e., dimensions of stereotypes) and intergroup emotions that lead to discriminatory behaviors. These behaviors can be either active or passive (i.e., intensity) and facilitative or harmful (i.e., valence) as indicated in figure 1, the 2x2 stereotype content model.

Figure 1. 2X2 -   Facilitation/Harm and Active/Passive.

	Facilitative	Harmful
Active	Hi vs. Lo	Hi vs. Lo
Passive	Hi vs. Lo	Hi vs. Lo

2. Stereotypical attitudes can be formed regarding social perceptions of individuals as well as about social groups (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002).

3. Competence and warmth stereotypes stem from assessments of an evaluated group's goals, including the projected benefit or harm to achieving the group's goals and the extent to which the group can be efficacious at achieving them (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002).

4. Groups against which the assessor is competing are stereotyped as low warmth; cooperative groups are considered high in warmth. Concomitantly, groups assessed as having high status receive a high competence stereotypical rating, whereas groups assessed as being low in status are deemed low in competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002).

5. Four emotions are derived from competence and warmth rating outcomes. These are admiration, contempt, envy, and pity (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002), arising from four types of interpersonal social comparisons and related attributional outcomes (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002). For the purposes of the present research, these will not be described as they will not form the basis of the present proposed model.

Bias Map

The present research is consistent with the BIAS map (Cuddy, Glick, and Fiske, 2007), an extension of the SCM. The BIAS map has the following characteristics:

- Evolved from SCM
- Emphasizing traits that gird behavior and focuses on dissonance between stereotypes and emotions
- Regarding warmth information as weighing more profoundly than competence information on behavioral outcomes that arise during social interactions (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002)
- Reemphasizing that behaviors can be either active or passive (i.e., intent) and facilitative or harmful (i.e., valence) (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, and Glick, 2002)

Implicit Bias Theory

Eliminating stereotypes and biases in the workplace seems an insurmountable and virtually impossible aim, given the present social, political, cultural landscape across the globe. Far too numerous accounts in the news, various media, and anecdotal experiences of citizens point to the charged tone of bias, prejudice, and discrimination against protected groups, including women, underrepresented minoritized groups, groups of diverse sexual orientations, differentially abled groups, and the like. Surely, given that implicit bias theory iterates that all people hold some implicit biases, we face a daunting challenge as professionals dedicated to eradicating such isms, which plague our environs via data-driven approaches to understanding, documenting, and alleviating these ills in a systematic way.

Still, the very goal of this and other bodies of research in the empirical literature points to a trend to make an attempt, albeit wrought with opposition, to chip away at age-old traditions that threaten to uproot our sociopolitical structure and cause further demise to the democracy on which our institutions have been built. The next section

will explore some of these bodies of literature that, like the present proposal, offer insights and practical approaches to facilitating strategic changes in organizational settings for the betterment of all races, sexes, abilities, and so on.

Patricia Devine is noted as the founder of the implicit bias movement in social psychological research (Devine, Forscher, Austin, and Cox, 2012). The implicit association test, widely known and marketed as the IAT, is the brainchild of Greenwald (1995) and was created as a measure of implicit bias in a variety of domains, including obesity, racism, sexism, nationality, and so on. Though widely marketed, distributed, and advocated, the IAT is not without its critics. Frank Landy, a very famous industrial-organizational psychologist, commented that "IAT research study designs are sufficiently far removed from real work settings as to render them largely useless for drawing inferences about most, but not all, forms of employment discrimination" (Landy, 2008, p. 379).

Implicit biases arise from often unconscious attitudes and beliefs about target individuals, groups, or events. Because they are implicit, implicit biases can also be difficult to identify and control in everyday life (Hall et al., 2015). Racism can exist in many forms, including overt, modern, symbolic, or aversive racism subtypes (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, and Hodson, 2002). Aversive racism exists when there is a discordance between holding personal prejudicial attitudes and beliefs and the latent negative feelings a person has about holding such attitudes and beliefs. The distinguishing component of aversive racism is that of the somewhat commonplace, adaptive nature of these stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes and beliefs in contexts, as described previously, in which information on a target is limited or unavailable or when time constraints prevent evaluations of a target from being as thorough and complete as they should to be accurate.

What Are Stereotypes?: Bounded Rationality And Heuristics

The stereotype literature in the psychology discipline stems from research on the availability heuristic by Tversky and Kahneman (1974).

The concept of heuristic seems quite simple—that humans use mental shortcuts to derive answers to sensory perceptions of unknowns in their environments, giving labels to things, people, and figures they encounter in a world in which their own drives and desires consume the remainder of their physical and cognitive energy expenditures. In other words, humans reduce the amount of time they spend evaluating an unknown target in the environment by making rather elementary judgments that lack sufficient scrutiny to arrive at completely accurate, foolproof assessments 100 percent of the time (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). The idea for this body of research is a derivative of research by Herbert Simon on the concept of bounded rationality. Simon proposed that there are constraints of resources on human judgments in terms of the time spent evaluating a target, availability of information, and cognitive limitations (Barros, 2010).

The construct of bounded rationality also spills over into the context of procedural justice in that time limitations will plausibly limit the amount of time available to apply due diligence to procedural standards in the evaluation process. Especially in the performance appraisal domain, this is an impactful theory and must be given full consideration in assessing the accuracy of performance appraisals when information on a specific employee's work behaviors such as performance on independent tasks is limited or unavailable in the absence of such behavioral observation mechanisms as video-recorded work tasks, telephone/audio recordings of customer service phone calls, or employee journals on their daily assigned to-dos.

The present research proposal offers a pragmatic potential solution to the decision-making process in such instances in the form of decision tree matrices using computer-based performance appraisal software that provide the appropriate performance rating in instances where measurable, observable work behaviors are documented accurately. This decision tree matrix technique will reduce and potentially eliminate bias in the performance appraisal process by reducing the amount of subjectivity raters/supervisors allowed.

Diversity Training And Other Prejudice-Breaking Interventions

One potential solution for the eradication of bias and prejudice in the workplace has been the implementation of a diversity training program in organizations. There are multiple delivery methods for diversity training platforms, including online, in-person classroom exercises, immersion and experiential techniques, and approaches that combine two or more of these. Any intervention in any format, notes Walton (2014), can be an effective problem-solving tool for issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in today's organizations.

Chang, Milkman, Gromet, Rebele, Massey, Duckworth, and Grant (2019) recently published the results of two studies assessing the effectiveness of online diversity training for changing attitudes and behaviors toward both women and racial/ethnic minorities. The study was conducted at a global company and consisted of more than three thousand participants (n = 3,016).

In the first study, the authors sought to determine whether an online diversity training program targeted toward changing attitudes and behaviors about women would be effective. The diversity training regarding women consisted of

> best practices and strategies for changing attitudes and behavior from interventions conducted in a wide range of other contexts. These strategies include targeting the specific underlying psychological process believed to produce undesirable outcomes, offering personalized feedback about individuals' own biases to motivate change, destigmatizing attempts to improve on undesirable behaviors, and offering actionable strategies for improvement and the opportunity to practice these strategies. Specifically, we designed the diversity training to raise awareness about the pervasiveness of stereotypes, share scientific evidence of the impact of stereotyping on important workplace behaviors, destigmatize and

> expose participants to their own stereotyping, provide
> evidence-based strategies for overcoming stereotyping,
> and allow employees to practice deploying evidence-
> based strategies to combat bias by responding to
> different workplace scenarios . . . this training was also
> voluntary. (Chang et al., 2019, p. 7778)

The results were positive and significant. Employees' attitudes and behaviors were positively influenced by the diversity training program regarding women, including attitudes expressed about their "willingness to acknowledge discrimination against women" and "support for policies designed to help women" (Chang et al., 2019, p. 7779). This effect was greater for international respondents located beyond the contiguous United States.

Regarding the "blind spot" phenomenon, in which respondents usually underestimate their own self-attributions of bias against women in comparison to how they rate the bias of target others, the diversity training treatment demonstrated increased willingness of respondents to acknowledge their own gender biases relative to those of target others (Chang et al., 2019). This blind-spot phenomenon has also been documented elsewhere in the empirical literature (Pronin, Lin, and Ross, 2002).

Finally, another attitudinal measure was used to determine whether respondents intended to "engage in inclusive work behaviors toward women" (Chang et al., 2019, p. 7779). Through the use of workplace scenarios, the researchers found that the diversity training had a positive significant effect on the respondents' behavioral intentions and that this effect was more pronounced (and only positively significant) among international respondents located beyond the contiguous United States.

The findings of the first study conducted by Chang et al. (2019) suggest that diversity training programs can effectively serve as a bias-reduction tool within organizations. However, the study also points to the ominous cloud of sexism that pervades institutions within the United States. The need for additional research in this area is evident to dissect the reason(s) for the sexist attitudes and behavioral intentions

held by United States citizens and occupants and how we can reduce these prejudicial attitudes and behaviors in future diversity training techniques.

In the second study, Chang et al. (2019) sought to determine whether the diversity training program would generate significantly positive results if conducted regarding racial biases rather than gender biases. Typically, racial biases and racist attitudes and beliefs are more pervasive and thus potentially harder to break than other forms of prejudice and discrimination. The results demonstrated a significant positive main effect of the diversity training on respondents' beliefs that their own prejudicial attitudes and behaviors matched those of the general population. This was true of respondents within the United States as the only respondents in this analysis were from the United States because only racial identities of United States employees were collected by the organization before the study (Chang et al., 2019).

The spillover phenomenon was also assessed in the second study of Chang et al. (2019). This phenomenon exists when positive changes in the attitudes and behaviors of respondents toward one group positively affects the changes in attitudes and behaviors of respondents toward other groups, such as the use of gender bias training and a spillover effect into racial bias as a result. The authors found that there was a positive significant effect on the number of racial/ethnic minorities selected to participate in a mentoring program when the respondents completed the gender bias diversity training (Chang et al., 2019).

Multicriteria decision-making methods have evolved and are currently utilized in decision-making processes (Shaout and Yousif, 2014; Velasquez and Hester, 2013). For instance, the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) is often used as an accompaniment to the balanced scorecard for performance assessment to rank alternatives. The AHP "uses pair-wise comparisons . . . both to compare the alternatives with respect to the various criteria and to estimate criteria weights" and rankings (Velasquez and Hester, 2013, p. 58). The method relies on the judgments of experts to determine criteria, weights, and rankings. However, its weaknesses include the fact that only comparisons between instruments are used to assess inconsistencies and not the examination

of one instrument alone. Other multicriteria decision techniques such as fuzzy logic have been proposed and offers a "mathematical and perception computation to evaluate [work] performance" (Shaout and Yousif, 2014). It is a combination of the analytic hierarchy process analysis and the fuzzy model known as FTOPSIS. The solution is the selected alternative that is the farthest from the negative ideal solution and closest to the positive one. In any event, the most appropriate evaluation strategy must be selected based on the needs of the evaluation application (Shaout and Yousif, 2014).

Another rubric for diversity training is unconscious bias training (Nordell, 2017). Patricia Devine and her colleagues have created a prejudice-breaking intervention to eradicate racial and gender bias that is promising. It is known as the prejudice habit-breaking intervention. It uses semi-interactive presentations that have been tested on students, faculty, and police officers (Devine, Forscher, Austin, and Cox, 2012). In comparison to a control group, Devine and her colleagues demonstrated in a twelve-week-long experiment that focused on "awareness of implicit bias, concern about the effects of that bias, and the application of strategies to reduce bias" that people who received the prejudice habit-breaking intervention showed markedly lowered prejudice toward out-groups and expressed heightened concern about bias and their personal awareness of the problems throughout the experiment (Devine, Forscher, Austin, and Cox, 2012, p. 1267).

A meta-analysis of diversity training program effectiveness was conducted by Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly (2006). The authors noted that such methodologies are actually the least effective at increasing the numbers of White and Black women and Black men in the upper organizational echelons of management. However, they also noted that when such methodologies were paired with mentoring and networking programs, results were more favorable. Further, the authors noted that when organizations were subjected to EEOC compliance mandates, they, too, realized greater impact of organizational diversification efforts, and this was attributed to the assignment of responsibility for legal and governmental compliance to a specific manager within the company (Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly, 2006).

Other organizations such as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation have developed initiatives such as the Racial Healing initiative and the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation effort that is being implemented across the United States in organizations and cities and yielding effective results. Information is available at www.racialequityresourceguide.org.

Nordell (2017) notes that bias is ubiquitous—it occurs across nearly every field and affects all groups of people. Not to be disregarded as mythical, hundreds of studies demonstrate the pervasiveness of implicit biases, and additional research in this vein is still a necessity. Approaches to eliminating bias in the workplace, health-care agencies, client/customer interactions, marketing, and so on abound in the empirical literature (Hall, Chapman, Lee, Merino, Thomas, Payne, Eng, Day, and Coyne-Beasley, 2015). However, the focus of the present investigation is limited in scope to the decision-making context, specifically that of performance evaluation and assessment. The next section will delve further into this body of literature.

Stereotyping And Emotions In The Context Of Performance Appraisals

The decision-making literature is replete with delineations and analyses of performance appraisal techniques—those that work, those that do not work, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and so on. However, the melding of the analysis of stereotypes in the performance appraisal context is not as robust in the empirical literature on decision-making in organizations, especially as pertains to racial bias. The present study seeks to make a significant scholarly contribution to the decision-making literature by proposing a decision-making mechanism, namely, computerized decision tree matrices (here, go to empirical studies that cite the advantages of the use of decision aids as tools in the decision-making process to improve decision accuracy and quality) as a potential solution to reducing implicit bias and stereotyping in the performance appraisal process. The present study has the potential to catapult additional research in this area and in the vastly growing and dynamic technology domain.

Coupling emotions with stereotypes in the present analysis is imperative since "past empirical evidence has demonstrated that employees' positive mood states predict task performance" (Tsai, Chen, and Liu, 2007, p. 1570). In fact, in complex situations that involve decision-making, positive moods actually facilitate better decision-making, enhanced problem-solving, and better outcomes through greater attention to detail and increased speed (Isen, 2001). Other researchers have noted that emotions can be either deleterious or advantageous in decision-making contexts, and they can be either unwanted or unconscious (Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, and Kassam, 2014). The marriage of emotions with stereotyping is critical as I begin to uncover the reasons for these discrepancies in the emotion decision-making link and explain bias and prejudice in decision-making contexts from the theoretical perspective described herein, including bounded rationality and implicit bias theories.

The specific decision-making context to be examined here is that of performance appraisals. The Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey (1999) reports that 25 percent of survey respondents in the military who were Black viewed prejudice and discrimination in the performance evaluation process as the aspect of their military experience that was most troublesome. Mackenzie, Wehner, and Correll (2019) attest that, in fact, most employee performance evaluations are biased but that these issues can be resolved with the use of checklists and other specific performance indicators that reduce the subjectivity of the performance assessment so that the rater is unable to only provide opinion-based evaluations. In more objective evaluations, raters provided evidence-based feedback about why their ratings had been given and were given specifically enumerated criteria against which the assessments should be made. Finally, the authors recommend reviewing each performance evaluation when it is completed to ensure that all components of the evaluation tool have been effectively examined and covered by the evaluator's feedback. Stamarski and Hing (2015) concur with this assessment regarding the implementation of more objective measures of performance for personnel-related decisions and also point out that interventions such as affirmative action policies, diversity and sensitivity

training, and interactive discussions can be effective for eradicating bias in the workplace (Stamarski and Hing, 2015).

Mackenzie, Wehner, and Correll (2019) iterate an age-old phenomenon that is most problematic in the performance appraisal process. The so-called criterion problem, according to Austin and Villanova (1992), makes any performance evaluation less effective at actually assessing what it is intended to assess—performance. Defining which criteria constitute effective performance is a critical step in the performance evaluation process. This makes the issues of criterion validity and construct validity another prescient concern, and Levinson (1976) noted that a performance appraisal must first identify specific performance criteria to be assessed to effectively meet its goals of "providing feedback, modifying behaviors, and providing data for the evaluation of future job assignments and compensation" (Levinson, 1976).

Among other biases prevalent in the workplace such as gender bias and racial bias, a pervasive form of bias is age discrimination. Schwab and Heneman (1978) examined age stereotyping in the performance appraisal process and found that participants who were above the median age of thirty-three years gave lower evaluations to older targets who were sixty-one years old than participants who were below the median age and that the reverse was also true. That is, participants who were below the median age at the time the assessments were made evaluated targets who were sixty-one years old with higher performance ratings. The researchers used written descriptions of performance to manipulate variations in performance descriptions (Schwab and Heneman, 1978).

In another interesting study on gender stereotyping in the performance appraisal context, Li, Bagger, and Cropanzano (2016) noted that supervisors rated employee performance with lower ratings when work-family conflict was high and that the inverse relationship was also true. This moderated mediator effect was also modified by employee gender (Li, Bagger, and Cropanzano, 2016).

A number of other factors may also contribute to reduced accuracy in the performance evaluation, a decision-making process. Intuitively, decision-making is better accomplished when resources such as minimal job demands and exhaustion levels contribute to more accurate

decisions and, subsequently, overall performance. Ceschi, Demerouti, Sartori, and Weller (2017) demonstrated this phenomenon—that is, a moderating effect of job demands and exhaustion on decision-making and performance outcomes such that employees with low decision-making competency are more sensitive to job demands and exhaustion. Moreover, high decision environment management levels increase sensitivity toward job resources and exhaustion related to extrarole performance (Ceschi, Demerouti, Sartori, and Weller, 2017, p. 1).

Overall, the empirical literature points to the need for additional research in these areas to pinpoint the cognitive mechanisms at play in decision-making in situations where performance ratings are impaired or clouded by external influences such as stereotypes and emotions and the identification of best practices for the eradication of these problems in organizations.

Overview of the Rationale
with Recommendations
and
Sample D&I Target Additions to the
Performance Appraisal Process
for Hourly and Salaried Associates

Review of Key Findings in the Extant Literature

Biases in Judgments and Decision-Making

- Anchoring Bias – We rely more heavily on more recently/newly acquired information and fail to consider all the alternative explanations before making a decision/judgment. The current salaried performance appraisal procedure is to have the person being evaluated go into the system to rate themselves and then for the manager giving the rating to go into the system to review what the associate said first before having the manager make their own evaluations/judgments/decisions. This results in prima facie bias in the manager's decisions.
- Race is a more salient feature than other physical characteristics, despite the fact that we make assumptions about ethnic groupings that people don't really fall neatly into.
- Typically, racial biases and racist attitudes and beliefs are more pervasive and thus potentially harder to break than other forms of prejudice and discrimination (Chang et al., 2019).
- Performance Feedback Mechanisms – Are they continuous and responsive to the associates' ongoing needs, regardless of the time of year and prior level of performance (prevents critical constructive feedback only being provided to high-potential associates or star performers)?
- The rating process may involve the use of automatic processes whereby a rater compares a subordinate's behavior to existing prototypes to determine whether they belong to specific categories (Baron, 2006).
- This process is automatic, and the rater may not be able to articulate the causes for the subordinate's behavior or to explain it (Beugre, 2009).
- Providing justifications for ratings, however, involves a different cognitive process that requires conscious thought and reflective awareness (Lieberman, 2007).

- *Recommendation:* In addition to providing behavioral exemplars in the rightmost column/description category, provide an opportunity for the manager to make a justification of their ratings by not only giving a numerical rating but also providing an example of how the employee demonstrated that level of performance behavior.

Biases That Can Be Reduced or Controlled

- Dimensions of performance that are most salient in a rater's evaluation tend to vary by race/ethnicity of ratee (sales for Blacks, interpersonal and social skills for Asians, etc.)—refer to Wilson, K. Y. (2010). "An Analysis of Bias in Supervisor Narrative Comments in Performance Appraisal." *Human Relations* 63 (12): 1903–33.
- The shifting standards model (SSM) of stereotypic judgments has been found to explain why there are differing standards for compensation decisions for White versus Black employees among HR professionals in a study by Weeks et al., published in the J*ournal of Applied Psychology* in October 2020.
- Across three studies, participants judged a Black employee's raise as subjectively better than a comparably described White employee's, despite no objective differences in the actual amounts of the raises—participants working in the HR fields and those with experience making compensation decisions were as likely as other participants to show evidence of the shifting standards effect. The findings point to implicit biases inherent in equity decision-making. The last of the three studies published in this article revealed also that Black employees' current salary was perceived as higher than White employees' salaries and that this perception correlated significantly with the objective raise amount subsequently awarded to the Black employee, meaning the SSM affects future objective decision-making.
- Ultimately, the results demonstrate an implicit mechanism that could disadvantage Black employees during compensation

reviews, and the results also give initial evidence that these shifts could continue to disadvantage Black employees as they advance in their careers. Although HR managers are trained to make objective employment decisions, research has continually found that most decisions are highly influenced by subjective judgments, which can be detrimental to the accuracy of the decisions and can hurt the employee who is the target of such. See also Jenks (1991); Kausel, Culbertson, and Madrid (2016); Prendergast and Topel (1993); and Grund and Przemeck (2012).

- The implicit bias behavior link has been demonstrated in a variety of contexts including business decision-making processes such as the performance evaluation process. Importantly, the tendency to shift standards on a stereotype-relevant domain can predict subsequent discriminatory judgments (Biernat et al., 2009).

- *Recommendation:* Provide rater training for more specific forms of implicit biases such as anchoring bias, judgment errors, confirmation bias, and availability heuristic.

- Among this debiasing training is as follows:

> Understanding the underlying psychological process that leads to a bias is crucial for developing remedies to correct or reduce the bias. A bias reduction method entails priming the target with bias-reducing information prior to the decision-making task. However, this outcome only occurs when participants have enough cognitive resources. When they experience cognitive load, the priming of the target attribute does not reduce their judgmental biases.

Organizational Sources for Bias and Methods for Reduction

- Kahneman and his colleagues (2016) said, "Humans are unreliable decision-makers; their judgments are strongly

influenced by irrelevant factors, such as their current mood, the time since their last meal, and the weather. We call the chance variability of judgments noise."

- High rates of variability within organizations by different raters – The unavoidable conclusion is that professionals often make decisions that deviate significantly from those of their peers, from their own prior decisions, and from rules that they themselves claim to follow.

- Noise and bias are different – Bias can be based on some bits of factual information that is not well thought out, whereas noise refers to artifactual elements in the environment that cause outcomes to vary from situation to situation or from time to time.

- Noise impairs the accuracy of judgments/decisions – High variability within judgments is an indication of noise and flaws in accuracy, even without knowledge of what a good decision will be.

- *Recommendation:* Have multiple raters or a 360-degree feedback.

Sample 360-Degree Feedback Criteria

Subordinate D&I Subcategory Questions

- Involves others and encourages full participation of all members of the team.

   Below Target: Does not actively encourage participation of all team members and does not adequately respond to team members' comments and suggestions.

   On Target: Often encourages participation of all team members and responds appropriately to team members' comments and suggestions.

   Above Target: Demonstrates a commitment to getting all team members involved and actively encourages all team members'

participation and input on multiple assignments, projects, and objectives. Goes above and beyond to respond thoroughly to team members' comments and suggestions.

Outstanding: Is an inclusive leader by encouraging all team members, including those who tend to be quiet and less outspoken, to be heard in team discussions by providing the opportunity for written and alternative formats of input, feedback, and comments. Gives more than a sufficient amount of information to team members who request additional resources and responds thoughtfully and adequately to any and all team members' comments and suggestions.

- Assigns job responsibilities and duties fairly regardless of ability status, racial/ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation, religion, handedness, or other identity group membership.

    Below Target: Does not provide adequate opportunity for members of diverse identity groups to be engaged in work tasks toward their own career advancement and does not identify opportunities for growth for members of diverse identity groups.

    On Target: Often provides opportunities for members of diverse identity groups to be engaged in work tasks toward their own career advancement and often identifies opportunities for growth for members of diverse identity groups.

    Above Target: Regularly provides opportunities for members of diverse identity groups to be engaged in work tasks toward their own career advancement and regularly identifies opportunities for growth for members of diverse identity groups.

    Outstanding: Always seek to facilitate the career growth of members of diverse groups by allowing them to engage in

work tasks that enhance their skills sets and always identifies opportunities for growth for members of diverse identify groups.

- Job decisions surrounding hiring, promotions, task assignments, trainings, and turnover are made by the manager/FSD in an unbiased manner.

  ***Below Target**: The associate tends to make biased decisions that do not reflect diverse and inclusive ideals during the hiring, promotion, task assignment, training, or turnover process.

  On Target: The associate refrains from biased judgments and makes objective and sound decisions regularly regarding hiring, promotions, task assignments, trainings, and turnovers.

  Above Target: The associate demonstrates a visible commitment to diversity and inclusion by seeking out diverse groups for task assignments that will broaden their skill sets by including diverse candidates in the talent pool from which hiring decisions are made, by including diverse team members in promotional considerations, and by considering diversity and inclusion when making involuntary turnover decisions.

  Outstanding: The associate's diverse team reflects their commitment to diversity and inclusion by always engaging members of diverse groups in task assignments that will broaden their skill sets, by always including multiple diverse candidates in the talent pool from which hiring decisions are made, by always including diverse team members in promotional considerations, and by always considering diversity and inclusion when making involuntary turnover decisions.

- All job decisions are applied consistently across all affected and involved employees.

Below Target: The associate does not rely on objective criteria to make decisions that affect employees and regularly uses their own subjective judgment to make such decisions.

On Target: The associate relies on objective criteria such as productivity data and customer feedback reports to make decisions that affect employees.

Above Target: The associate often relies on objective criteria such as productivity data and customer feedback reports to make decisions that affect employees and will await such objective information before proceeding with a final decision.

Outstanding: The associate makes a demonstrable effort and always relies on objective criteria such as productivity data and customer feedback reports to make any and all decisions that affect members of their employee base and does not make any such decisions without data or other valuable information.

- When decisions are made about the job, the manager/FSD is sensitive to the associate's personal needs.

Below Target: The manager/FSD is insensitive to the personal needs of their associates and does not display empathy when the associate's personal needs arise in the workplace.

On Target: The manager/FSD is sensitive and empathic to their associate's personal needs and actively listens and offers support, help, and compassion when necessary.

Above Target: The manager/FSD goes out of their way to demonstrate sensitivity and empathy when their associates have personal needs and actively listens and offers support, encouragement, help, and compassion even when the associate does not express they need it.

Outstanding: The manager/FSD always goes above and beyond to demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, and compassion when their associates' personal needs arise; offers help when it is not requested; actively listens; and offers support and encouragement each time the associate has personal needs.

- When decisions are made about the job, the manager/FSD offers adequate justification for these decisions.

  Below Target: The associate does not include employees in the decision-making process and offers no logical rationale for their own decisions.

  On Target: The associate sometimes includes employees in the decision-making process and offers logical rationale for their decisions when requested.

  Above Target: The associate often includes employees in the decision-making process and offers logical rationale for their decisions without request via team communication channels.

  Outstanding: The associate always includes members of their team in the decision-making process and stresses the importance of having the team's input on issues that will affect them as a group. The associate always demonstrates rational and logical thinking by specifying their decision-making rationale when the final decisions are rendered.

- The manager/FSD treats employees fairly (such as involvement, reward, respect, participation in decision-making).

  Below Target: The manager/FSD does not treat people fairly on the bases of involvement, reward, respect, and participation in decision-making.

On Target: The manager/FSD usually treats people fairly on the bases of involvement, reward, respect, and participation in decision-making.

Above Target: More often than not, the manager/FSD treats people fairly on the bases of involvement, reward, respect, and participation in decision-making.

Outstanding: The manager/FSD always treats people fairly on the bases of involvement, reward, respect, and participation in decision-making.

Peer D&I Subcategory Questions

- Works collaboratively and cooperatively with all members of their own and other work teams to achieve mutually defined goals and objectives and to clearly communicate progress toward leader-defined objectives.

    Below Target: Does not work well with others and does not seek cooperation and inclusion of all team members or members of other work teams to define and achieve objectives. Does not communicate sufficiently regarding progress toward achieving objectives.

    On Target: Works sufficiently well with others and seeks collaboration, cooperation, and inclusion from members of their own and other work teams to define and achieve objectives. Communicates sufficiently regarding progress toward achieving objectives.

    Above Target: Works well with others and usually seeks the collaboration, cooperation, and inclusion of members of their own and other work teams to define and achieve objectives. Communicates well regarding progress toward achieving objectives.

Outstanding: Works very well with others and always seeks the collaboration, cooperation, and inclusion of members of their own and other work teams to define and achieve objectives. Communicates regularly and thoroughly regarding progress toward achieving objectives.

• Makes decisions in an unbiased manner and does not engage in other biased or discriminatory behaviors.

Below Target: Has displayed biased behaviors or other discriminatory patterns in the past toward me or one of our team members.

On Target: Has not previously behaved in a biased or discriminatory manner toward me or any of our team members.

Above Target: Is antiracist in their actions and speech and does not behave in a biased or discriminatory manner toward me or any of our team members.

Outstanding: Always demonstrates verbal and actionable commitment to diversity and inclusion by engaging in antiracist actions and behaviors and speaks out against bias and discrimination among our team.

• Creates an inclusive atmosphere where all members of a diverse team feel respected, welcomed, and a sense of belonging.

Below Target: Makes some team members feel excluded by downplaying the importance of diversity and inclusion and engages in disrespectful behaviors or creates an unwelcoming atmosphere for team members from diverse backgrounds.

On Target: Makes team members generally feel included by emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion and refrains from engaging in disrespectful behaviors. Creates an

atmosphere that is welcome for members of diverse groups to feel a sense of belonging.

Above Target: Often makes team members feel included by emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion and never engages in disrespectful behaviors toward others. Often creates a welcoming atmosphere by making members of diverse groups feel a sense of belonging.

Outstanding: Always makes team members feel included and often emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion. Never engages in disrespectful or exclusionary behaviors of any kind toward others. Always creates a welcoming atmosphere by making members of diverse groups feel a sense of belonging.

- Makes hiring and promotion decisions in an unbiased manner and does not discriminate on the basis of ability, status, racial/ethnic group identity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, handedness, or other identity group membership.

Below Target: Has made biased or discriminatory decisions in the past related to hiring or promotion.

On Target: Refrains from making biased or discriminatory decisions related to hiring or promotions.

Above Target: Refrains from making biased or discriminatory decisions related to hiring or promotion and seeks out members of diverse groups among the talent pool of qualified candidates when making such selection decisions.

Outstanding: Never makes biased or discriminatory decisions related to hiring or promotion and regularly seeks out members of diverse groups among the talent pool of qualified candidates when making such selection decisions; is vocal about their desire to create a diverse and inclusive team.

Leader D&I Subcategory Questions

- Hires members of diverse groups

  Below Target: Never

  On Target: Sometimes

  Above Target: Often

  Outstanding: Always

- Leads inclusive teams effectively

  Below Target: Does not effectively manage diverse team dynamics and divergent views.

  On Target: Sufficiently manages diverse team dynamics and divergent views.

  Above Target: Does a good job at managing diverse team dynamics and embracing diverse viewpoints.

  Outstanding: Does an outstanding job of managing diverse team dynamics and always embraces and encourages divergent viewpoints.

- Demonstrates a commitment to achieving goals for diverse group representation

  Below Target: Expresses cynicism or pessimism regarding achieving goals for diverse group representation.

  On Target: Does not express cynicism or pessimism and accepts goals established for achieving diverse group representation.

Above Target: Expresses optimism and actively engages with others in efforts to achieve goals established for diverse group representation.

Outstanding: Is eager and optimistic about the future of the company and actively engages with others in efforts to facilitate achieving goals for diverse group representation.

- Promotes members of diverse groups by evaluating them fairly and objectively

  Below Target: Never promotes members of diverse groups and does not engage in fair and objective decision-making processes regarding promotion decisions.

  On Target: Regularly promotes members of diverse groups and engages in fair and objective decision-making processes regarding promotion decisions.

  Above Target: Seeks to promote members of diverse groups by affording them many opportunities to demonstrate their talents and skill sets and regularly provides feedback on their performance and areas of improvement; communicates promotional decisions to members of their team to identify criteria for such decisions; evaluates others in a fair and objective manner.

  Outstanding: Always seeks to promote members of diverse groups by continually affording them job opportunities that leverage existing and potential skill sets. Always affords members of diverse groups feedback on their performance and identifies areas of improvement; always communicates promotional decisions to members of their teams to identify criteria for such decisions and aid diverse team members in achieving promotions.

Definitions

Subordinate: a person who directly reports to the ratee about the progress, quality, quantity, and outcome of their own work

Peer: a coworker with whom the ratee works and who reports to the same leader as the ratee being evaluated in the 360-degree feedback system

Leader: a person to whom the ratee must report about the progress, quality, quantity, and outcome of their own work

Prong IV

Community Development

What does it mean to have a sense of the "beloved community" that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently spoke of, paraphrased succinctly and masterfully by bell hooks in her book, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*. She is quoted saying, "Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference, but by its affirmation. By each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world."

When you think of the place where you belong, what feelings, thoughts, or emotions are stirred? Do you feel that you have to identity-switch or code-switch, or could you bring your unique, authentic self to that space and feel safe knowing that there will be no repercussion, no consequences? Does the space you thrive in make you feel like an other, an outsider, or do you feel that your presence there is welcomed and valued? Are you afraid to let your guard down and truly express your most authentic thoughts, feelings, and ideas? Are you able to wear your hair in a style that you feel most suits you or dress comfortably and not feel as though you have to be a different person when you are at work every day?

When we refer to the concept of psychological safety, we are referring to the notion that one feels that they are comfortable in the environment and can bring their unique perspectives to the table whenever possible;

this is the opposite of one being afraid to be themselves (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, and Edmondson, 2009). But the absence of fear does not necessarily capture the essence of psychological safety fully. When employees have what is referred to as voice, they are enabled with free and open expression of their own thoughts and ideas. They are not silenced either literally or figuratively by any organizational systems, policies, processes, or procedures that might hinder them from being able to do so. And it is this very voice—the diversity of thoughts, ideas, and expressions—that we are seeking to leverage by engendering representative diversity in the organization. This is what will catapult innovation, creativity, synergy, and ultimately learning and growth (Chen, Li, Wu, and Chen, 2020).

Because of employee voice, organizational systems and policies that were once antediluvian can be transformed into fine-tuned, efficient operating systems that are avant-garde and that address the most human aspects of our functioning. From parental leave policies to gender neutrality in all domains, the forward-thinking organization learns from its employees how to accommodate and create work that is not only purposeful but also accessible and user-friendly.

Surely, work should not be a drag to perform. I believe that most will agree that it is not comfortable coming to work as the "only," the "other," or the "lone outsider." This is where employee resource groups (ERGs) or affinity groups play a vital role in creating a culture of inclusivity for all organizational members. In my experience, fostering a sense of belonging and allowing employees to assert their leadership skills creates an atmosphere where each and every organizational member feels as though they are a stakeholder in a cultural transformation process. And this also helps the multipronged approach run smoothly. By requesting that the ERGs craft a mission and vision statement to guide their development of activities and community outreach efforts consistently aligned with the overall organizational mission, vision, and core values for DEI+J, the multipronged approach is communicated widely, loudly, and frequently throughout each line of business and functional unit.

Furthermore, the community roundtable events that speak to each of the ERGs' cultural backgrounds and heritages are better informed and

produced when the ERG members serve as key stakeholders by planning the agenda, production, and execution. Again, the culture that is being communicated throughout the organization is one where participatory management is conducive to progress; and through such employee participation and involvement, the DEI+J cultural transformation process drives bottom-line performance (Denison, 1984).

This is a poignant segue into the celebration and commemoration of significant holidays and cultural and heritage-relevant dates throughout the calendar year as part of the community development prong. When employees feel that you appreciate and take time to better understand their various backgrounds, they feel they are a significant part of the larger cultural transformation effort and want to contribute to its success. The climate that is being cultivated is one where each and every employee feels a sense of inclusion and belonging, buzzwords for DEI+J strategy success in both the short and long terms.

But what about equity? What about justice? Where do these aspects of the DEI+J abbreviation play a vital role in the multipronged approach for cultural transformation? Succinctly, the answer is through the task force and the diversity and inclusion action council (DIAC). The task force and DIAC participate in myriad ways as members of subdivided teams to promote the efforts of the cultural transformation prong and to work together to ensure their success through demonstrable and measurable metrics such as KPI target outcomes. By working collaboratively and synergistically with the DEI+J chief or lead, the task force and DIAC facilitate progress on each of the prongs throughout the year.

While the task force consists of volunteers from any organizational level, the DIAC consists of leaders who were selected because of their passion for DEI+J as well as their expertise in various functional areas. This creates diverse thoughts and perspectives that give way to robust decision-making where it is most critically needed.

The sense of community is a critical aspect of developing a holistic DEI+J strategy in which all organizational members, serving as key stakeholders in the cultural transformation process, feel the sense that they are a part of something much larger than themselves and that

they play a vital role in the outcome of the cultural transformation. Such a sense of community creates commitment and belongingness for all organizational members and generates buy-in to the cultural transformation, which is imperative for its successful implementation and objective achievement.

Prong V

Cultural Assessment and Systems Analysis

A cultural assessment and systems analysis seeks to glean insights into company culture through the lens of archival data sets. The very first step in such a process is to gather any and all archival data you can, including but not limited to websites and web-based publications; governance documents; principles, vision, mission, and values statements; reports of the board of directors; annual reports; and diversity and inclusion (D+I) reports. Once you have data in hand, you may begin to identify which objective and key result (OKR) indicators you want to measure, such as degree of accessibility for people with varying abilities, depiction of diverse groups in imagery and verbiage, and the extent to which such publications are reflective of an alignment between verbiage and action. Once your OKRs are identified, go back and weight each criterion for its relative degree of importance to your overall objective, giving different weights to each criterion. Then you are ready to analyze your archival data.

The purpose of such a content analysis is to provide a qualitative assessment of the culture and systems that comprise the corporate governance, structure, communications, and statements from leadership at an organization in an effort to identify and eradicate impediments to the achievement and realization of progress on our stated DEI+J goals. An example of a weighted criteria scorecard is provided below:

Objectively Weighted Criterion Scorecard

Objectively Weighted Criterion Scorecard

Criterion	%	Rationale	Exemplar	Industry Best Practice	Actions for Implementation	Impediments to Implementation
Communication using DEID-specific language	10%	Directly and actively tackling -isms in the organization is more likely to lead to reductions in biases & discriminatory actions	Anti-Racist or Anti-Discrimination Mission, Vision, and Values Statement	We would be the front-runner on modifying our Mission statement to include anti-racist language	Notify all stakeholders of language modifications, obtain board approval, disseminate new mission statement broadly	Stakeholder alignment on critical importance of language modification; retaliation fears
DEID-accessible communication	25%	Inclusion of people with disabilities in every aspect of organizational structure, governance, and procedures	Audio recorded with closed captioning transcripts, ASL-interpreter, braille accessible communications allow people with disabilities to fully integrate with the company and its people	Accenture - A global leader and Fortune 500 company, Accenture is taking the lead on accessibility practices, too. Their biggest shift was creating an IT accessibility program aimed at making 100% of the company's technologies compliant with global accessibility standards. While this is excellent for those with disabilities, Accenture sees it as helpful for everyone. "[Accessibility] assists with language barriers, cultural understanding and any person facing a permanent or temporary disability due to physical mobility, neurodiversity, disease or aging. Accenture believes accessibility functionality will become the rule, not the exception." Accenture also sponsors research, like the study above, to show other companies the value of accessibility.	Align with IT on developing our additional accessible offerings company-wide; interface with HR and L&D Directors to align for needs for improvement, request alignment and guidance from Operations team on steps for implementation	Budgetary constraints; technology capabilities and cutting-edge innovations are costly and time-consuming to develop and implement
Verbiage/Action Alignment	20%	Empty rhetoric and lack of action on stated commitments erupts into a maelstrom of discontent, hypocrisy, and ominous community and stakeholder disapproval	Regularly updated corporate-wide and publicly disseminated communications on progress towards stated goals and objectives	Microsoft Global D&I Report 2020 coupled with regularly held briefings from corporate leaders [e.g., CEO Satya Nadella in the news]	Create a roadmap with actionable outcomes; document and distribute to employees, stakeholders, and via the internet for public viewing	Approval from Senior and Executive leaders; limited reach of community channels
Chains of Command do not prevent access to attention from Senior and Executive Leadership	15%	A frontline associate should not have to obey a formal, hierarchically-restrictive chain of command that potentially creates a hostile work environment if the complaint regards their manager, FSD, or direct supervisor	If a frontline associate has a problem with their manager, FSD, or direct supervisor, they should be able to communicate directly with a member of the Senior Leadership team or via an accessible alternative communication channel such as an unidentifiable and non-retaliation-enabled email account	We would be a potential global & industry leader in implementing this recommendation	Create an anonymous email account for complaints and reporting purposes, remove the formalized hierarchical communication chain of command structure from any and all governance and proceedings of the company	Getting senior and executive leadership buy-in and board approval; communication could become burdensome for monitoring agent who is responsible for tracking the complaints portal
All ethnicities represented in communication, governance document, or former company-wide publication	15%	The images, videos, and other depictions distributed by the company should reflect the many cultures that comprise the company's employee base.	Photos, images, graphics, videos, etc., reflect more than white faces/people, and depict an array of ethnicities, sizes, and appearances	• Marriott promotional boasts a 66% minority employee base; Today Marriott International not 300+ open hotels owned by women and diverse partners, Marriott does to have 1,500 open hotels owned by women and diverse partners by 2020	Increase representation of diverse employees internally through enhanced, targeted, and structured recruiting practices that reduce and eliminate bias and judgment-based errors in decision-making; attract more diverse candidates by depicting more diverse ethnic groups on website and in any and all corporate communications	The reflection of diverse groups in imagery does not always translate to representation of diverse groups in the employee base, so this is a multifaceted approach that incorporates both aspects: increase minority and women-owned business enterprise spend and partnerships.

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Some of the documents analyzed will not contain some of the criteria, and that particular criterion will be eliminated from any calculations of total scores by reducing the denominator by that criterion's percentage weighting.

Key questions containing OKRs were posed for each of the archival data. These key questions drove the development of the weighted criterion scorecard and serve to provide the content and substance of this report. An example of the key questions and OKRs are pasted below:

Objective and Key Results (OKR) Questions

PRINCIPLES/VALUES	MISSION	VISION	STATEMENTS FROM LEADERS	PROCESSES/PROCEDURES
What do they convey?	Is communication directly tied to D&I in a demonstrable way?	Where does the company envision it will be along D&I metrics in 10-20 years?	Are leaders verbalizing their commitment to D&I regularly and providing details on progress towards the ultimate goal?	Are processes and procedures such as chains of command fair to all employees?
What are the channels of communication?	Does every member of the organization have access to the communication that is not limited by accessibility, accommodation, or technology access issues?	Does every member of the organization have access to the communication that is not limited by accessibility, accommodation, or technology access issues?	Do leaders' actions underscore their commitment to D&I? Provide exemplars and relevant real-world examples from this and other model companies.	Do employees feel welcome and a sense of belonging in their work groups, teams, and in the organization overall?
Are they inclusive?	Does the mission directly mention the terms inclusion, diversity, or any forms of equity?	Does the vision directly mention the terms inclusion, diversity, or any forms of equity?	Have leaders acknowledged that there is a gap to close and that there are improvements to be made?	Is there an open-door policy for grievances and concerns?
Do they demonstrate commitment to D&I goals and objectives?	Does the mission demonstrate a commitment such as accountability for achieving D&I goals and objectives? Such as closing racial ethnic equity and representation gaps?	Does the vision demonstrate a commitment such as accountability for achieving D&I goals and objectives? Such as closing racial ethnic equity and representation gaps?	Are leaders accountable for achieving D&I goals and objectives? In what way (list examples).	Do employees feel a sense of "holding" when things are not going very well?
Are they accessible for people with varying abilities?	Is the mission accessible for people with disabilities and does it include a specific statement in the diversity list for disabilities in addition to the other protected classes?	Is the vision accessible for people with disabilities and does it include a specific statement in the diversity list for disabilities in addition to the other protected classes?	Do leaders mention people with disabilities and are all leader statements that are posted online available in multiple formats such as via closed captioning or auditory/audible?	Do employees have access to input/feedback channels to voice their concerns about their own positions, the managers who lead them, and any other feedback they may have for the company?
Do images and graphics depict diverse groups?	Are members of diverse backgrounds visible on company-wide communications and correspondences such as the front page of the website? Are the representations accurate or pejorative? Are they few or plentiful in number?	How are stories from employees communicated—are members of diverse demographic groups included in such stories and do they convey the company's vision?	Does leadership reflect diverse demographic groups, such as racial/ethnic diversity, gender diversity, religious diversity, nationality, ability status, sexual orientation, etc.?	Are all employees granted access via accessibility channels such as closed captioning, audible formats, braille, etc.?

Created by Ayanna Cummings for Compass Group at Microsoft

12/12/2020

Finally, tally the total scores for each document and provide an average final score based on all the total scores for each of the documents analyzed. This qualitative procedure is very useful in other arenas as well, such as that of a self-reflection and growth process that can be added to the appendix of an annual DEI+J report to maximize the analysis of objective attainment, goal alignment, and future directions with implications for seizing opportunities where gaps are identified as existent. Such a self-reflection process is very detailed and may be time consuming but is an excellent way to chart growth and progress in the DEI+J journey and execution of successful strategic DEI+J initiatives.

Prong VI

Vendor and Supplier Diversity

Demonstrative and actionable objectives are the key words in a vendor and supplier diversity program. Not only should one aim to maximize the percentage of spend among diverse vendors—identified as minority-owned, woman-owned, disability-owned, LGBTQIA+-owned, or veteran-owned—but maximization of the number of partnerships is also of utmost desirability in a comprehensive vendor and supplier diversity program.

Before one can begin to increase spend and number of partnerships among diverse vendors, however, the vendor and supplier partners must be identified in the local area. This means broad sourcing is necessary, similar to the strategic targeted and structured recruiting prong. To achieve this, it may be feasible to hire an outside consultant or dedicated support personnel who focus solely on vendor and supplier diversity partnerships as sourcing is a very time-consuming grassroots endeavor.

After all the local vendors who can possibly fill the diverse bucket are sourced, consider other avenues that will achieve similar objectives, such as sourcing for local, farm-raised, sustainable/eco-friendly, and dietetically diverse (e.g., vegan) vendors. This will help create a holistic list of potential vendors and suppliers from whom to select the very best vendor and supplier partners.

Next, it is imperative that all vendors and suppliers be vetted for their ability to scale, their certifiability or lack thereof, and the safety of their practices and products, among other more idiosyncratic considerations given the industry in which the company operates. Among other criteria, one may seek to deem important the quality of the product or service, the risk level given the profitability of the business, and so on.

Then another analysis must be carried out. One may select to complete a weighted criterion scorecard procedure in this vein or a decision tree matrix that simplifies the process using yes or no answers about whether the potential vendor and supplier partner meets specified criteria.

Upon scoring each potential vendor and supplier partner, you are ready to begin the onboarding process and make every attempt to help the partners grow their businesses exponentially. This may mean providing marketing services that seek to place the products in various marketplaces external to your company, offering certification assistance to help would-be partners become certified so that they can attain partnership in the future, or assisting the business with a rebranding effort that seeks to create the most visible and profitable brand image for the company over time.

Measuring success is also critical during each phase of the journey. An initial baseline of the amount of spend and number of partnerships will help give you something to measure against and helps you chart progress. You may decide to upload all the data and metrics into a visual dashboard so that it is user-friendly and simple to navigate for all stakeholders.

In sum, vendor and supplier portfolio diversity is among the top three most important prongs in the multipronged approach, next to targeted and structured recruiting and continuous and responsive training, assessment, and development. While an organization may be committed to creating opportunities that enable the selection and advancement of underrepresented racial and ethnic minoritized individuals, it is the pipeline of partnerships with vendors and suppliers from the surrounding communities that actually uplifts the economic trajectories of its members and creates sustainable changes in the economic positions

of business owners and their employees. One example of such an impact stems from the notion of second-chance hiring of persons who have encountered the criminal justice system. Where other organizational procedures and systems may mandate that persons with violent offenses on their records are not able to gain employment within the company, it is the vendor and supplier partnership portfolio that onboards partners vis-à-vis entrepreneurship and that enables rather than stymies such a DEI+J effort given the caveat of legality and regulations on second-chance hiring's progress in corporations. Such partnerships seek to expand and grow to scale the businesses with which they partner, creating opportunities for advancement beyond the confines of the particular organization and into entire industries and supply chains that facilitate economic opportunity and wealth for diverse business owners.

Prong VII

Community Outreach

- How many corporations among the Fortune companies have a community outreach or corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategic initiative in place?

  According to Tim Stobierski (2021) of *Harvard Business Review*, "An estimated *90 percent* of companies on the S&P 500 index published a CSR report in 2019, compared to just 20 percent in 2011" (italics mine).

- How are such CSR or community outreach strategic initiatives measured and accounted for?

  Both quantitative and qualitative metrics can be used to measure the effectiveness and reach of a community outreach strategy. For instance, identifying the participation rate among employees, the participation and engagement rates among senior and executive leaders, the amounts of funds raised, number of families provided for, number of meals donated, number of homes built, amount of dollars donated, number of partnerships established, survey feedback from community nonprofits on the quality of the partnerships, number of employee volunteer hours donated, and many other measures of quantitative effectiveness can be gleaned using survey and other quantifiable metrics.

Qualitative data, however, is more insightful and provides the tools necessary to make continuous improvements on community outreach strategies during subsequent implementations. For instance, by creating a weighted criterion scorecard that assess the effectiveness of the organization on previously established priorities that will serve as objective key result indicators, a community outreach or DEI professional can uncover not only the previously defined measures but also exploratory content to which there are no preestablished parameters. That is, by engaging in dialogue with community partners, community members, and other stakeholders such as organizational committee members through focus groups and 1:1 interviews, we can receive feedback that we did not know or preconceive a need for. This will aid the DEI professional engaging in community outreach work by continually improving on the current implementation.

- What percentage of donations to community based nonprofit organizations comes from corporations?

  According to the *NonProfit Times* (2019), "More than 80 percent of non-profit funding comes from government grants, and contractual fees for services . . . only about 10% of nonprofit revenues comes from donations, and about 4% from foundations."

Creating Impactful Community Outreach Strategies

This section centers on answers to the critical question "How do we create community outreach strategies that have deep, lasting, and meaningful impact on the community-at-large?" This question has a more straightforward answer than it appears on the surface. While corporate social responsibility and environmental and social governance (ESG) initiatives within corporations are not new, they are more prevalent now than ever before.

Again, "An estimated 90 percent of companies on the S&P 500 index published a CSR report in 2019, compared to just 20 percent in 2011" (Stobierski, 2021). The question of whether the community outreach strategies we are creating have meaningful impact is more poignant than asking whether such strategies indeed exist. To have such impact, the primary determinant of success outcomes is how *success* is defined in the first place. When we fail to include members of the community or community partner organization's leadership in our determinants of success as outcomes, we fail to understand how critical community outreach engagement really is. There is a saying that there should be nothing about us without us. Thus, members of the community are an integral part of the planning, implementation, and measurement phases of a community outreach journey.

The benefits of employing impactful community outreach strategic initiatives in corporations is magnified by the experiences of employees who volunteer to participate in such engagements. By building fundamental leadership and interpersonal skills, status security, and employee self-esteem, employees who volunteer and engage in community service on behalf of their employers are more likely to remain committed to the organization and to have heightened morale and thus better productivity than those who do not (Boccalandro, 2009; McCallum, Schmid, and Price, 2013). Furthermore, those employees who are more committed demonstrate less turnover, more effort, and better retention (Charities.org).

To further iterate the business case for community outreach or CSR strategies, McCallum, Schmid, and Price (2013) identify four components that underscore the rationale for instituting community outreach in organizations:

1. Enhancement of company or brand reputation
2. Reduction of costs and risks such as employee turnover
3. Achievement of business strategy such as conducting industry- or skill-specific volunteer engagement activities with associates within their domains
4. Creating learning and partnership

To effectuate the community outreach strategies that we have in place or are planning to execute, proper marketing and communications as well as volunteer time must be employed to increase participation among employees (Business News Daily, 2021; Peloza, Hudson, and Hassay, 2008).

A groundbreaking research study conducted by the Boston University Center for Corporate Citizenship (Boccalandro, 2009) identifies best practices with respect to community outreach and engagement implementations in Fortune 500 companies using a survey analysis methodology. Among the best practices noted by Boccalandro (2009), the following indicators were used as benchmarks against which to measure the effectiveness of CSR strategies in the companies that participated in the survey:

1. Cause-effective configuration
    a. Cause focus: focuses on causes for which the company is especially well suited to support
    b. Asset leveraging: leverages the company's asset to support the employee volunteer or giving program
    c. Philanthropic integration: is integrated into the company's philanthropic program
    d. Productive partnerships: has procedures and systems to support effective partnerships with nonprofit/government organizations served by the program
2. Strategic business positioning
    a. Business goals: has employee-accessible written goals that explicitly state the business benefits the program promotes
    b. Aligned infrastructure: benefits from procedures/practices/guidance from department(s) charged with the business goals the program seeks to promote
    c. Resonant cause(s): focuses on causes that connect to the business
    d. Integration with corporate citizenship: is integrated into the company's overall corporate citizenship/social responsibility plans

3. Sufficient investment
   a. Strong team: has at least one full-time paid professional position for every ten thousand employees and not less than two in total to manage the program (not organize events)
   b. Adequate operating budget: expends at least $30 per employee in operations and not less than $500,000 in total (operating budget excludes salaries and grants)
   c. Grant support: grants to nonprofits, in support of employee volunteering, a total of at least $100 per employee (e.g., dollars for doers, team grants, other grants tied to volunteer events but not matching gift grants unless they are limited to organizations where employees volunteer)

4. Culture of engagement
   a. Facilitative procedures: has universal procedures/practices/ guidance to facilitate employee involvement
   b. Formal encouragement: has universal procedures/practices/ guidance to create interest and enthusiasm for employee volunteering
   c. Business department support: supports the volunteer program, per its business goals, to promote employee involvement
   d. Middle management outreach: educates middle managers on the relevance of the volunteer programs to their responsibilities
   e. Senior management modeling: has senior executive public participation
   f. Accessible information: makes information on how to get involved easily available

5. Strong participation
   a. Majority participation: involves at least 50 percent of employees in volunteering programs
   b. Substantial scale: generates at least eight hours, on average, of employee volunteering per employee per year

6. Actionable evaluation
    a. Participation metrics: tracks employee participation in volunteer programs
    b. Volume metrics: tracks employee volunteer hours
    c. Employee feedback: collects employee feedback
    d. Nonprofit feedback: collects nonprofit partner feedback
    e. Business outcomes metrics: tracks business outcomes
    f. Social-sector outcomes metrics: tracks community outcomes

After analyzing the qualitative data collected by Boston University, the author reported that an average of 26 percent of the companies demonstrated compliance with the drivers identified, indicating substantial room for improvement in many areas with respect to employee volunteer programs.

There is much work left to be done to truly change the society in which we live and, more locally, our own communities. Corporate community outreach endeavors aim to do just that by fostering a volunteer and donation program among their employees that resonates with nonprofits and their constituent community members. But to be effective, community outreach strategies should benefit from the holistic and authentic incorporation of several core metrics and sources of feedback throughout each phase of the execution and evaluation of such programs.

- How much of a rise in CSR outreach to BIPOC-serving organizations and institutions occurred on the impetus of the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020?

A recent *Washington Post* article by Jan, McGregor, and Hoyer (2021) assessed the actual impact of the recent rise in CSR commitments geared specifically toward social and racial justice in the wake of George Floyd's brutal murder, as follows:

> To date, America's 50 biggest public companies and their foundations collectively committed at least $49.5

billion since Floyd's murder last May to addressing racial inequality—an amount that appears unequaled in sheer scale.

Looking deeper, more than 90 percent of that amount—$45.2 billion—is allocated as loans or investments they could stand to profit from, more than half in the form of mortgages. Two banks—JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America—accounted for nearly all of those commitments.

Meanwhile, $4.2 billion of the total pledged is in the form of outright grants. Of that, companies reported just a tiny fraction—about $70 million—went to organizations focused specifically on criminal justice reform, the cause that sent millions into the streets protesting Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis police officer.

- Can we expect that such a rise in CSR outreach efforts will remain steady, increase, or decline in the years ahead?

While this question may be of concern, the more pressing question is whether the CSR outreach efforts already committed to will have any sustainable impact in the years to come. Whether new initiatives geared toward eradicating social and racial injustices are devised in the coming years is of lesser importance simply because any such measures must be not only executed but also monitored and evaluated for their subsequent impact.

According to the *Washington Post* article cited above, much more work lies ahead for those of us who are wholly committed to eradicating such inequities and realizing progress toward achieving that objective in our lifetimes. In ideating the community outreach strategy you will execute and monitor, I invite you to consider some questions that may assist in creating a holistic approach that is meaningfully impactful on members of the target community:

- To what extent are community members affected by such community outreach endeavors, and how is such impact measured and documented?
- In what ways can such approaches to corporate social responsibility and community outreach be improved?
- How do we tie climate crisis endeavors to CSR, and what does this mean for sustainability practices at the individual and organizational levels?
- What types of CSR efforts should your corporation undertake and why?

The recent uptick in organizational community outreach strategies that target racial and social justice is encouraging for DEI+J professionals whose community service and outreach strategies have always sought to eradicate inequities in communities of color. Now the buy-in needed from senior- and executive-level organizational leaders is present, but the idea of profiting from such investments is still of concern given the statistical figures presented in this chapter.

A truly meaningful and impactful community outreach strategy addresses the particular needs of community members by initially assessing such needs and then delivering on the promises to the underserved. Only then can a community outreach or corporate volunteer strategy effectuate sustainable and demonstrable value creation.

Prong VIII

Employee Engagement, Recognition, and Retention

To what extent is it essential to measure and address employee engagement as a part of a comprehensive DEI+J strategy—why employee engagement, and how does it differ by race, ethnicity, and gender in the organization in which I am embedded?

A comprehensive DEI+J strategy is remiss when it omits employee engagement analyses and actions from its imperative foci. When we measure diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice climate changes year over year, quarter over quarter, or month over month, we essentially want to know not only the extent of reduction or increase in bias and discrimination experiences, inclusive leadership, and belongingness, among other outcomes, but also necessarily what impact such outcomes have on engagement by demographic. If, for instance, Black or African American associates are experiencing heightened encounters with discrimination in subsequent quarters since our baseline measures were established, has this also translated to lowered engagement; and thus, can we expect an increase in turnover and thus lower retention among African American associates? Such inquiries are critical to remain

abreast of employee factors that affect turnover and retention among varying demographic groups. Our strategic actions that follow will thus be targeted toward the retention of the same groups as representation remains a key focus area among diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice transformation efforts.

Why should we recognize employees, and how does this factor into DEI+J strategies?

Each associate has something to contribute to the company's overall success. At least that is the rationale behind their being hired in the first place. When we fail to celebrate small and big wins among our associates whose successes contributed to larger company or team efforts, we run the risk of losing key talent to others in the competitive and dynamic marketplace. This is the war for talent that makes recognition and reward/incentive programs such a vital part of our diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice strategies overall because they boost retention efforts as a by-product of implementation (Schramm, 2017).

Employee recognition does not have to be a monumental feat. Such small celebrations as certificates or plaques commemorating employee contributions, newsletter spotlight or milestone recognitions, and even $25 or $50 increment gift cards as a prize when an associate contributes a bright idea toward a team or organizational goal can make the difference between failure to recognize and retain top talent and retaining the same talent in years ahead.

To what extent are retention rates different for racial and ethnic minority group members, and what can be done to foster inclusivity to prevent the revolving door of diversity?

The "revolving door of diversity," the "sticky floor," "the broken staircase," and "the glass or concrete ceiling" all work in concert to

denigrate our efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive atmosphere in organizations. The more racially diverse the organization is, the less likely racially diverse employees are to voluntarily turnover (Zatzik, Elvira, and Cohen, 2003). So retention exists in a cycle—it is not a stand-alone process. This means the better the recruiting, hiring, and onboarding strategies and the better the engagement and recognition 0f racially diverse associates, the more likely they are to be retained.

Some will cite inclusion as the primary retention mechanism for diverse hires. But what does *inclusion* really mean? How do we define success metrics related to inclusion, and in which ways are they definitive, demonstrative, and actionable? It doesn't seem to be rocket science. All components interact to create an environment in which minoritized individuals feel included or excluded.

So why, then, does the revolving door of diversity still permeate our organizational environments? In answer to this question, I ask you to consider some others:

- Does the organization's senior leadership and board of directors reflect the same diversity as the lowest rung of the organizational ladder?
- In turn, are there structural and systematic opportunities for career development and advancement in the organization that target minoritized and historically marginalized individuals?
- Are there mentorship and sponsorship opportunities that help provide critical feedback, support, and learning opportunities particularly for minoritized and historically marginalized individuals?
- What are the promotion rates for minoritized and historically marginalized groups in the organization?
- Have you analyzed the exit interview data for diverse demographic strata to determine whether there are similarities among similar demographic groups or whether there are differences between groups from different demographic backgrounds?

- Have senior and executive leaders been made aware of the discordances and disparities in the turnover of minoritized or historically marginalized groups?
- To what extent are the retention strategies structured so that there is a dedicated retention resource that provides ongoing support for retention strategies implemented in the organization?
- Does the cultural transformation process include the voices, feedback, and suggestions of these demographic group as you strategize and plan how to execute the next steps in the cultural transformation journey?

Brown (2018) notes that *inclusion* means being able and comfortable to bring your authentic self to work each day:

> Employees who differ from most of their colleagues in religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, and generation often hide important parts of themselves at work for fear of negative consequences. We in the diversity and inclusion community call this "identity cover," and it makes it difficult to know how they feel and what they want, which makes them vulnerable to leaving their organizations . . . they key to inclusion is understanding who your employees really are. (p. 3)

Brown (2018) points out some best practices to discover employee identities fully and authentically:

1. Segment employee engagement results by demographic groups
2. Conduct focus groups using independent facilitators
3. Have one-on-one discussions
4. Use the tools and data you uncover to retain employees

In sum, the use of employee engagement, recognition, and retention strategies to bolster a human capital portfolio with better retention and

lower turnover, particularly for historically marginalized demographic groups, is an essential element of any comprehensive DEI+J framework or strategic initiative. Some potential mechanisms that incorporate engagement, recognition, and retention into the DEI+J framework are discussed in this chapter.

Prong IX

Career and Professional Development

Mentoring

This chapter's focus will center on creating systemic-level change to effectuate better inclusion of Black women in corporate settings that are predominantly or historically White. In my research and readings on the subject of the career progression and advancement of Black women, be it in higher education as faculty or in corporate or governmental settings, there is a recurrent central theme surrounding hindrances and enablers of career advancement for Black women—mentoring.

I attended the Sisters Inc. virtual summit hosted by Black Enterprise this week and again was confronted with the question of whether I, as a professional in a senior-level role in my company, have sought out and successfully received proper mentorship throughout my career journey or whether that was in my trajectory in the future. And this begged the similar question of who would serve as a fitting mentor for someone of my stature and background? How we would mutually benefit from such a relationship, and do I have the energy and wherewithal to drive the relationship and steer its course for my own success and professional development?

And there are no easy or finite answers to these questions, I might add. Honestly, finding Black women in the C-suite to mentor me, as a person who wants to one day reach the C-suite in corporate America,

is daunting in itself. But interacting in a way that is fruitful for both of us also seems to be something that could potentially become an issue—will I be a leach on her that only seeks to suck out relevant information for myself, or will she, in turn, be taken aback by my expertise and thus display downward envy or jealousy, something that I have been lucky enough in my own career to avoid?

Good mentoring will place me, so it seems, in a better place than when it began. And what I have learned as a person on the mentor side of the equation is that mentors also learn quite a bit, not only with respect to esoteric or field-specific knowledge but also about their own doings, how much they have grown, and where they want to be in the future. Giving others advice can essentially benefit the advice giver in myriad ways.

So why are there no television ads for midlevel career professionals to get mentored? Why are mentoring programs that take the whole person into account when pairing them with a mentor or mentee so difficult to locate in many successful corporations, even among the Fortune 500?

Many years ago, I read a book by Dr. Phil, *Self Matters* (2002). In it, Dr. Phil discusses the necessity of identifying five pivotal people in one's life who have shaped or molded them into the person they are today. Among the five that I selected was none other than Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas. He created a career option for me that I was not very familiar with at the time but would, in essence, capture all that I was so painstakingly passionate about since my childhood—effectuating much-needed systemic-level change in our society through the lens of DEI+J.

This chapter will seek to extrapolate from individual phenomenological experiences of Black women who have worked as professionals in various industries and sectors into broader, more systemic, and more structural-level issues that affect entire organizations and ecosystems. In so doing, I will delineate methods that seek to eradicate such issues that adversely permeate the organization's culture and create barriers to the advancement and growth of Black women professionals.

Method: One-on-One Interviews

The author conducted two one-on-one interviews to provide substantive data for this chapter. The first interview was conducted with a legal professional who now serves as a judge on the court of largest general jurisdiction in a large metropolitan urban area in southeastern United States. The second interview was conducted with a diversity, equity, and inclusion professional who has served in many capacities in corporations throughout her career and now notably serves as CEO of her consultancy and president of an award-winning chapter of one of the largest professional organizations for black business people across the United States.

The questions posed to the two interview participants were as follows:

1. Describe for me, in as much detail as you wish, your experiences as a Black woman in a predominantly White environment.
2. Describe what you believe are the structural or systemic barriers or enablers that hindered or facilitated your advancement in predominantly White environments, such as formal mentoring programs, coaches, sponsors, and the type of performance feedback you received.
3. If you could give advice to other Black women operating in predominantly White spaces, particularly DEI practitioners, what advice would you give?

Throughout this chapter, I provide excerpts from each of the interviews to underscore the concepts discussed in a particular section.

The Author's Experience

I consider myself an advocate. I think of myself the way others think of Sister Souljah or Queen Latifah when she rapped—the girl who was never afraid to speak up, to stand for what was right, and to do the right thing at all costs. And sometimes this means being the only one.

Growing up in urban public schools, the majority of my friends and peers were Black like me. Only when I attended a summer program or traveled with my family did I meet people of different races than my own, and those experiences were plentiful but usually centered on minority educational development opportunities and thus did not have many Whites, Asians, Latinas, Indigenous, and others. I then went on to an HBCU as an undergraduate. I was a scholar, a musician, a singer, and very actively involved socially, academically, and otherwise.

Then I went to grad school, and boy, was I in for a real awakening. At the PhD program I attended, I was the only Black woman and only Black person for many years. What an isolating experience this was—a time for self-reflection for which I was really unprepared in the grander scheme of things, a time when I had only myself to stay motivated and to maintain my sense of purpose academically and professionally.

Being the only Black person, particularly the only Black woman, in a sea of white faces is not an easy feat. It is a challenge that must be overcome with lots of social support and camaraderie among other friends outside the institution or organization in which you are embedded. And to do those things, you have to have time, or make time, to nurture yourself. Self-care is probably the most critical aspect of that form of social and spiritual isolation. Without it, we end up barren, confused, and void of a sense of purpose and community.

Perhaps it's even more so when, as a DEI practitioner or other professional, we are constantly required to pour into others some inspirational or uplifting sentimental message of inclusivity and equity for all people. On top of this, we must mitigate biases where they certainly exist and run rampant in corporations and academia in this country. No more racist can an institution be than the very institutions that profited and capitalized on the chattel slavery of African people in this country.

And so it is, as I have come to discover very late in my DEI journey that began in consultancy and academia, that the racism, the sexism, the heterosexism, the ableism, and all the malignant isms that characterize and plague our society are magnified tenfold in corporate America. But their guise manifests in myriad other subtle yet undeniable

ways—lowered performance ratings, less enthusiasm, talking behind the back, and microaggressions that could, all at once or one by one, erode the very paths on which Black professionals walk, particularly Black DEI professionals, whose very substance and value are tied to our ability to overcome and mitigate such idiosyncratic yet disruptive discriminatory behaviors (Roepe, 2021).

Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto (2015) cite the myriad coping strategies employed by Black women professionals. Such coping mechanisms arise, the authors note, out of the bifurcated cultural identities and legacies of Black women who have an intersectionality of experiences as being both Black and simultaneously female. And these same coping mechanisms create leadership skills that surpass others who do not encounter similar adversities that breed resilience.

Self-empowerment is one coping mechanism that effectively rejects the stereotypical garbage thrown at Black women in the workplace and replaces those pejorative connotations with self-affirming, positive, and fulfilling belief systems that penetrate the core of a Black woman's essence. Another strategy is that of the sanity check by which a Black woman who is experiencing racism or gendered racial microaggressions might seek out the confirmation of a Black female counterpart to validate her experiences and feelings so that she is not alone in her perceptions (Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto, 2015).

I know that I am not the only one. I know there are countless other Black women DEI executives, managers, leads, heads, chiefs, VPs, and so on who thrive even in the midst of being siloed as the lone Black woman in a predominantly White environment. And what of this silo, this isolation of being the only Black woman in a sea of White men? Persistent discrimination, wage disparities, and exclusion—that's what (Roepe, 2021).

As of 2020, Black women still only earn sixty-three cents for every dollar that a White man makes in the United States. In states like Georgia, where I live and work, that figure is even more dismal at a mere fifty-nine cents for every White man's dollar. This amounts to $24,110 annually:

These lost wages mean Black women have less money to support themselves and their families, save and invest for the future, and spend on goods and services. Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result. (National Partnership for Women and Families, March 2021)

Ultimately, these wage gaps reflect more than $1 million in lost wages among Black women throughout their careers (Epperson, 2021).

In a dissertation study by Branch (2012), questions of why the persistent lack of representation of Black women in senior- and upper-level leadership in United States corporations revealed many ominous sentiments on the part of the interview participants:

1. Black women are perceived as less competent than their White counterparts and thus looked over for high-level, high-status roles.
2. Because Black women are not visible in extant leadership positions, this previously identified preconception of incompetence persists and is allowed to fester alongside a lack of visible role models who lead and guide other Black women to advancement.
3. The preconceived bias that there are a limited number of "qualified" Black women available in the labor pool to fill open positions of leadership in corporations is also problematic. And this notion is the converse of reality. In fact, Black women are the largest ethnic minoritized group to achieve educational degrees (Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto, 2015, p. 165).
4. Misperceptions about a Black woman's ability to manage a work-and-life balancing act leave Black women out of promotion and advancement opportunity discussions.
5. Mentoring and sponsorship opportunities are woefully lacking, particularly in light of the regular mentoring and sponsorship available to White men who belong to the "good ole boys network."

6. Black women's leadership skills are construed pejoratively in light of biases about general leadership traits that are prototypically and stereotypically male in nature, including aggressiveness, assertiveness, and outspokenness.

7. It behooves Black women to advance socially using both informal and formal channels to create vast social networks that ultimately aid in advancement and career progression.

Overall, a diligent work ethic and valiant determination are the determinants of long-term outcomes of career success for Black women, despite obstacles of racial and gender discrimination (Branch, 2021; Cain, 2015; Woldai, 2021). As one interviewee said, black women "got to do better, be better and work harder to get the recognition similar to less qualified counterparts."

In a study exploring the phenomenological experiences of Black women executives in corporations, Latasha Cain (2015) explores the myriad nuances of being Black and female in a predominantly White male organizational environment, the barriers such Black women face in career progression and advancement, and what strategies can be employed at the individual level to overcome these barriers to effectively change the status quo and navigate the career ladder toward promotion and senior-level leadership.

Like (Branch, 2012), Cain (2015) expounded on several emergent themes in her phenomenological findings, among them:

1. mentor influence,
2. work ethic and determination,
3. work-life balance.

Stereotypes and Stereotype Threat

Black women also experience the perception of being intellectually inferior, which can undermine their credibility. African Americans report having to constantly prove their ability and observe the surprise

of managers and colleagues who may have had initial assumptions about their competence (Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto, 2015, p. 165).

I serve in many capacities. Among them is my role as a postdoctoral scholar at a very highly acclaimed institution in southeastern United States. I also have, for many years since 2001, served in the academic world as an adjunct professor in various psychology subdisciplines. In both scenarios, I am usually the only or one of a very small few Black women among hundreds or thousands of others in the same space. And this is certainly no bragging right nor privilege. Rather, it is a sad scenario that we are woefully underrepresented in many predominantly White institutions, in higher education, and otherwise in corporate America.

One impact of such a silo is the concept of impostor syndrome. *Impostor syndrome* is defined as the condition when a Black or other ethnic minoritized individual feels inadequacy, illegitimacy, and overall lack of effectiveness in predominantly White institutional environments, despite their qualifications, credentials, and knowledge (Woldai, 2021). Such impostor syndrome feelings of inadequacy arise not only as a result of internal mechanisms but also often come about as a result of the maltreatment and overall biases toward Black or other ethnic minoritized individuals, reactions to the notion of affirmative action, and other egregious and vicious misinterpretations of the representation of Blacks and other ethnic minoritized individuals in predominantly White environments (Fields and Cunningham-Williams, 2021; Truehill, 2021). As one interviewee noted, "Imposter syndrome is real—you are not just enough, you are capable and you deserve to be in the space you are in."

Racism and Isolation Yield Psychological Effects

Several negative and deleterious psychological outcomes may manifest in Black women as a result of their experiences with gendered racism and racial microaggressions. According to Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto (2015, p. 165-66), among such often disabling psychological

outcomes are anxiety, depression, sleep problems, paranoia, lack of confidence, feelings of worthlessness, intrusive cognitions, helplessness, loss of drive, and false positives, a condition in which a person might overgeneralize negative experiences with others due to persistent feelings of harassment. "Racial microaggressions can have a deleterious and cumulative psychological impact over time."

In this same vein, and counterintuitive though it may seem, the idea of identity switching can also be used as a mechanism that is facilitative and not debilitating. Such is the ideated exploration in the work by Bailey-Fakhoury and Frierson (2014), who note that identity or code switching is a subdimensional component in the traditions of Black "motherwork" that are beneficial because they allow Black women from predominantly White environments to coexist within their own home and family dynamics while also succeeding in spaces where they are the one or only.

Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto (2015) refer to this same construct as "armoring," a method in which Black girls learn to adapt to two distinct cultural systems and adopt appropriate behaviors for both encounters. In fact, "Faulkner (1983) believed that young women of color were taught ways to armor and protect themselves against racism at an early age."

One interviewee noted, regarding stereotypes about Black women, "Women or black or Supervisors of color were few and far between"—referred to as "aggressive." Someone told her it is a euphemism—assertive or aggressive? If you allow others' definitions to define you, you will always question where you are and how you move and how you act. The label is used disproportionately on Black women for being assertive.

Another supervisor who was Greek told her the same thing; she told her that though she appeared White to the world, some of the challenges associated with being a person of color also affect women in general. Just because you don't fit into the "leave it to Beaver" paradigm does not make you inadequate. This shaped her going forward.

As part of firm employment, they had a country club membership with an investigator from the firm. At twenty-eight years old, she walked up to the concierge stand; and when she walked up the Black

man at the host stand, he pushed her to the side and said he needed to wait on the man behind her. He said, "Hold on one second. I will get you an application in a moment." She appeared to him to be a well-dressed applicant for a host or server position at the club. She was dressed in a suit. Then the man she was with, a White man, introduced her as his new associate. Every Black person during lunch came out and walked past the table in shock, looking as though they were surprised a person of color worked for the law firm. Atlanta is not that way; there is a false sense of what the rest of the world looks like because of the vast number of people of color in positions of power.

When I think of my experience in a mostly White world as a Black woman, it has been one that has been challenging at times. Knowing that you are working harder, people notice when you are not present, and you are held to a different standard because you did not attend something.

It Takes a Village

I was born and raised in southwest Atlanta, Georgia, an area known by those unfamiliar with its legacy for violence and being the first news story from the previous night because of a random shooting or other atrocity. But to those of us who know better, it was the place of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s family home on Sunset Avenue, a street where I also lived and "grew up" as a graduate MBA student at the world-renowned institution Clark Atlanta University a few blocks away; of Amb. Andrew Young, who lived on Peyton Road, where there once existed a wall structure that separated the southwest side, once predominantly White, from the area where Martin Luther King Jr. Drive now stands, a racist display of the segregated South; or of congressman and activist John Lewis, whose son grew up with my brother and who is a very dear friend of our family. That is the southwest Atlanta that I knew.

The Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays High School (Mays), which I attended and at which I was crowned Miss Mays 1995–96, had also educated my brother and members of Goodie Mob, whose records and

music are known the world over. Adams Drive was where the famous Hank Aaron dwelled, alongside other notables such as the Dungeon Family crew. So many well-to-do, well-educated, prominent figures of the Black Atlanta legacy reside and continue to make southwest Atlanta a community that is beautiful in its resilience and strong in its forthright commitment to community, justice, and human rights for its members. Those inalienable rights of access to justice and equal treatment were bestowed not by the Constitution but by a more divine and magnificent Creator. This, the SWATS as it is known, is my legacy and the reason why I am the woman I am today.

So it is that the journey that ensued many years ago and that continues today to inspire and transform me personally, psychologically, and emotionally to think differently and to do more than I have. The work that is left to be done is monumental, but because we cannot do it alone, we uplift and encourage one another to remain steadfast in the struggle for our own emancipation and the realization of the freedoms that even our forefathers, robbed and humiliated of the same, would want us to have in all their many facets.

I boast two HBCUs as alma maters—my beloved home by the sea, Hampton University, nestled on the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, and the Panther nation where I obtained my MBA, Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. Both experiences taught me the necessity of nurturance, legacy, and community, both within the confines of the university halls and well beyond them, into the rest of my life. When I entered graduate school and simultaneously began working as a college instructor full time, I quickly learned, just as my interviewee noted, that I had to do better, be better, and work harder to get recognition similar to often less qualified counterparts.

Systemic Barriers vs. Systemic Enablers

One interviewee noted a piece of advice for other Black women professionals seeking to advance their careers: "Seek out mentors from all different spectrums of diversity, people who want to be mentors,

people who will be honest and not just give positive feedback. One mentor told me (a Black woman) that she was an excellent lawyer who does not rest on her natural talent. At some point, your natural talent will only take you so far. Having that conversation, I had to have an honest and hard look at myself. Am I really resting on natural talent? What am I doing each day to ensure that I am growing and bettering myself etc.? Now the opportunities I have are because of my efforts. [The Black-owned law firm where I once worked] gave me opportunities there that other associates my age were not getting . I realized that was because of the mentoring and experiences I had. When people are directly or indirectly investing in you, the pitfall of that is that when people do not have those types of investments in them, even when they show promise, there are other things that might stifle their progress like dress, presentation style, etc. Similarly, we are our sister's keeper and can help my sister fix her crown without knocking it off. So we are responsible for mentoring others, even when it is not invited. We are not necessarily taught of the importance of networking and net weaving. Every job I have gotten has been through leveraging the power of my network or because someone referred me."

Mentoring and Feedback as Structural-Level Enablers and Counters to Microaggressions

A unique qualitative study on the role of mentoring as a buffer for gendered racialized microaggression experiences of Black women was conducted by Nair and Good (2021). Specifically, structured mentoring that provides mentoring training on dimensions such as holding difficult conversations, dispute resolution, audience analysis, implicit bias, emotional intelligence, and building self-awareness, coupled with coping responses that attack microaggressions head-on through self-assurance, self-empowerment, and bolstering self-esteem, is an effective strategy at mitigating the effects of microaggressions on the psyches of the recipients (Nair and Good, 2021). Such an implementation requires a formalized mentoring program that seeks to advance the career

trajectories of underrepresented groups, particularly African American women, in the workplace.

Below is an excerpt from Cummings (2021):

> Finally, feedback is a critical component in any leader's success. Receiving and being open to getting such feedback from mentors, supervisors, peers, and subordinates will play a vital role in the development of leaders to their full potential. One mechanism by which we can continually self-improve is to be open and receptive to constructive feedback. By transcending such criticism to positively change ourselves and our communities, we are better prepared to lead when our time comes. While any type of feedback is constructive, negative feedback is particularly important to digest and transcend if a leader wants to continue to progress professionally.

Advice

One interviewee gave advice to Black women who are seeking better career trajectories: "Be confident and authentic. So many times, we enter these spaces feeling as though we have to be someone other than ourselves. Anybody operating in a DEI capacity has to have a healthy confidence, a thick skin, and strong sense of self or perseverance. Someone once said I live my life with the confidence of a mediocre White boy."

The structural- and systemic-level barriers that will inhibit the advancement of racially diverse individuals in predominantly White environments should be scrutinized to identify whether structural barriers can be removed or mitigated to effectuate the facilitated promotion of underrepresented groups in predominantly White institutions.

How Does This Relate to Systemic Level Isms, and What Can Be Done to Eradicate Them?

I also know that the issues we face at present and have faced for so many years before now are not solely individually determined through the lens of unconscious or implicit bias. This is a more systemic larger issue that must be met with swift and immediate resistance and achievable strategies that level the playing field so that Black women can thrive. When Black women thrive, all women thrive because support mechanisms, advancement opportunities, and structural-level enablers are in place that mitigate the impact of our intersectional idiosyncrasies on our effective navigation of professional career ladders.

Qualitative, phenomenological studies are especially relevant in this domain. Cummings (2021) noted:

> These phenomena are magnified by the experiences of Black women in this country. Coupled with women's struggles for equality and human rights was, particularly for the Black woman, slavery and its reverberations, the post-emancipation era and the black codes, Jim Crow laws, the civil rights movement, affirmative action, and present-day racism. As Crenshaw (1989) describes, Black women experience an "intersectionality" of oppressed identities in the United States, and the profound influence of Blackness and womanhood in one being express themselves inwardly and outwardly as a compound, more complex existence. To overshadow one experience [Blackness over womanhood or vice-versa] over the other is impossible for the Black woman who embraces each aspect of her identity (Cummings, 2021).

In each circumstance, the Black women I interviewed said that their experiences with working in predominantly white environments taught them valuable lessons about the true nature of their motivations and the depths of their expertise and capability. They also learned to

lean into their internal and external social networks for support and encouragement, both as a coping mechanism and as a catalyst for their professional growth and development. Such informal networks "can validate the existence of racial discrimination and provide support in diminishing the adverse impact of these experiences to one's self-esteem. These circles also provide a particular kind of acceptance and legitimacy" (Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto, 2015, p. 166).

I learned that I am indeed not alone in this journey. I am truly immersed in a nurturing and supportive environment. While still a very isolating experience as one of the only Black women in an organization or as a department of one, I have many outlets within which to network and vent when necessary. My sorority, my church, the NBMBAA, the Urban League of Greater Atlanta Young Professionals, the Mothers Social Literary Circle—all these organizations cater to the needs and design outreach mechanisms geared toward Blacks and communities of color.

And giving back is the essence of my purpose-filled mission as a DEI+J professional. Without that recognizance of the suffering of others, without acknowledging and creating ways to define and meet the needs of the underserved, my own journey will not be worthwhile. And until there are so many Black and female faces that we appear to be taking up all the space and breathing all the fresh oxygen in the room, until the walls and hallways are filled with our joy, our enthusiasm, our wit and wisdom, until that time, I will be adamant that the buck never stops with me. That it is my responsibility to bring others into this fold, to lead, guide, and nurture as best I can so that they, too, have the foresight and the fortitude to reach back and pull others along with them as they go. And so it is.

Career Progression Mapping

A career progression map utilizes qualitative data insights to redefine organizational systems, policies, procedures, and frameworks to facilitate the advancement of racial and ethnic minoritized or historically marginalized groups toward senior- and upper-level

managerial positions in the company. Such qualitative procedures entail one-on-one interviews with models in the environment that started on the lower rung of the organizational ladder and subsequently advanced to higher levels such as director, VP, and above. A career progression map interview asks questions such as:

- **Initial Ambition to Advance:** To what extent did the models seek out advancement opportunities upon their initial hire? To what extent did their initial evaluations indicate their leadership potential or identify personality factors they possessed that would bode well in leader roles?

- **Mentoring Opportunities:** To what extent did the models gain exposure to mentoring opportunities? Were such opportunities formal or informal? Were the relationships nurtured over time or periodic and intermittent?

- **Purposeful or Serendipitous?:** Did the models gain their current status in a purposeful manner by seeking out such advancement? Were they granted such opportunities in a serendipitous fashion such as being handpicked for the new higher roles?

- **Structural or Systemic Enablers:** Were there aspects of the organizational environment that were structurally conducive to the models' progress such that those enablers created greater likelihood for their advancement and were attributable to their ultimate success?

- **Structural or Systemic Barriers:** Were there aspects of the organizational environment that were structurally inconducive to the models' progress such that those barriers had to be overcome for the models to succeed?

- **Reproducibility:** Can the career progression path the models undertook be replicated in the environment for others? Which and how? What characteristics of the career progression path of the models cannot be replicated? Which among them should be evaluated to be removed as structural or organizational impediments?

How to Use the Information to Make Structural and Systemic Level Changes in an Environment Where Executive Minority Career Development Is Not Apparent Based on the Congregation of Ethnic Minoritized Individuals at the Lower Rungs of the Organizational Ladder

When consistencies exist among interviewees who identify organizational structural barriers to their advancement, such structural barriers must be wholly examined for adverse and disparate impact on historically marginalized groups. Some examples of such systems might include the performance appraisal process; the selection, recruiting, orientation, and onboarding processes; the promotion process; recognition processes; and so on. One may also cross-tabulate or correlate to corroborate the findings of the exit interview data for consistent emergent themes among the barriers identified.

How to Leverage Extant Resources to Create Executive Minority Career Development Opportunities and Pathways to Advancement

Systemic- and structural-level enablers must be put in place formally, which address the specific needs of racial and ethnic minoritized groups, gender diversity, and other historically marginalized group members. Some examples of such enablers include formal mentoring programs that provide cross-cultural mentor training for participants, management in training programs that seek to advance the career trajectories of underrepresented groups among frontline associates and external diverse applicants, women in leadership programs, employee resource groups that allow participants to develop leadership skills such as through executive leadership academies and creation of engagement and learning opportunities for members, LGBTQIA+ inclusion programs that foster inclusivity through learnings and pronoun usage and practice, accessible programs that foster inclusivity and advancement training for people of varying abilities, and much more.

Part IV

Summary and Conclusion

Our society and its systems are wrought with the damning reality that racism and other malignant isms continue to perpetuate discrimination in myriad facets. The evolution of the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice field, designed to tackle such isms head-on, is at its core a mechanism that will erode the path of injustice and inequity through systematic, data-backed strategies that confront the status quo and rid our organizations and communities at large of such plaguing ills.

Seated at the Table defines and constructs a methodology that is comprehensively formulated to effectuate much-needed organizational and systemic-level changes vis-à-vis cultural transformation implementations, referred to as a multipronged approach. This book cites many examples and provides sample data collection procedures and instruments that can be utilized in the pursuit of organizational cultures that are both inclusive and equitable for all their diverse members. Such strategies, grounded in scientific data collection methodologies, create more objective and fairer procedures and systems that reify an organization's authentic commitment to DEI+J transformations.

While it is the emphatic position of the author that no one-size-fits-all approach will change each and every organization and create ubiquitous inclusive landscapes, the strategies identified in *Seated at the Table* are tried-and-true approaches that, together, formulate a

holistic DEI+J systemic cultural transformation from start to finish. Without many of the components defined in this book, a DEI+J cultural transformation effort may encounter blind spots that create a maelstrom that undermines a very sincere effort to foster inclusivity for all stakeholders both within and beyond the organization's boundaries.

Thus, a recommended compendium of all or some of the strategies outlined herein, either all at once or instituted in phasic fashion, remains. That is, a DEI+J expert will assess the needs of its particular organization before defining such an implementation strategy and, where warranted, add to or subtract various aspects of the approach to suit the organization's idiosyncratic needs.

It is the author's hope that *Seated at the Table* has opened the readers' eyes, hearts, and minds to some portion of a vast universe of possibilities and creative solutions that will change the trajectories of our organizations and communities for the betterment of society at large in the years ahead. "The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you can alter, even by a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change the world" (James Baldwin).

I remain yours in passionate commitment to action and service,

Ayanna Rashida Cummings, PhD, MBA, SPHR

Part V

Definitions and Operationalizations

Glossary

ableism – The maltreatment of people of varying abilities, such as persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities or those whose vision or hearing or both are impaired. Such treatment usually undervalues and underestimates the individual target's capabilities.

advisory committee partnership – A partnership between the organization and another diverse organization or institution, such as an educational institution, that brings together leaders and committee members from both entities who seek to effectuate meaningful organizational change by developing a pipeline of professional development and placement for diverse students or members of the general public. Such advisory committee partnerships might be established with historically Black colleges and universities or workforce development programs that are run by the state government to facilitate increased representation of diverse groups, particularly at upper managerial levels in an organization.

ageism – The practice of discriminating against older persons or people who are above the age of forty, particularly in the workplace. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act was signed into law to protect people over the age of forty from hiring practices and policies that favor younger workers.

automatic thinking process – A cognitive process that happens without our conscious reflection and awareness, which makes it hard to pinpoint and thus difficult, but not possible, to overcome.

bias – This term usually refers to implicit or automatic and unconscious thinking processes but more generally refers to the notion that we tend toward one way or manner of doing things or behaving and thus against others. We can have many types of biases, such as biases toward the ability of our family members to do well in a stage play versus other actors or a bias toward the types of foods that are good for our bodies based on our own experiences. Biases are often skewed to reflect limited encounters with the target and characterized by an availability heuristic that further expresses very preconceived, unfounded thoughts and beliefs based on these experiences.

cognition – A thought process.

demographic – A particular strata or subset of a population of interest. Demographic typically refers to people-level variables that characterize a population of interest, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, age, religious affiliation, and many more.

discrete emotions – These are the primary basic emotions identified by psychologists that are identifiable universally across cultures on the basis of facial expression.

discrimination – While bias and prejudice often refer only to attitudes, beliefs, or cognitions, discrimination refers to actions that cause harm on protected or diverse groups of people, and such discrimination may manifest not only in outward displays of overt racism but also in nuanced ways and the decisions made by individuals within organizations that perpetuate the racial and economic divide between Whites and people of color.

diversity – The multicultural, multifaceted, multinuanced nature of an organization in its ability to bring together an array of people, thoughts, backgrounds, cultures, ideas, and perspectives.

emotional intelligence – The concept that managing one's own and gauging and managing others' emotions expressed in the workplace can be an effective leadership tool that separates inclusive leaders

from noninclusive ones. For instance, when a person comes to work after recently losing a loved one and openly expresses that they are not feeling great that day, an emotionally intelligent leader will lean into the expressed feeling or emotion and explore it further while expressing sincere condolences before moving on with the business at hand for the team that day.

equity – A leveling of the playing field for persons from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups to create a fair and just system of operations and practices for an organization. This construct is not the same as equality, which applies every opportunity equally across the spectrum of diverse talent. Instead, equity gives each unique individual the specific resources they need to be successful.

heteronormative – This is the notion that many Western standards and ideologies are based on the patriarchal, male-dominated family structure that places a husband and wife in male-and-female-only positions and does not embrace the notion of same-sex couples or same-sex marriage as a result of this supposition.

heterosexism – This construct refers to the idea that homosexual or other sexualities in the spectrum of LGBTQIA+ are often mistreated and marginalized by heteronormative ideologies and practices, such as the practice of a bakery that chooses not to serve wedding cakes to gay couples, which can also be buttressed by archaic laws and governance.

heuristic – A mental shortcut.

impact – This term refers to the actual outcome of an initial action and operates irrespective of the initial intention behind it. Sometimes when there is a negative outcome that harms a diverse person or group, it arises not because of the intention behind the action but by the action itself. This is why the concept emerged that not the intention but the impact is what is most relevant.

implicit bias – The automatic, reflexive thinking process that tends toward person classification into predefined and precharacterized groups without more thoughtful reflection and deliberation. Unconscious bias may manifest not only in how we treat others

but also in our decisions and practices when we serve in positions of authority.

inclusion – The power of an organization's culture and practices to create meaningful experiences of belonging for each and every employee by creating programs, policies, and strategic initiatives geared toward embracing each individual's unique culture, heritage, and contributions to the organization. By amplifying the backgrounds and experiences of all persons in the organization, an inclusive culture is one in which each and every person has the opportunity to be themselves and to grow and succeed within the organization.

intent – This term refers to the initial purpose of the action, thought, or attitude and operates irrespective of the impact.

justice – A relatively classic but newly adopted construct in the diversity, equity, and inclusion literature that stems from the work of the civil rights movement, led by such icons as Rev. Dr. Joseph Echols Lowery and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. These leaders asserted that no civil rights movement for the inclusion and human rights of all people would be complete without the power of justice to eradicate inequities and to create fair policies, laws, and regulations that magnify the concept of inalienable rights bestowed by God.

microaffirmations – These operate as counter-mechanisms to microaggressions by reaffirming positive aspects of a target's identity and contributions to the organization. Such microaffirmations as simply stating that a person did a "great job" on an assignment or that without the person, a project would not have been completed successfully or on time can operate as opposing forces for diverse organizational members who likely experience racial microaggressions regularly in their work encounters.

microaggression – This term usually refers to racial microaggressions, or gendered racial microaggressions, to refer to racialized attitudes and behaviors that permeate interpersonal encounters in organizations and cause psychological and other types of harm on the target. Examples of microaggressions include such statements as "You're very attractive to be so dark skinned" or asking to touch a Black woman's natural hair and other mechanisms that perpetuate the

notion of "other" and "outsider" in a predominantly or historically White space. The psychological ramifications of the experience of many microaggressions over time can be very deleterious on the physical and mental health of the target. By failing to address such microaggressions, the experience of them can lead to a snowball effect that ultimately thwarts the career progression and advancement of the target or unfortunate recipient.

microassaults – A more egregious form of microaggression, such as an outright racist or racialized statement geared directly toward a person of a different cultural background than one's own, that, similar to microaggressions, has deleterious psychological and physical consequences on the recipient due to the isolation of exclusion.

microinsults – Small statements about the race, gender, or other aspect of a person's identity that are unnecessary and bigoted in nature, such as "Wow, I did not know gay people kissed," or statements about a person's ability to a person who is visually or hearing impaired.

prejudice – This construct predates the bias construct in empirical and extant literature on racism and sexism, such as the seminal work by Dr. Gordon Allport entitled *The Nature of Prejudice*.

psychological safety – This term was originally coined by Dr. Amy Edmondson in 1999, referring to the organization's climate that either promotes outspokenness and new ideas and contributions from all members or stifles such creativity by implementing reactionary repercussions and measures that lead to negative consequences and outcomes for persons who tend to rally against the status quo. Such psychological safety does not operate when fear is present and is more beneficial when all members of the organization's diverse body have access to formal procedures that solicit their feedback and input regularly.

racism – The malignant ism of racism is all too familiar to some and can manifest in myriad ways and in a variety of settings. Sometimes racism can arise even when it is not intended, such as in the definition of *antiracism* that Dr. Ibram Kendi esp0uses, which points a lack of action or inertia as racism when it perpetuates the

status quo of systems, policies, procedures, and practices that have historically marginalized certain groups of people and not others.

racist – A person who perpetuates the extant status quo of systems, policies, procedures, and practices that have historically marginalized certain groups of people and not others. Racist people exist in many forms, often those that are more subtle and nuanced than outright Ku Klux Klan membership.

sexism – The maltreatment of women or persons of different biological sex than one's own but most often refers to the stereotypical portrayal and treatment of women in the United States as substandard, less able, gender normative, and more emotional and caring than their male counterparts.

stereotype – An automatic thinking process that takes mental shortcuts by categorizing people, things, or other objects and places into predefined groups without much thought or reflection about the unique characteristics of each individual within the predefined group. This often leads to racial bias and can exist in many pejorative forms but also may lead to positive stereotypes that further separate different groups of people on the basis of arbitrary, often false, preconceived characteristics, habits, or traits.

unconscious bias – The automatic, reflexive thinking process that tends toward person classification into predefined and precharacterized groups without more thoughtful reflection and deliberation. Unconscious bias may manifest not only in how we treat others but also in our decisions and practices when we serve in positions of authority.

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